

MARKETING STRATEGIES OF INDIAN TELECOM OPERATORS-A STUDY

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Abstract

Telecommunications is a rapidly expanding industry in India and with an expected telecom market size in India to be ranked second only to China by 2023. This sector has also been experiencing growth because a very large ratio of the population still does not have wireless connections. Marketing plays a vital role in growth, profitability and competitiveness of organisations within this sector especially given the competitiveness that characterises the service industry. This paper aims at exploring the marketing strategies adopted by Indian telecom services in Hyderabad and Telangana region within India. The research follows a structured questionnaires and through the collected data, graphs, charts, and tables are used to analyze the result by using statistical tools like Correlation, Chi-square and ANOVA. Conclusively, customer concern regarding service quality was established, though several participants mentioned call drop and network problems. In this regard, to address the presented concerns, telecom service providers have to work on improvement of services dependability and networks performance to secure customer loyalty. And secondly, the study states that issue of service portfolios differentiation and customer loyalty/retention are necessarily important to achieve competitive advantage. With the help of fresh marketing concepts and customer-oriented initiatives, the telecom organizations can deliver its target customer requirements effectively and can ensure its competitiveness in the transforming telecommunications industry.

Keywords:Telecommunication, Customer Satisfaction, Promotional Strategies, Marketing Strategies, Customer Loyalty, Wireless Services

Introduction

The telecom sector is one of the prominent growing worldwide and India being forecasted to achieve the second-largest telecom market in the globe by 2023, next only to China. This sector has grown at a very fast pace due to the growing need for wireless communication and internet in a populous nation with a highly literate populace in technologies. After world economy liberalization in 1991, Indian telecom sector has changed from a state monopoly into more liberalized and decentralized sector filled with prospect and innovation opportunities.

Hyderabad of Telangana talented state has become one of the important poles of telecommunications development and has made substantial contributions to the telecommunications industry. The city's population comprises of an expanding urban populace and the increasing teeming populace of new telecommunication firms renders the city appropriate for examining telecom marketing strategies. As mobile internet and smart phones are gaining ground the telecom sector for the most part strives to raise the quality of the service, minimize the cases of problems relating to the network, and increase geographical accessibility to satisfy the population needs.

It will also be important to embark on effective marketing strategies that will enable telecom service providers to create competitive advantage and cause more customer traffic in this environment. These strategies use the 7 marketing mix ingredients including product, price, place, promotion, people, physical evidence, and process to reach the targeted customers with a value proposition that is superior. Telecom companies must always seek ways of

satisfying the consumer needs, find the best way of pricing, increase the dependability of the services and the use of the digital media in influencing the customer.

Today there are tremendous shifts in through mobile phones and internet services have a large impact on their behavior. India is now on the third place, following United States and China as the largest consumers of internet with majority using mobile devices with almost 40% internet usage. However, factors like poor bandwidth, call connection loss, and network signals are still prevalent and telecoms must enhance top and ground facilities and services respectively.

The current research revolves around the assessment of the specific marketing activities being implemented in the telecom service providers' context of Hyderabad, Telangana and their impact in fulfilling customer needs, enhancing satisfaction and resulting loyalty. The work also describes promotional campaigns, technological improvements, and services as components that are also relevant to sustaining competitiveness in the telecom market.

India is projected for a \$1 trillion digital economy by 2025, subsequently that will fuel the demand for telecom services. Going forward, the key to the sustained growth and delivery of value to customer will rely greatly on the recognition of customer needs and the application of superior data-driven marketing techniques.

Statement of the Problem

The Indian telecommunication sector currently exists in a fiercely competitive environment where profit margins are slim. This is mostly because most telecom carriers do not seem to recover the costs attributable to bandwidth licensing and infrastructure deployment. At the same time, consumers in India are very sensitive to the price and thus exert further pressure on providers to deliver value for money as well as generating profits.

In this environment telecoms need to examine strategies for gaining increased market share, acquiring new customers, retaining their current customers and converting users from rival firms. But the practices include and the strategies differ depending on whether the telecom company is in the public or private domain and the overall objectives of a single marketer that may comprise a set of resources.

Considering all these issues, there is an imperative need to review the influence of marketing factors on customer buy behavior, satisfaction, and loyalty within the competitive context of an emerging smart city, Hyderabad, Telangana. This paper examines the strategies used by the telecom service providers to manage these challenges and enhance their positions in the market.

Need for the Study

This research is informed by the rapidly evolving telecommunication industry and customer dependence on mobile and internet connections. The rapid advance in technological front with the constant enhancement in the availability of internet can help in the establishment of a much better appreciation of the consumer needs and wants to support the appropriate marketing strategies that can effectively be put into place.

