

The Consumer Satisfaction of Internet Service Providers in Kathmandu Valley

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Abstract

This study examines the consumer satisfaction of internet service providers in Kathmandu Valley. Customer satisfaction is selected as the dependent variable. Similarly, internet speed, technical support, brand image, reliability, security, and pricing are selected as the independent variables. This study is based on primary data with 121 observations. To achieve the purpose of the study, structured questionnaire is prepared. The correlation coefficients and regression models are estimated to test the significance and importance of different factors influencing customer satisfaction in Kathmandu Valley.

The study showed that internet speed has a positive impact on customer satisfaction. It means that an increase in internet speed leads to an increase in customer satisfaction. Similarly, technical support has a positive impact on customer satisfaction. It indicates that an increase in technical support leads to increase in customer satisfaction. Moreover, brand image has a positive impact on customer satisfaction. It means that an improvement in brand image leads to an improvement in consumer satisfaction. Likewise, price has a negative impact on customer satisfaction. It shows that a decrease in price leads to an increase in customer satisfaction. Similarly, pricing has a negative impact on customer satisfaction. It shows that the lower the pricing, the higher would be the customer satisfaction. Further, reliability has a positive impact on customer satisfaction. It shows that the higher the reliability, the higher would be the customer satisfaction. Where security has a positive impact on customer satisfaction. It shows that the higher the security, the higher would be the customer satisfaction.

Keywords: internet speed, technical support, brand image, reliability, security, pricing, customer satisfaction

1. Introduction

Satisfaction is the summary psychological state resulting when the emotion surrounding disconfirmed expectation is coupled with prior feelings about the customer experience (Hassan *et al.*, 2019). Satisfaction for internet service providers is an analysis of the underlying process concerning customer happiness and internet service provider switching behavior utilizing several satisfaction models (Erevelles *et al.*, 2003). Customer satisfaction is that which

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leads to customer's loyalty, recommendation and repeat to purchase products (Wilson *et al.*, 2008). Customer satisfaction is as an overall evaluation based on the total purchase and consumption experience with the goods or services overtime (Fornell *et al.*, 1996). With the marketing, customer satisfaction also comes along with it which means it ascertains the expectations of the customer on how the goods and services are being facilitated by the company actionable information on how to make customers further satisfied is therefore, a crucial outcome (Oliver, 1999). Likewise, Madushanka (2020) described that a high level of service quality should be delivered by the service provider as service quality is normally considered an antecedent of customer satisfaction.

Speed is as the frequency of network connection breakdown, the time to navigate the Internet banking website, the amount of time that the customer spends for page response, and the rate that banks response to the complaint of customers and speed had a positive significant impact on customer satisfaction (Ahmad and Al-Zu, 2011). However, Joudeh and Dandis (2018) described consumer loyalty includes highlights or attributes that can fulfill the desires or needs of a client, it is a post utilization encounter which contrasts apparent quality and expected quality, in this way a similar conduct between inputs previously and after utilization. Technical support has the meaning of such activities that take place in interactions between customers, employees, other individuals, and products with aim to assist and support customers' everyday practices partly taken from the definition of service (Grönroos, 2008). Similarly, Fianto *et al.* (2014) described the influence of brand image on purchase behavior through brand trust. The study revealed that brand image has a positive and significant impact on purchase behavior.

