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# **Customer-Switching Behaviour for Telecom Service Provider**

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## **Abstract**

The paper tries to find reasons why customers switch service providers in the telecommunication industry. The Keaveney Model on customer switching behaviour (CSB) in service industries and Porter's Five Forces Model. The working employee's data was gathered from the telecommunication industry and was analysed using exploratory factor analysis. To retain a customer, the service provider has to maintain relationship with the customer by providing lucrative offers for their friends and family. The study is original as it identifies the reasons why a customer switches to other service provider.

**Keywords:** Customer-switching behaviour; Telecom service providers; Keaveney model; Porter Model, competition.

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## **Introduction**

Customer-switching behaviour in the telecommunication industry has substantially increased over the years. This switching behavior has severely impacted the market share of the firms in international markets. The extent to which the customers are inclined to switch their service provider has become a key factor influencing the market trends in the industry (Kokemuller, 2007). Customer-switching behaviour (CSB) has led to technology innovation in markets, and new research fields have emerged. The technological innovation may arise due to dissatisfaction with incumbent that leads subscribers to search for new suppliers in anticipation of higher levels of satisfaction (Lee, 1966). It is therefore important to analyse the factors influencing switching behaviour, more so because the costs incurred by the service providers in the initial acquisition of the customers and their subsequent regaining tend to be prohibitive for the service providers. One consequence of customer-switching, especially switching by the high-margin customers of the firm to another telecom firm

is the loss of revenue (Czajkowski & Sobolewski, 2013; Chang, Liu, & Chen, 2013; Dick & Basu, 1994). It becomes difficult to acquire new customers and even more difficult to retain them. These new customers involve both operating and marketing costs. Some of the key factors having an impact on customers switching behaviour are service quality (including service adequacy and their perceptions of the quality of service), proactive approach of the service providers to minimize switching and retain customers and various patterns of behaviour exhibited by the customers (Baumann, et.al., 2017). Lucrative price offers and diversity of products and/or services offered by new players in the telecom service market are also the key determinants of brand switching on the part of customers (Zeithmal, et. al, 1996; Storbacka, et.al, 1994).

Consumer brand switching models were initially applied in the goods market (Bass, 1974); Key factors associated with brand switching were identified as (a) heterogeneity, (b) perishability, (c) ownership, (d) intangibility, and (e) inseparability (Clemes, Mollenkoph, and Burn, 2000). Absence of a noticeable output in services has led to an increased research in switching (Gronroos, 1990). Studies of customer switching behaviour in diverse industries namely banking, insurance and retail revealed that key contributing factors were perceptions of quality (banking industry) (Manrai and Manrai, 2007) customer dissatisfaction (insurance industry) (Crosby and Stephen, 1987); and service encounter failure (retail industry) (Kelley, Hoffman, and Davis, 1995). Service quality and customers' satisfaction were found to be other key factors influencing switching behaviour (Zeithaml, Berry, and Parasuraman, 1996).

The advent of cellular phones was seen to be a major technological revolution in the recent years (uSwitch Mobiles, 2018; Ehrenberg, 2000). Technological advancements such as global system for mobile communication (GSM), code-division multiple access (CDMA), wireless local loop (WLL) and 4G technology moves together with a rise in the number of service providers, that leads to powerful competition amongst these service providers. To gain a competitive edge, the incumbent firms are focusing on service improvement as a means to enhance customer value (Parhizgar, 2002; Chen, Hsu, and Lu, 2018). The intense competition has resulted in providing multiple options, vast range of tariffs and combinations of products & services offered to the customers, triggering switching behaviour on the part of customers.

The telecommunication industry has also considerably widened the scope of their services through a variety of over-the-top (OTT) features such as e-mail, social media, messenger services, video conferencing, gaming, blogging and on-demand music etc. (Cronin and Taylor, 1992; Parasuraman et.al, 1988; Dutta and Sridhar, 2003).

These OTT features have led to spiraling demand for telecom services, urging the telecommunication service providers to focus on satisfying needs of their customers and endeavor to minimize their switching behaviour (Dick and Basu, 1994; Dwyer, 1997).

However, it is also seen that the contribution of value by various customers to the firm is not the same (Cronin and Taylor, 1992). Moreover, the costs associated with retaining a customer can be high; therefore, the strategy adopted by the firms to retain the customers requires careful consideration (Reinartz et al., 2005). A careful market segmentation and marketing resource allocation based on accurate analysis of the individual customers' contribution are necessary while exploring retention strategies (Joh, Timmermans, and Popkowski-Leszczyk, 2003).