The role that consumers attach to telecom brands and various aspects that affect the choice they make are investigated here. To achieve the research goal the latter is focused on assessing the key criteria such as customer satisfaction, service quality and brand loyalty in order to contribute to the formation of strategic plans of telecom providers to increase retention rates of existing individuals and attract new clients.

The study also raises the issue of customers as a valuable source for grasping product or service specifications. It stresses on the account of mass customisation, marketing analysis, customer communications and CRM systems, all as key to driving customer retention and therefore the longer-term revenues. Furthermore, it is beneficial to the telecom providers to meet the customers' complains on network problems, and interruption of services in that they are obliged to undertake changes that seeks to make users happier.

Objectives of the Study

1. In order to understand the marketing mix of the Indian Telecom services in Hyderabad, Telangana.
2. As a specific aim, they aimed at identifying the most preferred telecom service providers to the consumers in terms of service delivery.
3. For evaluating service quality provided by telecom providers and also for evaluating changes in performances over some period of time.
4. To assess the customers' attitudes, loyalty and satisfaction towards pricing strategies, network performance and promotions.
5. To analyze the factors that influence the extent to which the concept of technological solution will be effective in the Eli Lilly Company in establishing customer loyalty with the adoption of digital marketing tools.
6. For analyzing customer switching behaviour and the effects of offers, discounts on the on going services along with bundled offers for retaining the subscribers.
7. By so doing, Sana will be in a position to give recommendations on improvements on the current market trends in order to exploit better markets and increasing general service provision to improve competitiveness.

Scope of the Study

In this study, we are more interested in studying the marketing strategies that are employed by the telecomservice providers that operate in Hyderabad, Telangana, to figure out how they affect the ultra-critical activities such as customer acquisition, retention, and satisfaction. It seeks to determine price sensitiveness, service quality preference, network stability and preference for promotions. The study assesses customer attrition patterns and identifies methods for reducing churn while improving customer retention. Further, it explains market position and offers the sales and profitability sales and profitability enhancing strategies for developing competitive advantage. The relevance of digital marketing, customers and technology borne solutions to maintain competitiveness in telecom sector emerges as an important business lesson from the study.

Sources of Data Collection

Primary Data: Primary data was generated from the target market of telecom service; a total of one hundred participants in Hyderabad, Telangana were administered structured questionnaires through google form. This data will be used for analyzing the consumer buying behavior, preferences and level of satisfaction. The participants were purposively chosen mainly because they were available and willing to share their opinions and experience.

Secondary Data: Secondary data was collected from online sources which include websites, journals, research articles, newspapers and magazines. The gathered information from this source included the analysis of market trends, growth data, and strategies used by telecom companies to help in the analysis and interpretation of primary data.

Sampling Method

The selected sample was random; no telecom user was excluded or favored over the other as the selection was done randomly. These surveys were also conducted using convenience sampling by sharing Google Forms to reach even more students.

- **Sampling Area:** The study was conducted in Hyderabad, Telangana and the respondents were the telecom service users of the region.

- **Population:** The target population of the study comprised all telecom service users in Hyderabad.
- **Sampling Unit:** Telecom end-users who make frequent use of mobile or internet irrespective of being individual or group consumers.

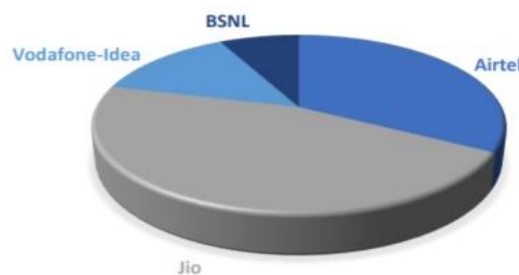
Analysis of SIM Provider Preferences in Hyderabad

This paper assesses the attitude towards telecom service providers among the respondents from Hyderabad, Telangana to understand market orientation, customer satisfaction, and determinants for SIM cards. According to the data, Jio has the largest share of the market with 45.9 % of the users following the cheap tariffs, geographical coverage and high speed internet services. Airtel comes second having a market share of 33.3%, due to it enhanced brand image in the production has specialized in reliability and customer service offering products to premium customers. Closely trailing behind is Vodafone-Idea with 13.5 % market share and actively experiencing issues with network quality as well as forming price policies. 7.2% is owned by BSNL that have the least market share and the main reason is the bad infrastructure and less advertisement.

