

Contribution of Mobile Number Portability in Quality Enhancement of Mobile Services: An Innovative Spike in Telecom Services

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Abstract

Telecommunications has been recognized world-over as an important tool for socio-economic development for a nation. It is one of the prime support services needed for rapid growth and modernization of various sectors of the economy. It has become especially important in recent years because of enormous growth of information technology and its significant potential for the impact on the rest of the economy. The Telecom Sector, which has the multiplier effect on the economy, has a vital role to play in economy by way of contributing to the increased efficiency. The Indian telecom industry is one of the fastest growing in the world and is projected that India will have 'billion plus' mobile users by 2015. Projection by several leading global consultancies is that India's telecom network will overtake China's in the next 10 years.

The Government of India is focusing on improving rural tele-density and broadband connectivity, effective expansion of the networks with efficient utilization of scarce spectrum and ensuring equal sharing of highly capital intensive infrastructure. TRAI, the telecom sector regulator, intends to create standards to ensure quality of service for mobile phone companies which deliver mobile data services to the users. Considering the fact that roll out of 3G and 4G high-speed data access services across the country will lead to quantum jump in the number of mobile internet users, the authority is seeking comments from stakeholders in the sector. According to the draft regulations issued, TRAI has created nine parameters benchmarks including service activation clause (that the service would be activated within three hours with a 95 per cent success rate), drop rate (or the network's inability to upload or download, should be below 2 per cent) etc.

“Mobile Number Portability” means the facility which allows a subscriber to retain his mobile telephone number when he moves from one Access Provider to another irrespective of the mobile technology or from one cellular mobile technology to another of the same Access Provider Present study gives insight to cell phone network providers on how to meet the challenge of possibility of losing existing customers' due to Mobile Number Portability (MNP) feature launched by Government of India recently. The survey conducted reveals customers' reasons and preferences for shifting to the other network provider, their satisfaction level with the current mobile service provider(s), and their suggestions for improving services to hold in the existing customers. Suggestions are made as to what the cell phone network providing companies should do in order to take maximum benefit of Mobile Number Portability by offering benefits to their existing customers.

Key Words: Telecommunication, TRAI, Quality enhancement.

Introduction

Mobile means something in motion. When it combines with services then it indicates that availing of the delivered service when in motion. Communication through telephonic media while roaming is referred as mobile or cell phone service(s). Mobile services are nothing but Radio-communications services between ships,

aircraft, road vehicles, or hand-held terminal stations for use while in motion or between such stations and fixed points on land.

Cellular Mobile service means availing the telecommunication services(s) any time and any where even if the user is not stationary but roaming somewhere. According to some specific communication characteristics the entire

transmission range is divided into small areas, which are called as cells. These cells are responsible for transmitting and receiving the radio frequency signal.

Cellular mobile phone is a wireless telecommunication device comes with inbuilt mobility feature. Mobile communication technology allows mobile users to avail the roaming facility.

Service is a patch up activity to fulfill some one's need in the market. Service is something, which can be experienced but cannot be touched or seen. Services offered by service providers cannot be seen & touched, as they are intangible activities.

The basic difference between service & product is that services are intangible but products are tangible and are required to follow some standardized procedures. Service user can specify about that particular service satisfaction only after availing it for some period of time. Some of the common service areas are: Retailing, Transportation, Cell phones, Education, Health & hospitality Services, BPO and many more.

Customer expectations are the standards against which the perceived services are checked in order to assess the quality of a service. This basically gives what is expected & what is actually received. If any difference exists between the expected service and actually received service then that difference is called as a gap, which needs to be reduced.

GSM & CDMA technology Digital cellular networks are the need of wireless extensions to establish the connection across the globe. For performing the transmission among the mobile users, it uses the concept of multiple accesses. Multiple access means simultaneous transmission or access from many sources to one. Multiple access transmission can be achieved through: SDMA - Space Division Multiple Access FDMA - Frequency Division Multiple Access TDMA - Time Division Multiple Access CDMA - Code Division Multiple Access SDMA, FDMA & TDMA technologies are based on fixed assignment like frequency and time duration. But CDMA is based on different codes to separate different

users in code space & so this technology allows multiple users to access the network through the shared medium without any interference. GSM - the Group Special Mobile was founded in 1982 to support the digital transmissions & now popularly known as Global System for Mobile Communications. GSM was primarily used to support the transmission to users in roaming environment. GSM is today's most successful digital telecommunication system.