Customer's satisfaction is that which leads to customer's loyalty, recommendation and repeat to purchase products (Wilson *et al.*, 2008). Consumer satisfaction is most commonly regarded as a significant antecedent of customer loyalty (Cakici *et al.*, 2019). Consumer's satisfaction may be a guide for monitoring and improving the current and potential performance of businesses (Zairi, 2000). Smimilarly, Akroush and Mahadin (2019) defined satisfaction as a measure of trust, and believes that if the consumers are pleased with the services offered by the bank, they will ultimately trust the bank. Likewisw, Tahir *et al.* (2013) proposed that customer satisfaction is a customer's viewpoint based on the customer's expectation and then the customer's subsequent post purchase experience. However, Nguyen (2014) argued the customers' level of satisfaction is a result of cumulative consumer experiences. Moreover, Maziriri and Madinga (2015) argued that if customer

satisfaction is not met, the customer will experience buyer's remorse, and this justifies the need of customer satisfaction for retailers. Similarly, Kotler and Keller (2009) defined satisfaction to be an individual's feelings of pleasure or displeasure that result from comparing a product's perceived performance or quality or outcome with their expectations. The response can either be cognitive or affective.

Bowen and David (2005) suggested that service quality is the extent to which the customer's perceptions of service either meet or exceed their expectations. Likewise, Ghylis *et al.* (2006) proposed that when organizations define service quality, they will be able to deliver services with a higher quality level thus resulting in an increase in customer satisfaction. Customer satisfaction is one of the most significant factors that can aid organizations to increase profits, customer satisfaction leads to customer loyalty which in turn leads to repeat purchases and referrals (Wilson *et al.*, 2008). Similarly, Customer satisfaction is important because it provides markets and business owners with a metric that they can use to manage and improve their businesses (Adeoye and Lawanson, 2012). However, Daniel (2018) revealed that there is a positive effect of brand image on the customer satisfaction and dedication towards market offering, customer satisfaction is a fundamental goal of marketing as the purpose of marketing is to satisfy customer. Similarly, Ling *et al.* (2016) showed understanding customer satisfaction of internet banking a case study in Malacca, the results of this research showed that web design and content, convenience and speed are closely linked to customer satisfaction toward internet banking and also are the top three factors that influence customer satisfaction toward internet banking.

Magin *et al.* (2003) discovered causal relationships which shows that the customer loyalty of customers of an internet service provider is determined by various direct and indirect factors. Likewise, Thaichon *et al.* (2014) found valuable insights into customer loyalty in the home Internet services and also this study developed an understanding about consumer buyer behavior of services, and will create an ideal model for retention. Moreover, Lin & Ding (2005) found relational selling behavior, network quality, and service recovery indirectly influence loyalty through the mediation of relationship quality, consisting of satisfaction and trust. Similarly, Johnston *et al.* (2015) revealed that lower cost related to defective goods and services, increased buyer willingness to pay price premium, provided referrals, and use more of the product and higher level of customer retention and loyalty. Likewise, Russel-Bennet *et al.* (2004) stated that brand creates relationship with the

consumers either the relation is positive by continuing the brand creates relationship with the consumers either the relation is positive by continuing the brand or negative by moving to the other brand.

Erevelles *et al.* (2003) found that the satisfaction of internet service provider consumers is generally relatively low, despite the fact that consumer expectation of internet service providers is also low, reflecting “mediocrity” in the marketplace. Similarly, Joudeh & Dandis (2018) found consumer loyalty includes highlights or attributes that can fulfill the desires or needs of a client, it is a post utilization encounter which contrasts apparent quality and expected quality, in this way a similar conduct between inputs previously and after utilization. The study found that the resulted good and well-built service quality may lead to customer satisfaction which in its turn can lead to a better level of customer loyalty. Likewise, Hendeniya & Fernando (2022) found and able to provide insights for internet service providers management by emphasizing areas of internet service quality that can satisfy their customer base, as well as actions that might be implemented in response to the observed practice gaps.