Table 1 : SIM Usage Preferences

Telecom Provider	Respondents	Percentage (%)
Airtel	66	33.3%
Jio	92	45.9%
Vodafone-Idea	27	13.5%
BSNL	15	7.2%
Total	200	100%

Graph1: Graph showing that kind of SIM's respondents are using



The results stress the importance of the improvements of the quality of the services offered, appearance of new strategies to set the price, and usage of new technology including 5G. Suggestions made as follows: Jio has to continue its leadership positions through customer-focused advertising and affordable tariffs, while Airtel has to offer products that remain premium yet affordable with better value propositions to end consumers Vodafone Idea has to enhance its network quality and lastly, BSNL offering modern network for economical customer segment. The implications of the findings suggest that technology development,

customer segmentation, and good customer relations remain vital in maintaining continued growth and customer retention in the intensely competitive telecommunication industry.

Analysis of Strategies Used by Telecom Providers to Increase Sales

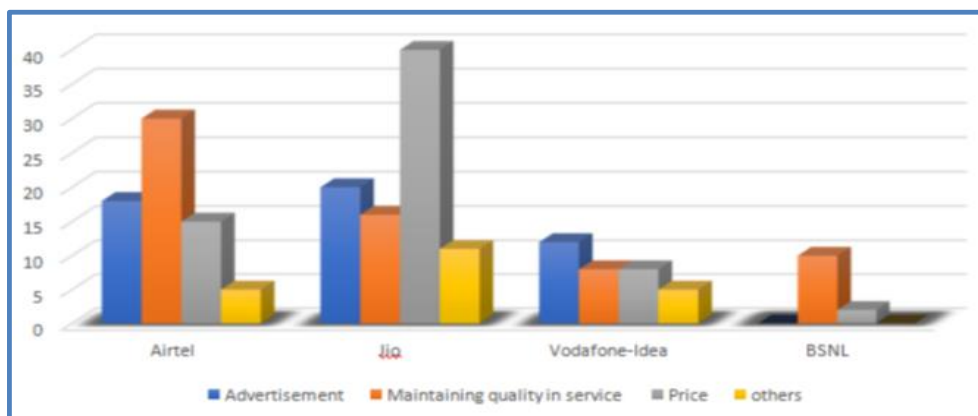
This paper seeks to find out the approaches practised by telecom services to deliver high sales and customer involvement in the area of Hyderabad, Telangana. The study involves Airtel, Jio, Vodafone Idea Cellular, and BSNL as the four primary service providers, and assessment is made concerning the locality of the advertisement, quality of the services, policy and charges for the services provided and other determinants.

According from the data it is obvious that Jio is the winner in pricing policies which shows that 20% total respondents preferred because of their competitive prices. From this we can infer that Jio has always placed focus on the price-sensitive factor when entering the market due to which it acquired the largest market share. On the other hand, Airtel has the highest rating in service quality where 15% of the respondents argued that issues to do with reliability of networks services and good performance where paramount to them. This focus enables Airtel shave its premium customers that are those willing to pay more for the service they want. Another important area of expenditure is advertising with company Jio has the highest advertising spend also among the companies, 10%, followed by Airtel with 9%. Vodafone-Idea (VI) is less proactive in this regard, and only 6% respondents talked to us about advertisements indicating that company's comparatively weaker promotional strategies. While some companies such as Idea and Airtel have revenues from advertisements accounting for 4% and 6% of their total sales respectively, BSNL gets 0% of the total revenue from advertisements which might explain its low market coverage.

Table 2: Strategies Used by Telecom Providers to Increase Sales

Particulars	Airtel	Jio	VI	BSNL
	Respondents (%)	Respondents (%)	Respondents (%)	Respondents (%)
Advertisement	18 (9%)	20 (10%)	12 (6%)	0 (0%)
Maintaining Quality	30 (15%)	16 (8%)	8 (4%)	10 (5%)
Price	15 (7.5%)	40 (20%)	8 (4%)	2 (1%)
Others	5 (2.5%)	11 (5.5%)	5 (2.5%)	0 (0%)

Graph 2: Graph showing that strategies used by telecom service providers to increase sales



Preservation of quality of service also contributes greatly to the needs fulfillment. The quality is being prioritized by more companies with T24A having 15% commitment, RIO at 8%, while Vodacom has 4% and BSNL has 5% and are therefore committed to improving the reliability of service delivery. From this we can deduce that both BSNL and VI require overhauling their operational structures and enhancing their consumer relations.