This paper aims at analyzing the factors influencing consumer-switching behaviour towards service providers in the telecom sector. Such an analysis will provide useful learnings for firms engaged in telecom service provision and help them in devising appropriate strategies for retention of customers. The employees working in the telecom industry were asked to identify the major factors that are considered for customer switching behavior.

The rest of the paper is designed as follows: To begin with, a brief literature review on conceptual frameworks on customer switching behaviour is provided, followed by an elaboration of the research methodology adopted and the rationale thereof. The findings of the study have been then analysed and the results are briefly discussed. Finally, the emerging conclusions, implications for management of telecom service providers, limitations of the research and future directions of research have been brought out.

## **Literature Review and Conceptual framework**

The customer-switching behaviour towards telecom service providers results from the combined effect of various factors which influence their behaviour (Bansal and Taylor, 1999). In this paper, an attempt has been made to identify such factors and understand the relationship between them and the customer-switching behaviour.

### *Customer switching intentions and behaviour*

The customer-switching behaviour can manifest itself in two ways; these may be either a partial or a total switch-over from one firm to another (Nimako, 2012). This applies to the telecom service sector also, wherein both manifestations of switching can take place. Both customer satisfaction and switching barriers effect the customers' switching intentions. While service performance and service value affect customer

satisfaction, the switching costs and contractual lock-in affect the switching barriers (Park, Park, and Lee, 2014; Sin and Kim, 2008).

CSB may have different switching incidents. The model formulated by Keaveney (1995) contained eight switching incidents. These were (a) pricing (price increase, unfair pricing practices); (b) inconvenience (location, waiting hours); (c) core service failures (billing errors, service catastrophes); (d) service encounter failures (uncaring, impolite, unresponsive and unknowledgeable staff); (e) employee responses to service failures (reluctant response, failure to respond); (f) attraction by competitors (consumers positive responses related to the service provider they switched to); (g) ethical problems (dishonest behaviour, intimidating behaviour, unsafe practices or conflict of interest) and (h) involuntary switching, besides other seldom mentioned incidents (such as customer having shifted locations or service provider having changed alliance). The persons working in this sector were interviewed to understand which factors motivated the customers to switch among service providers.

The competition and launch of different services by service providers benefit its consumers and further attract new customers to switch towards the new promising service provider not just by switching cost (Chuah, et.al., 2017). The competition in this sector is in consensus with Porter's Five Forces Model highlighting the five competitive forces, namely, (a) intensity of the rivalry among existing players; (b) bargaining power of buyers; (c) bargaining power of suppliers; (d) threat of substitute and (e) threat of new entrants, which shape each industry. These forces help us understand the customer's competing strategies in the telecom service sector.

In the telecommunication sector, costs related to the customer switching behaviour need to be considered. The switching costs are multi-dimensional and encompass a combination of the costs of various psychological, physical and economic factors involved in changing a supplier (Jackson, 1985). Tangible and intangible costs such as cost of information sharing regarding the change, the cost of acquisition of new lines, costs of terminating existing relationships with service providers, costs related to understanding and adopting new practices and costs of identifying service providers potentially offering better customer value proposition than the existing firm need to be duly considered while assessing switching costs (Jackson 1985).

The exact meanings of customer retention differ among industries and firms (Drucker, 1973). The firms always face a challenge to retain customers and make an effort to satisfy them so that they are able to retain customers in their on-going business (Harris et. al, 2003). Customer retention is progressively being observed as a managerial issue, mainly when seen in the context of saturated markets or lower rates of customer acquisition.

Customers' behavioral responses (like praising the service provider) demonstrate their affinity towards the firm. The higher the perceived service quality, higher is the customers' inclination to stick to the service provider, give less weightage to the price and share their positive experiences with others in their peer group (Johnson and Sirikit, 2002). Higher perceived service quality enhances the willingness of customers to pay more, initiatives such as giving recommendations and expanding business value (Zeithaml, 2000).

### *The scenario of CSB in the telecommunication sector*

One of the reasons for the telecom customers to switch from a particular service provider to other network service providers is the superior offers provided by the new provider. The trust and expectations of the customers from the service provider play an important role as compared to the corporate image of the service provider. Another key factor is the pricing; besides, factors such as the amount of talk-time, service quality, validation of the recharge offers are also considered important by the customers (Kim, 2008; Gepper, 2002).

