Customer Switching Behavior Towards Mobile Number Portability:
A Study of Mobile Users in India

Chandra Sekhar Patro, Department of Management Studies, Gayatri Vidya Parishad College of Engineering (Autonomous), India

 https://orcid.org/0000-0002-8950-9289

ABSTRACT

The telecom services have been an imperative means for socio-economic development of a country and a large contributor to the rapid growth and modernization of various sectors of the economy. In recent years, the mobile services are having enormous growth due to rapid changes in technology. The mobile users have the choice to switch from one telecom operator to another within the telecom circle without the change of phone number. The introduction to MNP promoted more competition in the telecom sector and forced service providers to improve service quality and reduce prices. Therefore, it is necessary to understand the factors influencing customer switching behaviour for using mobile number portability. The study identified that the respondents are not only aware of MNP but also know the procedure of using MNP. The results show that service payout, trustworthiness, responsiveness, and monetary value have a positive influence on customers to switch over other service providers whereas accessibility and technology do not have a positive influence on customer switching behaviour.

KEYWORDS

Accessibility, Consumer Behaviour, Mobile Number Portability (MNP), Monetary Value, Responsiveness, Service Payout, Service Provider, Technology, Trustworthiness

INTRODUCTION

Telecommunication network has been playing a phenomenal role in the development of the business. It is an essential component of economic infrastructure. The application of modern marketing principles in the telecom media pave the way for the generation of profits and would certainly make these telecom services quite affordable to the customers at large. In today's dynamic and competitive environment, customers have numerous choices to make the decision on the products and services to use. In the wireless communications industry, the introduction of mobile number portability (MNP) may induce more and more customers to switch their network operator, as MNP allows customers to retain their original telephone number when switching from one carrier to another. This might have a significant effect on price competition and market share of network providers (Shi, Chiang, & Rhee, 2006).

Rapid development in Indian telecommunications services has prompted major global manufacturers of telecommunications equipment to mull over investing in India, paving the way for the extensive provision of modern communication services in rural areas. But the growth has not been exponential in the quality of service offered or openness of business. Customers are not satisfied with the mobile operators' services and schemes. Traditionally, customers had to give up their mobile number on changing service providers. As a result, they are faced with extreme inconvenience by

having to inform every person about the change in their number. Besides, there is the likelihood of important calls from persons who didn't have the new number being missed out and so on.

Telecommunication sector is one of the technologically developed sectors of the Indian economy, as reported by the Telecom Regulatory Authority of India (TRAI). The scenario has now changed considerably with the introduction of mobile number portability (MNP). The Telecommunication Mobile Number Portability (Sixth Amendment) Regulations, 2015 were issued for facilitating inter-service area mobile number portability (Full Mobile Number Portability) in the country. In the mobile communication sector, which has oligopoly characteristics, MNP has increased the competition, protected the customers, allowed them to switch the service provider easier than ever before, and decreased the cost of changing the provider. In the early stages of market escalation, the emphasis was on acquiring new subscribers but now as the market has advanced and the importance of retaining existing customers has increased drastically. Indeed, acquiring new customers is more difficult and expensive than retaining existing customers (Saeed, Hussain, & Riaz, 2011).

Switching has become a common practice among mobile users. To control the customers from switching, mobile service providers are increasingly relying on contracts that would lock-in customers for a definite time period, but with changing competitive dynamics, contracts are not being favoured by many users (Braff & Laogue, 2004). Therefore, it has become essential to understand the fundamental drivers of customers' switching behaviour in the context of mobile services. The present study aims to study customer behaviour towards mobile number portability services. To know the customers' willingness to change their current mobile service provider when they are permitted to retain the current mobile number, and also factors influencing customers to change their service providers.

MOBILE NUMBER PORTABILITY

Mobile Number Portability (MNP) enables customers to retain their mobile numbers while changing service providers, service types and/or locations. The Internet Engineering Task Force (IETF) has referred number portability as service provider portability that enables a customer to retain the existing mobile number while changing from one service provider to another in the same area; location portability enables a customer to retain existing mobile number without impairment of quality, convenience or reliability while shifting from one geographic location to another; and service portability enables a customer to retain existing mobile number without impairment of quality, convenience or reliability when switching from one service technology to another service technology.

Globally among the major countries, Singapore was the first to implement mobile number portability during the year 1997, followed by Hong Kong in 1999, Spain in 2000, Australia in 2001, Germany in 2002, the US and France in 2003, South Korea in 2004, Taiwan in 2005, Japan in 2006 and Canada in 2007. Further, in 2008 MNP was introduced in the countries Mexico, Malaysia, Brazil, Romania and Turkey. During 2006, Telecom Regularity Authority of India (TRAI) issued draft regulations to facilitate mobile number portability in India and submitted its recommendations to the Department of Telecommunication (DoT) which recommended service provider number portability including service portability (portability between GSM and CDMA) for all mobile service operators.

MNP was launched in Haryana service area during 2010 on a pilot basis and the same was extended in the entire country in 2011. Initially, the MNP facility was available within the Licensed Service Area (LAS) only. However, in accordance with the provisions contained in the National Telecom Policy-2012 regarding "One Nation - Full Mobile Number Portability", MNP was fully implemented during 2015. The New Telecom Policy-2012 (NTP) aimed to eliminate roaming charges across the country and facilitate nationwide (inner-circle) Mobile Number Portability i.e., one-nation-one-number with free-roaming. This allowed the users to change the operator without changing their mobile number even if they move from one circle to another.MNP in India leads to better quality services and a change in the attitude of the operators towards addressing grievances to retain subscribers.

14 more pages are available in the full version of this document, which may be purchased using the "Add to Cart" button on the publisher's webpage: www.igi-global.com/article/customer-switching-behavior-towards-mobile-number-portability/259968

Related Content

Linguistics of Computer-Mediated Communication: Approaching the Metaphor
R. Tarsiero (2007). *Linguistic and Cultural Online Communication Issues in the Global Age (pp. 15-33).*
www.irma-international.org/chapter/linguistics-computer-mediated-communication/25561

Online TOPSE: Measuring Parental Self-Efficacy in Indonesia
Okina Fitriani, Rozainee Khairudin, Wan Shahrazad Binti Wan Sulaimanand Laila Meiliyandrie Indah Wardani (2024). *International Journal of Cyber Behavior, Psychology and Learning (pp. 1-16).*
www.irma-international.org/article/online-topse/340389

Understanding Bystanders' Willingness to Intervene in Traditional and Cyberbullying Scenarios
Justine A. Walkerand Debora Jeske (2016). *International Journal of Cyber Behavior, Psychology and Learning (pp. 22-38).*
www.irma-international.org/article/understanding-bystanders-willingness-to-intervene-in-traditional-and-cyberbullying-scenarios/158156

Internet Sexuality
Nicola M. Döring (2012). *Encyclopedia of Cyber Behavior (pp. 807-827).*
www.irma-international.org/chapter/internet-sexuality/64804

Cybertesting Behaviors
Jeffrey R. Stowelland Wesley D. Allan (2012). *Encyclopedia of Cyber Behavior (pp. 1156-1167).*
www.irma-international.org/chapter/cybertesting-behaviors/64832