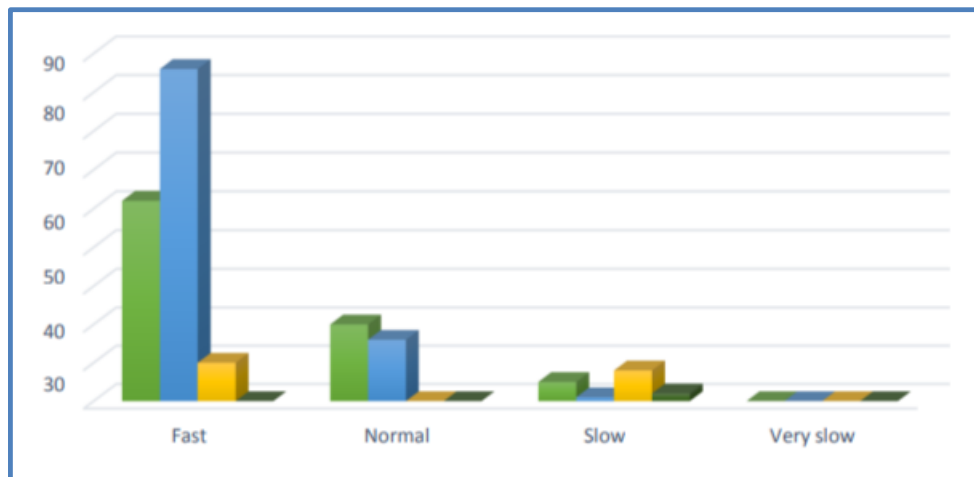
The young company Jio has the lowest tariffs and aims to attract numerous customers with a small income, and other entrants such as Airtel (7.5%), VI (4%), BSNL (1%) are behind it. Others like bundling and integration and affiliate marketing has also been adopted by the more so by Jio at 5.5% making it harder for competitors to penetrate.

Analysis of Internet Speed Across Telecom Providers

This research measures the aptitude of customer experiences in broadband internet speed available from the key telecom operators viz Airtel, Jio, Vodafone Idea (VI) and BSNL and classified into categories like – Fast, Normal, Slow and Very Slow. The statistics show that Jio is the favorite provider for the participant, 43% of them described the speed of the internet provided by Jio as Fast and only 0.5% of the participant reported slow internet speed provided by Jio. This underlines Jio's leadership in the provision of fast internet and also the firm's excellent network, which puts the firm in a vantage position with the market base that values fast internet most. Airtel ranks the second getting 26% saying that it has a fast speed; 10% saying that it is normal. Indeed, Airtel responds constantly positively while only 2.5 % of clients complained of slow Internet speed, which shows that network needs to improve in order to compete with Jio. However, VI's prospects are bleak: 5% of the respondents stated that Vodafone-Idea's speed was fast, and 4% discovered that it was slow. The lack of ratings which mention normal speeds can be regarded as networks' inconstancy and inadequate reliability of VI's services.

Table 3: Internet Speed Distribution by Providers

Particulars	Fast	Normal	Slow	Very Slow
	Respondents (%)	Respondents (%)	Respondents (%)	Respondents (%)
Airtel	52 (26%)	20 (10%)	5 (2.5%)	0 (0%)
Jio	86 (43%)	16 (8%)	1 (0.5%)	0 (0%)
VI	10 (5%)	0 (0%)	8 (4%)	0 (0%)
BSNL	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	2 (1%)	0 (0%)

Graph 3 : Graph showing the respondents networks speed

At the bottom of the pile is BSNL – none mentioned the speed to be fast or normal, whereas 1% mentioned it to be slow. This shows that it has old structures and no sign of a technological revolution; making BSNL the least considered for internet service provision.

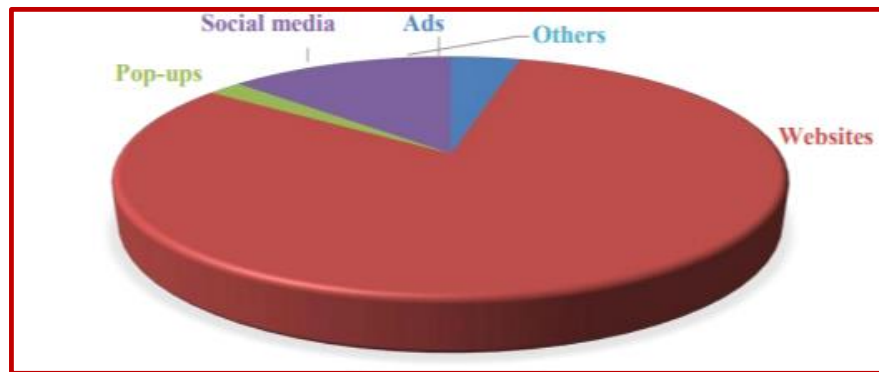
The results imply that Jio and Airtel are the dominant players in the market with the/catalog of high-speed internet, but VI and BSNL are ones that have network problems. To filling these gaps, Jio should persist in developing 5G solutions additionally increasing its high speed networks whereas Airtel should yield in increasing the level of constancy to come closed to that of Jio. VI and BSNL on the other hand have to upgrade their networks, increase service stability anddur introduce suitable tariffs to win back their customers.