In a study related to the Swedish telecommunication sector, it was observed that customer satisfaction and trust were the key factors having an impact on customer loyalty and quality of relationship (trust and satisfaction) (Feng and Zhang, 2009). A study in the Estonian context identified satisfaction, trustworthiness, image, and the perceived importance of relationship as key factors impacting customer switching behaviour (Kuushik, 2007). In a study related to the customers of a public sector telecom service provider company in one of the metro cities of India, problems related to infrastructure were seen as a major irritant in customer satisfaction and consequent customers' retention. There is a challenge to retain subscribers through promotional offers, family orientation and service affordability (Kuramesh and Praveena, 2012). It is being pointed out that mobile subscribers incur switching costs when the switching customers take advantage of lower call rates and potentially better services (Dick and Basu, 1994). Price was identified as the key reason for the customers to switch over to other providers (Lee and Murphy, 2005). The consumers become less sensitive to satisfaction levels as switching costs increase (Kim, Park, and Jeong, 2004; Hauser et. al, 1994).

Other factors influencing the customers to resort to switching, as considered by the researchers include network problems, poor coverage by the network, high call rates and the influence of family and friends (Satish et.al, 2011). In the context of telecommunication industry in Sri Lanka, it was found that customer retention is better when the service provider gives value to its existing customers followed by assurance

and responsiveness and gives less importance to legal undertaking, perceptibility and payment terms.

The Irish mobile phone industry provides an example of potential savings to the customers through switching once the mobile number portability (MNP) was introduced. Similarly, in a study carried out in a city in India, it was observed that after MNP was introduced, the switching of service providers by the customers was due to factors such as poor network facility of the previous operator as well as better deals such as superior SMS packs and full talk time (on recharge) from new service provider (Sathish et. al, 2011; Shin and Kim, 2008). Enhanced services and subsidies on mobile phones offered to the customers were observed to be the factors influencing switching behaviour.

Studies in the Nigerian telecom sector indicated that high switching cost as well as high customer's satisfaction by the existing service provider was the key factors influencing customer retention (Joachim et. al, 2012). In the Pakistan telecom sector the price fairness had a greater positive impact on customer satisfaction than customer services (Muzammil, et. al, 2010). Customer switching intentions of the mobile services in the US markets have led to the identification of significant factors of service quality, innovation, lock-in (Leng, 2014), customer satisfaction, switching barriers and demographics (Shin and Kin, 2008). In the Jordan mobile service sector, users switch suppliers because of price, inconvenience, service quality, customer service, an attraction of competitors and switching costs (Awwad and Neimat, 2010).

The nature and quality of previous interactions with the service providers also influenced the switching intention of the customers. Also, brand affinity was seen to be an important factor positively influencing customer retention (Fabra, 2006). Other authors have highlighted the need to consider trade-offs between costs associated with shifting the service provider and the level of change in evaluating the effects of customer switching behaviour (Pick, 2014; Makwana et. al, 2014; Galb, 1999).

#### *Customers' Un-switching behaviour and its implications*

Customer un-switching behaviour (CUSB) occurs when a customer returns to the previous service provider after having made a switch-over to a competitive service provider (Tokman, Davis, & Lemon, 2007). This phenomenon of un-switching behaviour may be voluntary or otherwise. This customer un-switching behavior is based on the assumption that the individuals are rational beings and would take necessary decisions and steps to move away on their own volition or under some external influence to their origin when they judge it more beneficial to do so. In many competitive markets, firms attempt to use marketing strategies to win back the confidence of switchers or defected customers (Oyeniya and Abiodun, 2011, Keaveney, 1995; Fornell, 1992).

To stop the consumers from switching brands, there are factors, other than price, such as costs of re-training personnel, capital requirements for change-over, and costs of acquiring new ancillary equipment (Porter 1980).

The consumer's emotional intelligence, relationship status, and personality factors also play an important role in affecting the consumer switching behavior (Lin et. al, 2010). The marketing efforts, like sales promotions, advertising, and brand loyalty are the influencing factors, which demotivate the consumer switching behavior (Nagar, 2009). Moreover, the companies not only focus on selling products, but also on building long-term relationships with their customers (Marshall et. al, 2011). Also time and psychological effort of facing uncertainty with the new service provider become other important factors. (Dick and Basu, 1994). Losing a consumer is a setback for the firm. By focusing on relationship status factor, we may state that strong relationships built by the companies with their customers acts as a barrier for the consumers from switching brands, even in case of service quality.