In the context of Nepal, Customer satisfaction must be compared side by side even if every organization has made an effort to expand the usage of services. The study is concentrated on exploring and evaluating customer satisfaction on a different stimulus offered by a fintech firm in Nepal, customers’ loyalty and the compatibility they gain through the company’s services. (Khanal *et al.*, 2023). Likewise, Pandey and Joshi (2010) revealed that customer satisfaction has direct relationship with service durability and behavioral intentions of the customer. Likewise, Gnawali (2016) concluded that there is high competition among different brands, the factors like price, durability, availability of services in market, incentives and profit margin determines the portion occupied by individual brand. Likewise, Neupane (2015) found a significant positive effects of brand image on customer satisfaction and loyalty intention in retail supermarket chain in UK. Similarly, Karn *et al.* (2017) found that measuring broadband internet performance in Nepal. Broadband internet performance either fixed or wireless has not been studied in details from the view of customer; though, broadband internet savors wide penetration in Nepal.

The above discussion shows that the empirical evidences vary greatly across the studies on the consumer satisfaction of internet services providers. Though there are above mentioned empirical evidences in the context of other

countries and in Nepal, no such findings using more recent data exist in the context of Nepal. Therefore, in order to support one view or the other, this study has been conducted.

The main purpose of the study is to analyze the consumer satisfaction of internet services providers in Kathmandu valley. Specifically, it examines the impact of internet speed, technical support, brand image, reliability, security and pricing on consumer satisfaction of internet service providers in Kathmandu valley.

The remainder of this study is organized as follows. Section two describes the sample, data and methodology. Section three presents the empirical results and the final section draws the conclusion.

2. Methodological aspects

The study is based on the primary data. The data were gathered from 121 respondents through questionnaire. The respondents' views were collected on internet speed, technical support, brand image, reliability, security, pricing and consumer satisfaction. The study used descriptive and casual comparative research design.

The model

The model estimated in this study assumes that the internet service providers depend on customer satisfaction. The dependent variables selected for the study is customer satisfaction. Similarly, the selected independent variables are internet speed, technical support, brand image, reliability, security, pricing. Therefore, the model takes the following form:

$$CS = \beta_0 + \beta_1 IS + \beta_2 TS + \beta_3 BI + \beta_4 R + \beta_5 S + \beta_6 P$$

Where,

CS = Customer satisfaction

IS = Internet speed

TS= Technical support

BI = Brand image

R = Reliability

S = Security

P= pricing

Customer satisfaction was measured using a 5-point Likert scale where respondents were asked to indicate the responses using 1 for strongly disagree and 5 for strongly agree. There are 5 items and sample items include “I am satisfied with service provided by my ISP”, “The price I pay for the internet service provided by my ISP is reasonable” and so on. The reliability of the items was measured by computing the Cronbach’s alpha ($\alpha = 0.812$).

Internet speed balance was measured using a 5-point Likert scale where the respondents were asked to indicate the responses using 1 for strongly disagree and 5 for strongly agree. There are 5 items and sample items include “I am satisfied with the consistency of my internet speed.”, “I experience buffering or slowdowns when streaming video or audio content.” and so on. The reliability of the items was measured by computing the Cronbach’s alpha ($\alpha = 0.828$).

Technical support was measured using a 5-point Likert scale where the respondents were asked to indicate the responses using 1 for strongly disagree and 5 for strongly agree. There are 5 items and sample items include “The technical support provided by my ISP is knowledgeable”, “Technical support is able to resolve my issues in a timely manner”, and so on. The reliability of the items was measured by computing the Cronbach’s alpha ($\alpha = 0.504$).

Brand image was measured using a 5-point Likert scale where the respondents were asked to indicate the responses using 1 for strongly disagree and 5 for strongly agree. There are 5 items and sample items include “Brand name affects the purchasing decisions”, “Brand name increases the goodwill of the company. and so on. The reliability of the items was measured by computing the Cronbach’s alpha ($\alpha = 0.787$).

Reliability was measured using a 5-point Likert scale where the respondents were asked to indicate the responses using 1 for strongly disagree and 5 for strongly agree. There are 5 items and sample items include “The internet service provider I use is reliable and consistent in providing internet connectivity”, “My current ISP is proactive in resolving service issues and providing timely support”, and so on. The reliability of the items was measured by computing the Cronbach’s alpha ($\alpha = 0.705$).