Analysis of Promotion Strategies Used by Telecom Providers

The various market promotion techniques used by telecom providers to place their products and services in the market are well captured in the study. In terms of the data collected we see that majority, 81%, of the respondents had seen or acknowledged the use of website for promotional purposes. This depicts increase usage of website since the telecom providers mostly use their website to show detailed information about their services, support services and even new and proactive ways of engaging the clients. In the case of websites and social networks, 13 percent of the promotions prove the recent shift in the Sud African information technology ads strategy towards target ads and influencers to attract more audience in these networks.

Table4 : Promotion Strategies Used by Telecom Providers

Particulars	Respondents	Percentage (%)
Ads	8	4%
Websites	162	81%
Pop-ups	4	2%
Social Media	26	13%
Others	0	0%
Total	200	100%

Graph 4 :Graph showing the promotion done by telecom service provider

More specifically, TV advertising makes up only 4%; radio, only 4%; and newspaper advertising also only 4%, demonstrating the gradual obsolescence of conventional marketing methods through personal interactions in cyberspace. The current use of pop-up advertisements is only at 2% as per the respondents, and this is because; the use of pop-ups is restricted by the current ad-blocking technologies in addition to the irritation. Successful mobile devices dominate at 78% among the respondents indicating that their use is slightly affected by the sizes of the screens, 43% believed their use is limited by ad-blocking technologies while 41 percent concurred that their use is restricted by Pertinently, no respondent mentioned the use of any other promotional methods apart from the online marketing techniques bearing witness to the fact that the online marketing overpowers the offline marketing.

Based on the insights, it is revealed that the telecom providers target their audiences mainly through digital media where the website along with social media communication have a greater potential for reaching out the people. To improve their positioning in the market, providers need to refine Website features and explore the opportunities of using data-driven advertising, as well as diversify the multichannel marketing strategies in order to promote the brand and guarantee more clients in increasingly stiff competition.

Findings, Conclusion, and Suggestions

According to the findings, India's telecommunication market is dominated by the Jio holding 45.9% of the market of telecommunication whereas Airtel occupies the second place with 33.3% of the market share telecommunication market is occupied by Vodafone-Idea 13.5% and BSNL 7.2%. The main contributing factor of its growth is the pricing factor they offer at 20% while for Airtel the growth factor is the service quality which occupies 15%. Self generated advertisement accounts for 6 % in Vodafone-Idea to pull new users while BSNL has 5% target to cling on its existing customers enhancing the service portfolio. Jio is preferred for internet speed, 43% of the respondent considering it fast while, Vodafone-Idea and BSNL struggling with slow speed and network problems. Promotional tools reveal a clear trend in favour of web-based techniques: websites are viewed as being particularly effective by 81 percent of respondents, with social media coming only second and being considered effective by 13 percent of respondents. Other techniques that are almost irrelevant include Ads at 4% and Pop-ups at 2% showing the need for an online strategy.

The conclusion reiterates the fact that customer acquisition and customer retention are very important to the telecom providers. Most users opt for prepaid plans because these are

cheaper and offer flexibility more than postpaid plans and many clients use two SIM cards to have different categories of contacts. The study shows that Jio offers competitively low tariffs along with 5G services and unlimited services to become the leader in the market while Airtel is popular for the stability of network connection. However, issues such as call drops, signal loss and congestion relates to the network need to be addressed urgently in order to enhance the welfare of the customers. Mobile recharges are considered as one of the most important usages of mobile payments and concerns the need to improve security and convenience of such solutions due to the increasing expectations of customers.

This paper recommends that BSNL should attend to customer complaints proactively, invest in many new technologies, and improve on the quality of services being offered with an aim of minimizing on customer attrition. For Airtel, there should be a forma plan of price reduction of the recharge plans to stay relevant for Vodafone-Idea and BSNL, there should be a broadening of the internet speed and a broadband 4G/5G networks. Any provider needs to therefore upscale the website as well as the social media marketing to enhance visibility and sale. Moreover, there are increased capital expenditure, more reliance on latest technologies, systematic and efficient approaches, and enhanced qualities, which is important to support the growth in the telecom sector where competition is very high. Regarding these areas, telecom providers are capable of better serving the customers, improving their performance and gaining a strengthened position in the dynamically developing digital environment.

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