In this paper, an attempt has been made to investigate and understand the factors affecting the customer-switching behaviour in the telecommunication industry. Moreover, we try to find out strategies that a firm may adopt to discourage customer-switching behavior. The study focus on the factors related to the customer-switching behavior and its implementation in the telecommunication sector. Improved knowledge may help the telecom sector to increase its benefits and avoid its failures emerged because of the customer-switching behaviour.

### **Research Methodology**

This paper attempts to analyze the various factors that influence telecom industry consumer's switching behavior. We compiled a list of factors based on the model proposed by Keaveney, 1995 on why customers switch service providers. Through the enquiry form (or the semi-structured questionnaire) administered to employees of the telecom industry, we attempted to understand what according to them, the customers want from the service provider. We incorporated questions that reveal factors (such as effective pricing strategies, lucrative offers, switching cost, etc.) that influence and motivate customers to switch the service provider. The study also aimed at identifying factors that control customer brand switching behaviour, which can help to retain its current customers in the telecom sector (Cronin and Taylor, 1992; Parasuraman et. al, 1988; Patterson and Smith, 2003). The employees who work in the international wholesale business organizations were selected to be interviewed based on which valuable information regarding the customer-switching behaviour was planned to be gathered (Zeng et. al, 2003). The interaction with employees revealed insights about the behavior of customers and likely factors that motivate the customers to switch service provider were identified.

The semi-structured questionnaire design included statements comprising of the above factors to collect information for the customer switching behavior. The questionnaire was on the 5-point Likert scale, where 1 indicated very unlikely, 5 indicated very likely to switch the service provider satisfaction. The respondents continued to be unidentified during the survey to permit free expression of their feelings and thought process. This questionnaire's responses were useful to ensure the strict confidentiality of participants' who participated in the survey.

This research used descriptive and exploratory research design. The questionnaire was pre-tested with 20 respondents. It was modified after editing and checking the data for reliability and validity. Subsequently, 120 working employees of the telecom firm gathered their responses. We eliminated 6 responses due to incomplete information and finally analysed 96 relevant responses. The designed questionnaire contained four parts. Part 1 of the questionnaire aimed to capture general attributes of the respondent perspective on switching behaviour. Part 2 and 3 of the questionnaire contained questions that measure the insights of customers (as gathered by the employees of the firm) about the pricing and economic and external determinants. Part 4 explored the possible causes of switching. The descriptive statistical analysis – frequency and percentage, and exploratory factor analysis were applied. We used the multivariate technique – exploratory factor analysis to determine the number of factors that would explain for the maximum variance in the data collected. Factor analysis is a procedure used for data-reduction and summarizing. For analyzing the data, we used version 23 of statistical packages for social sciences (SPSS), and through the Principal Component Method, we extracted factors with Eigen value (s) greater than 1. The comparison of the Varimax Rotated Factor Matrix with Un-Rotated Factor Matrix (entitled as the component matrix) was used; the rotation has enhanced the interpretability of the data. The factors have been extracted and listed from the rotated factor matrix. Furthermore, the conscious and unconscious factors of the consumer behavior which helps to retain consumers from switching between the cellular service providers were studied.

## **Results and Discussion**

The respondents were the employees working in the telecommunication sector. The respondents answered the semi-structured questions prepared by the interviewer. The average interview duration was 10 minutes. The respondents were selected randomly from different service providers either from the technical or non-technical background. The respondents had established offices in Delhi and the National-Capital Region (NCR) of India. The Cronbach's alpha reliability test was conducted with a cut-off value of 0.60 as suggested for the new developed questionnaires (Churchill, 1979).

The Cronbach's alpha value for this test was 0.64. Therefore, the questionnaire was reliable. Profile of the 96 respondents was assessed using frequency and percentages. Factor analysis was applied to understand the factors that encourage customers to shift to a new service provider.

### *Profile of respondents*

The sample used demographic parameters similar to the population. We targeted employees above 30 years of age who have adequate knowledge in the telecommunication industry and who may identify the factors that encourage customers to switch to another service provider. Understanding the consumer psychology is necessary to analyse customer-switching behaviour. 82.8% of the respondents belonged to the age group between 30-40 years. Maximum respondents were male (92%) and most of them (round 95% of participants) have worked in either international wholesale business or in a technical profile.

### *Discussion*

The factors that motivate the customers switching behavior from one service provider to another service provider in the telecommunication industry have been stated in Table 1. The table shows the responses of the employees for the factors that motivate customers to switch. It was found that 41.6% of the respondents (including 'likely' and 'very likely' categories) felt that the customers were aware and had understood the switching cost levied by their current service provider in the telecom sector. However, 29.2% of the respondents believed that the customers shifted to a new service provider to avail extra benefits without analyzing the end-to-end impact on service provider. 75% of the respondents believed that over-the-top (OTT) voice, text messaging and data services severely impact the prices for telecom market. (Dick and Basu, 1994; Galb, 1999).