Security was measured using a 5-point Likert scale where the respondents were asked to indicate the responses using 1 for strongly disagree and 5 for strongly agree. There are 5 items and sample items include “I frequently encounter security issues or threats while using your ISP’s services”, “I would like to recommend this ISP based on its security measures and protection of personal data”, and so on. The reliability of the feature was measured by computing the Cronbach’s alpha ($\alpha = 0.860$).

Pricing was measured using a 5-point Likert scale where the respondents were asked to indicate the responses using 1 for strongly disagree and 5 for strongly agree. There are 5 items and sample items include “My ISP is transparent in terms of additional fees or charges added to your bill”, “I would like to recommend current ISP based on the affordability of its pricing plans”, and so on. The reliability of the feature was measured by computing the Cronbach’s alpha ($\alpha = 0.763$).

The following section describes the independent variables used in this study along with hypothesis formulation.

Internet speed

Speed can be defined as the frequency of network connection breakdown, the time to navigate the Internet banking website, the amount of time that the customer spends for page response, and the rate that banks response to the complaint of customers (Ahmad and Al-Zu’bi, 2011). Ickin *et al.* (2012) emphasized on speed having influence on overall service quality and service experience although speed is not the only determinant of the technical quality of a service, it can be stated that speed is one of the most important characteristics and is often positively correlated with other indices of service quality. Speed was an important factor to achieve the successful for e-banking (Haque *et al.*, 2009). In the high-speed service context, network performance is considered about four times more important than customer-service performance (Kim *et al.*, 2007). Based on it, the study develops following hypothesis:

H₁: There is a positive relationship between internet speed and customer satisfaction

Technical support

Technical support has the meaning of such activities that take place in

interactions between customers, employees, other individuals, and products with aim to assist and support customers' everyday practices partly taken from the definition of service (Grönroos, 2008). According to Christopher *et al.* (1991), technical service is neither separated from customer service nor strictly divided into pre-sale and after-sale activities. Technical support has economic, societal, and ecological potentials. Technical support ensures higher profit margins to firms, better productivity to customers, lesser customer's operating costs, and higher dissemination including internationally of latest development and information related to ecological product usage (Aurich *et al.*, 2006). Technical support is critical for both successful global marketing and technology transfer (Samli & Kosenko, 1985). Based on it, the study develops following hypothesis:

H₂: There is a positive relationship between technical support and consumer satisfaction.

Brand image

Brand image is a unique set of association in the mind of customers regarding what a brand stand for and the implied promises the brand makes. Fianto *et al.* (2014) examined the influence of brand image on purchase behavior through brand trust. The study revealed that brand image has a positive and significant impact on purchase behavior. Kumar and Babu (2013) showed that there is a positive relationship between brand image and customer satisfaction. Neupane (2015) found a significant positive effects of brand image on customer satisfaction and loyalty intention in retail supermarket chain in UK. Ogba and Tan (2009) explored the impact of brand image on customer loyalty and commitment, the study showed that brand image has a positive impact on customer expression of loyalty and commitment to market offering. Based on it, the study develops following hypothesis:

H₃: There is a positive relationship between brand image and consumer satisfaction.

Reliability

Famiyeh *et al.* (2018) reveled that the moderating role of organizational culture in the relationship between service-quality, customer satisfaction and loyalty in the banking sector using data from the Ghanaian banking sector. Madushanka (2020) showed that bank service quality such as reliability and responsiveness have a positive effect on customer satisfaction and loyalty in

the Ethiopian banking sector. Furthermore, Service providers need to ensure that the information provided to customers is accurate and correct, and to share relevant information with customers in a timely manner within the given deadline as promised (Joudeh & Dandis, 2018). Reliability depicts whether a service supplier follows assured promises and how precious it is in its actions. The significant importance lies in fulfilling promptly the customer's requests (Hameed & Anwar, 2018). Based on it, the study develops the following hypothesis:

H₄: There is a positive relationship between reliability and customer satisfaction.