According to TRAI regulation, to facilitate Mobile Number Portability by providing unique porting code as requested by their subscribers (existing customers) is the obligation of all Indian network service providers towards their all types of subscribers in entire network without any discrimination. Changing from one service provider to the other is known as 'Porting'. New service provider to whom the customer is requesting to port his/her cell number is known as Recipient operator. Previous service provider from whom the customer wants to port-out his/her cell number is known as Donor Operator. Customers can change the service provider only within their current service area. Recipient Operator can disconnect customers' post-paid connection if the customers do not pay due bill amount to Donor Operator before requesting for porting. Pre-paid connection balance will be lapsed after porting.

Service Quality Concept & Quality Parameters Service is an intangible thing, which needs to be experienced before assessing it. Anything can be measured by measuring their respective service attributes & factors. There are certain Service Quality parameters as defined by the professional bodies in order to measure the service quality of corresponding service sector.

Quality is a key requirement in every field. In terms of Industrial growth quality plays an important role & so should be understood and defined properly. Different management Guru's in different ways defines quality. But the basic concept remains same i.e. "Meeting to the Need of Customer". In most generalized way the Quality term can be defined as "The inclusion of all specified features and characteristics as defined for product or service and its ability to

satisfy the given needs as per the requirement of user while using it."

Objectives of the study

The main objective of this study was to come up with an understanding of the concept of mobile number portability and specific objectives are:

- To analyze the socio-economic profile of the users of MNP in the study area.
- To explore the sources/media which influenced the subscribers to use MNP?
- To find out the reasons which initiated the subscribers to use MNP?
- To measure the respondents 'degree of agreement over various issues of mobile number portability.
- To compare the satisfaction level of respondents before and after using MNP with different mobile services.

Research methodology

Research methodology is the way to systematically solve a problem. A research methodology consists of various steps. In the present study research design is a combination of both descriptive and explanatory in nature. A self-administered questionnaire was designed to collect the data. Snowball sampling method was used to select the respondents. Initially, the respondents were asked whether they had ported out their mobile number, and if the answer was yes, then the questionnaire were given to the respondent. The questionnaire consisted of two parts. The first part of the questionnaire collected the details about the demographic profile of the respondents and the second part consisted of items which collected data about reasons and medium which motivated the respondents to use

the MNP, the level of satisfaction before and after using MNP, and level of agreement regarding MNP issues . The sampling methodology used was a combination of random and convenient sampling.

The sample size of study is 50 respondents. The study was conducted from November 2014 to January 2015. The respondents were carefully selected from different groups like students, employees, businessman, professionals, agriculture and homemakers. The study was conducted in District Meerut region Uttar Pradesh of India. Hence, it was assumed that the respondents represented the population perfectly.

Limitations of the study

The key limitations of the present study are:

- The study is limited to the attitude and the perceptions of the selected sample respondents, and may not be universally applicable.
- There was a possibility of the respondent's bias in reporting perceptions of the survey.
- The study is 'micro' in nature, and its survey findings and observations cannot be generalized, and may be subject to change from time to time and place to place.
- As the sample size was 50 respondents, it is not necessary that it truly represents the population universe.

Data Presentation, Analysis and Interpretation

To truly understand the MNP users' views about mobile number portability facility, responses of respondents have been analyzed in the following ways:

Table 1: Individual Profile of the Respondents

Gender	No. of respondents	Percentage
Male	40	80
Female	10	20
Total	50	100.0

Age	No. of respondents	Percentage
<25 years	15	30
26 to 40 years	10	20
41 to 55 years	20	40
Above 55 years	5	10
Total	50	100.0
Qualification	No. of respondents	Percentage
Under Graduate	15	30
Graduate	30	60
Post Graduate	5	10
Total	50	100.0
Present status	No. of respondents	Percentage
Student	23	46
Homemaker	5	10
Salaried	10	20
Businessman	5	10
Agriculture	2	4
Professional	3	6
Retired	2	4

Total	50	100.0
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Source: Primary Data

Sources Influencing Switching to other Service Provider

Buyers react differently to various sources of information. Table 2 throws light on the sources from where respondents got the information about MNP. Majority of respondents (50%) stated that friends and relatives was the main source who motivated them for mobile number portability. Internet and advertisements were also found to be effective in influencing 10% and 8% of respondents respectively in taking their decision regarding switching their services to other network/service provider.