The customers (47.9% of respondents) believed that delay in responses happen because the customers avoid calling help-lines to avoid long interactive voice response (IVR) queues and delay (Burnham et.al. 2003). However, 33.3% respondents believed that customers try the new service provider to avail extra benefits. But still, 54.2% respondents believed that improving the customer handling process will surely reduce the extent of customer switching (39.6%). Incentives such as service providers offering full talk time on recharge mobile phone as subsidies on the service bills will reduce the extent of customer switching.

With respect to price, the customers are attracted by the lucrative offers (39.6% of the respondents), clarity on the prices levied (56.2% of the respondents), trust and relationships etc. encourage them to pay more (45.8% of the respondents). In the beginning prices attract consumers, but later the service and clarity in paying process

builds their trust in the service provider. Thus 45.8% of the respondents were neutral towards buyer-seller relationships at the development stage. Thus the price is an important factor to motivate customers to switch to another service provider (this is in consensus with Lee & Murphy, 2005). The variations in prices may affect different companies' price selection for their service provider (Munukka, 2005). Lucrative offers attract customer but if the customer has clarity on charges levied reasonably, good service can hold them for a longer period as suggested by Jun and Bin, 2005.

For other services, 85.4% of the respondents believed that the current service providers regularly upgraded the services as per the latest trends and customer choices. The customers (62.5% of respondents) always look for new functions and features added by the service provider to stay with them for longer duration of time. Thus service providers need to inform customers at regular intervals about the changes they have brought in their service provider (Zeithmal et. al, 1996).

For the competitor, advertisement increases consumer awareness (54.2% of the respondents) and brand ambassadors influence the consumer (33.3% of the respondents) in addition to the increase in reputation of the service provider. All these motivate the customer to switch to a new service provider and later through different advertisements etc. may attract back the customer to its earlier service provider. (is similar to Kaveney, 1995; Fornell, 1992).

To understand the customer's switching behavior in the telecommunication industry, the factor analysis was conducted. We gathered this information on a scale of 1 (very unlikely) to 5 (very likely). The respondents had been closely working in the industry and could reasonably understand the behaviour of the customers pre- and post- switching. The Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) measure of sampling adequacy was 0.498 and, the Bartlett test of Sphericity (with the chi-square value of 413.015 at 120 degrees of freedom) rejected the null hypothesis that the correlation matrix was an identity matrix. The eigenvalue for six common factors were greater than unity. The gathered responses from the rotated component matrix where the factor loadings were above 0.6. The three variables were eliminated after considering factor loadings of 0.6 and above. Thus 13 variables were considered for finding the common factor. The proportion (percent) of variance explained by all six factors altogether account for about 68.248 percent of the total variance using the principal component method. We then rotated the resulting factors by the varimax method to facilitate the interpretation of the results.

The first factor includes the current service provider who regularly upgraded its services according to trend; the advertisement and publicity from competitors; and bulk offers or better offers for family and friends encourages the customer to switch. Therefore, we can name this factor as 'innovative offers and publicity.' The second

factor includes customers understanding towards the switching cost; for example: "network coverage and data service provided by the existing service provider is good, but the customer still wants to try a new service provider so as to avail extra benefits", and ease of changing service provider due to absence of any legal or regulatory hurdles involved; and thus can be named as 'convenience' factor. The next factor implies that the current service provider does not offer similar lucrative benefits as a new service provider and during the development stage, the new service provider attracts customers by charging low prices and thus can be named as 'price' factor. The fourth factor includes impact of OTT voice, text messaging and data services on customers switching behaviour and this can be named as 'other service' factor. The fifth factor includes clarity on price charging and benefits compared to other service providers and building multiple offers for services and thus named as 'competition' factor. The last factor consists of consumer awareness of the quality of the customer handling processes and support as compared to the other service provider and thus called as 'service quality' factor. Thus there are six factors namely innovative offers and publicity, convenience, price, other services, competition, and service quality which are considered by customers when confirming switching behavior of service providers in the telecommunication industry (similar to Keaveney, 1995; Cronin and Taylor, 1992; Parasuraman et. al, 1988).