Security

Patrick (2002) found customer trust as thoughts, feelings, emotions, or behaviors manifested when customers feel that a provider can be relied upon to act in their best interest when they give up direct control. Morgan and Hunt (1994) defined trust as confidence that one party has on another because of honesty and reliability of the other partner. Trust is defined as a generalized expectancy held by an individual that the word of another can be relied on (Rotter, 1967). Gul (2014) emphasized that when the customer is loyal towards a product or service, he is basically trusting in it. Based on it, the study develops following hypothesis:

H₅: There is a positive relationship between security and customer satisfaction.

Pricing

Price is one part of the marketing mix, which is a value of certain goods attached to goods or services that are being traded in the market (Uchenna and Yew, 2008). Dhurup *et al.* (2014) found that prices show a significant positive effect on customer satisfaction. In other words, prices affect customer satisfaction. Sujuan *et al.* (2017) revealed that the market has a high sensitivity to prices, changes in price increases are very sensitive to the level of customer satisfaction, the prices offered are accordingly the greater the effect on customer satisfaction. The most frequently discussed reason for online shopping is price, and many early online sellers used price as bait to lure customers to their websites (Cheng and Chung, 2003). Based on it, the study develops following hypothesis:

H₆: There is a positive relationship between price and customer satisfaction.

3. Results and discussion

Correlation analysis

On analysis of data, correlation analysis has been undertaken first and for this purpose, Kendall's Tau correlation coefficients along with means and standard deviations have been computed, and the results are presented in Table 1.

Table 1

Kendall's Tau correlation coefficients matrix

This table presents Kendall's Tau coefficients between dependent and independent variables. The correlation coefficients are based on 121 observations. The dependent variable is CS (customer satisfaction). The independent variables are IS (internet speed), TS (technical support), BI (brand image), R (reliability), S (security) and P (price).

Variable	Mean	S.D.	CS	IS	TS	BI	R	S	P
CS	3.672	0.690	1						
IS	3.600	0.516	0.515**	1					
TS	3.763	0.625	0.480**	0.435**	1				
BI	3.986	0.506	0.320**	0.325**	0.438**	1			
R	3.666	0.675	0.529**	0.467**	0.544**	0.328**	1		
S	3.583	0.636	0.549**	0.518**	0.507**	0.284**	0.667**	1	
P	3.673	0.628	0.530**	0.445**	0.398**	0.327**	0.508**	0.543**	1

Note: The asterisk signs (**) and (*) indicate that the results are significant at one percent and five percent levels respectively.

Table 1 shows that internet speed is positively correlated to the customer satisfaction indicating that internet speed increases customer satisfaction. Likewise, pricing is positively correlated to the customer satisfaction. This implies that decrease in pricing leads to the increase in customer satisfaction. Similarly, technical support is positively correlated to the customer satisfaction. It indicates that higher the technical support, higher will be the customer satisfaction. However, brand image is also positively related to the customer satisfaction that leads to the increment of customer satisfaction. Moreover, reliability is positively correlated to the customer satisfaction that indicates that increase in reliability led to the increase in customer satisfaction. However, security is positively correlated to the customer satisfaction that indicates that increase security led to the increase in customer satisfaction.

Regression analysis

Having indicated the Kendall's Tau correlation coefficients, the regression analysis has been carried out and the results are presented in

Table 2. More specifically, it presents the regression results of internet speed, technical support, brand image, reliability, security and pricing on customer satisfaction of internet service providers in Kathmandu valley.