Table 2: The Sources which influenced the Respondents to switch their services to other Network

S. No.	Sources	Respondents	Percentage*
1.	Friends & relatives	25	50
2.	Internet	10	20
3.	Advertisement	8	16
4.	Retailer	3	6
5.	Tele calling	2	4
6.	News	2	4
Total Respondents		50	

Source: Primary Data

*Total exceeds 100% because of multiplicity of answers.

Causes for Porting Out

“Why does a mobile user go for porting out” is a question of immense importance. To know the reasons for porting out, a query in this connection was made. Table 3 clearly depicts that the reasons for porting out was low call cost of new service provider as responded by majority (50%) of respondents followed by 40% respondents stating low internet cost of new service provider. Poor coverage services and poor customer services were also the reasons as responded by 30% and 30% of respondents respectively. Table also reveals that 20% of respondents went for portability just for a change and 10% respondents wanted to get desired service package from other service providers.

Table 3: Reasons for porting out

S. No.	Reasons for porting out	Respondents	Percentage*
1.	Low call cost of new service provider	25	50
2.	Low internet cost of new service provider	20	40
3.	Poor coverage services of old service provider	15	30
4.	Poor customer services of old service provider	15	30
5.	For a change	10	20
6.	Desired service package	5	10
7.	Just try MNP	3	6
	Total Respondents	50	

Source: Primary Data

*Total exceeds 100% because of multiplicity of answer.

Conclusion and Suggestions

Activities contributing to company success include identifying emerging trends and integrate them into operations, respond quickly to technology changes, provide high-quality services, continue to invest time and money in marketing and advertising, continue to expand into specialty markets, and stay ahead of the "technology curve". The marketing strategies of cellular service providers are highly dependent upon measuring resources they need in order to execute their plans and be competitive. Their method includes qualitative and/or quantitative measurements of competition and by estimating their own company growth, sales, and cash flows. Their resources are also measured in terms of people, equipment, financial, and critique to see if the resources fit are adequate for the situation. Resources are available as needed to meet the technology curve. In general their strengths include business management, accounting and finance, knowledge of the wireless communications services industry, and experience in running successful businesses in the past. Therefore, the cellular service providers pride themselves on their high-quality customer service. Although excellent customer service is expected, not all provide this. Cellular service providers are available at all times for customer orders and inquiries.

Governments and regulators in industrialized nations have adopted mobile number portability (MNP) to encourage competition and boost the economy. In MNP, a subscriber can change the network operator without surrendering the mobile number. This helps consumers to protect mobile phone numbers that is part of personal identity of an individual. According to GSM standards in MNP, routing algorithms have been designed to enable any incoming call to the old number (from the old operator’s number range) to be routed to the new connection in the new operator. Also all outgoing call will carry the old operator’s number as the caller name identifier. Most of respondents are comfortable with the pricing of cellular service providers and fifty

percent of them are interested in cash payment mode to recharge their cellular service. Majority favored need based product pricing and flexible pricings simultaneously.

A group of respondents felt unhappy with experience of utilizing the service because of some technical problems. So there is a need of sophisticated software for easy utilization of all the services provided by the cellular operators. This enhances 70% of respondents to be able to utilize the services to their fullest satisfaction.

As the utilization of cellular services is taking place at each corner of the world, still there are many areas where the network of some particular services has not covered. So there is a need for installation of cell towers in each end every corner make to the services available to all people in the world.

Now-a-days, more than sixty percent of the cellular service users especially in India are from working group and housewives. These people utilize the cellular services one for livelihood and the other for the time pass. Therefore, to facilitate these people there is a need for giving call rates at a low price than the present call rates.

The satisfaction level of cellular service users is the most important factor in the marketing strategies by cellular service providers. This will be possible only through the best service provided to the cellular service customers. So customers should be the main role players in formulating marketing strategies by cellular service providers. Therefore, the cellular service providers should satisfy their customers through their schemes and services.

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