The customers today possess mobile phones and have become aware to access e-mails, social networking sites, WhatsApp, video conferencing techniques, games, video blogging, music on demand etc. that have created extensive competition among the service providers in the telecommunication industry. The service providers have a challenge to retain their customers in the long-run. The companies try to win new customers and at the same time want to bring lucrative offers to retain their existing customer base. Thus the service providers are trying to improve their after sale services to maintain relations with the customers and do not let them move towards the new service provider. This has increased competition in the telecom industry, and thus influences the customers to switch between the service providers as per the tariffs charged and the additional services provided by the service provider.

### **Managerial and Practical Implications**

Incidence of customer-switching from one service provider to other service providers has increased many folds over the years. The companies in the telecommunication industry have begun to focus on innovation, publicity and new high-technology based schemes to attract new customers as well as to retain the existing customers. Looking at the insights received from the people working in the telecommunication industry, we have identified a few managerial and practical implications for the business managers and society in general.

Firstly, we propose that the telecom companies should focus on retaining their existing customers. This retention of customers will help the companies to withstand the rising competition in the telecom sector. The paper gives pointers to the telecom firms to strategize and plan their offers and other value added services such as free WhatsApp, internet connection, e-mail services, after-sales service, etc. in a way that motivates existing customers to take pride in their service provider. This will facilitate attracting new customers through the spread of word of mouth by the existing customers about the service quality and customer caring approach of their existing service provider. We can also say that this qualitative approach will help telecom firms to understand the rationale followed by the customers to switch among service providers. High-quality services can help in retaining customers and discouraging the customers from switching.

Telecom service providers should target to provide high-quality services such as customer care, network coverage area, video conferencing techniques, games, video blogging and music on demand, etc. to attract new customers and convince them to switch their service provider. The findings of the telecom service provider are similar to the study by Jun and Bin, 2005 who states that customers considering quality services offered by companies discouraged brand switching. Therefore service quality enhances satisfaction among customers and the performance of the service providers. The firms need to be encouraged to cater to the needs of their existing customers first through superior service quality and attractive offers and schemes; followed by innovative offers for the new customers from other service providers (customers exhibiting switching behaviour in their favour) through publicity, advertisements and discounts, etc.

### **Conclusions and Recommendations**

The customer switching behavior in the telecommunication industry leads to the relationship ending with an existing service provider and the beginning of a new relationship with new service provider. The employees working in the telecommunication industry were interviewed to understand the reasons that influence customers switching behavior. The results show that the switching cost between service providers is one of the major factor that leads to change in the service provider (Keaveney, 1995). The service provider companies may think to retain their customers by raising the switching cost to a new service provider (Burnham et.al, 2003). At times customers do not switch towards the new service providers if the existing service provider increases the switching cost, provides low service charges, maintains personal or professional commitments concerning the change in the mobile number, possess a high quality and an appealing brand image etc. The frequent switching of the customers between service providers happen mainly due to low switching cost provided by the service providers. It is important for customers to establish 'Trust' in the long-run with the existing service provider to avoid switching to the new service provider. The factor analysis shows six

factors namely innovative offers and publicity, convenience, price, other service such as trust building, competition, and service quality which are considered by customers at the time of switching to the new service provider in the telecommunication industry (Keaveney, 1995; Cronin and Taylor, 1992; Parasuraman et. al, 1988). Moreover, value-added services (VAS) and effective pricing strategies of the telecom players can control consumer brand switching behaviour and can help retention of customers for longer periods. Apart from trust, brand image of the service provider attracts new customers who switch to their service provider and thus the responsibility lies with the service provider to provide offers to these new customers and also to maintain satisfaction of their existing customers.

The service providers should look towards increasing their customer switching cost to maintain their loyal customers and encourage them not to shift towards a new service provider (Park, et.al, 2014). High-quality services should be provided to the customers and maintain and give importance to the customer care services as and when raised by the customer. The customer's satisfaction level with their existing service provider will ensure that the customers do not switch towards to new service providers. Moreover, it is important to maintain strong and alluring brand image to increase customer's loyalty with the brand. The relationship among the customers and the company should be that of trust so that the customers feel encouraged to remain loyal with the service provider. Lastly, offers should be combined with low charges and high-quality services to avoid customers switching behaviour.

The above research can be used by both business executives and academicians to understand the factors that impact the customer-switching behavior in the telecommunication industry. The telecommunication sector may plan and strategize new innovative offers for the family and friends of the existing customers so that the customer base of the firm increases. The strategies would help to encourage customer's un-switching behaviour in the telecommunication sector across the globe.

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