Table 2

Estimated regression customer satisfaction, internet speed, technical support, brand image, reliability, security and pricing provided internet service providers in Kathmandu valley

The results are based on 121 observations using linear regression model. The model is $CS = \beta_0 + \beta_1 IS + \beta_2 TS + \beta_3 BI + \beta_4 R + \beta_5 S + \beta_6 P + \epsilon$ where the dependent variable is CS (customer satisfaction). The independent variables are IS (internet speed), TS (technical support), BI (brand image), R (reliability), S (security) and P (pricing).

Model	Intercept	Regression coefficients of						Adj. R ²	SEE	F-value
		IS	TS	BI	R	S	P			
1	0.716 (2.036) *	0.821 (8.492) **						0.372	0.54709	72.108
2	1.274 (4.038) **		0.627 (7.707) **					0.327	0.56624	59.397
3	1.316 (2.908) **			0.591 (5.250) **				0.181	0.62472	27.564
4	1.028 (4.155) **				0.721 (10.869) **			0.494	0.49114	118.126
5	1.232 (4.374) **					0.681 (8.799) **		0.389	0.53963	77.431
6	1.359 (4.418) **						0.630 (7.627) **	0.323	0.56820	58.174
7	0.225 (0.645)	0.575 (5.355) **					0.375 (4.241) **	0.451	0.51178	50.194
8	0.562 (1.708) *		0.424 (4.760) **				0.413 (4.657) **	0.427	0.52263	45.706
9	0.733 (2.373) *		0.329 (3.348) **			0.475 (4.926) **		0.437	0.51787	47.641
10	0.731 (1.744) *		0.535 (5.495) **	0.233 (1.937) *				0.343	0.55981	32.262

Notes:

- i. Figures in parenthesis are t-values
- ii. The asterisk signs (**) and (*) indicate that the results are significant at 1 percent and 5 percent level respectively.
- iii. Customer satisfaction is a dependent variable

Table 2 shows that the beta coefficients for internet speed are positive with the customer satisfaction. It indicates that internet speed has positive impact on the customer satisfaction. This finding is consistent with the findings of (Oliver, 1999). Likewise, the beta coefficients for pricing are positive with customer satisfaction. It indicates that price have positive impact on the customer satisfaction. This finding is consistent with the findings of (Dhurup *et al.*, 2014). In addition, the beta coefficients for technical support are positive with the customer satisfaction. It indicates that technical support

has a positive impact on the customer satisfaction. This result is consistent with the findings of Grönroos (2008). Further, the beta coefficients for brand image are positively related with the customer satisfaction. It indicates that brand image has a positive impact on the customer satisfaction. This finding is consistent with the findings of (Neupane, 2015). In addition the beta coefficients for security have positive impact on customer satisfaction. It indicates security has a positive impact on the customer satisfaction. This finding is consistent with the findings of (Patrick, 2002). Moreover, the beta coefficient for reliability is positive with the customer satisfaction which indicates that reliability has positive impact on the customer satisfaction. This result is consistent with the findings of (Joudeh & Dandis, 2018).

4. Summary and conclusion

Customer satisfaction is as an overall evaluation based on the total purchase and consumption experience with the goods or services overtime. described customer satisfaction is a measure of a measure of how your organization total product performs in relation to a set of customers' requirements. With the marketing, customer satisfaction also comes along with it which means it ascertains the expectations of the customer on how the goods and services are being facilitated by the companies. Satisfaction is the summary psychological state resulting when the emotion surrounding disconfirmed expectation is coupled with prior feelings about the customer experience. Satisfaction for internet service providers is an analysis of underlying process concerning customer happiness and internet service provider switching behavior utilizing several satisfaction models.

This study attempts to examine the consumer satisfaction of internet service providers in Kathmandu valley. The study is based on primary data with 121 observations.

The study also showed that internet speed, technical support, brand image, reliability, security, pricing has positive relationship with customer satisfaction. The study concluded that proper internet speed, technical support, brand image, reliability, security, pricing have a significant role in increasing customer satisfaction. The study also concludes that the most influencing factor is internet speed followed by security and pricing that explains the customer satisfaction.

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