Full Length Research Paper

Antecedents and consequences of relationship quality

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Abstract

The present study aims to explore the impact of antecedents (Service Provider Employees Attributes, Perceived Relational Benefits, and Consumer Comfort) and consequences (Customer Loyalty and customer Switching Behavior) of Relationship Quality in Telecom sector of Pakistan. Research findings indicate the significant positive relationships between Service Provider Employees Attributes, Perceived Relational Benefits, and Consumer Comfort with Relationship Quality and Results also shows that Relationship Quality Foster Customer Loyalty and reduce Customer Switching Behavior.

Keywords: Service Provider Employees Attributes, Perceived Relational Benefits, Consumer Comfort, Relationship Quality, Customer Loyalty, Customer Switching Behavior.

INTRODUCTION

In today’s competitive situation the significance of (CRM) customer relationship management has been increasing. Building outstanding relationship quality increases competitive advantage (Crosby et al. 1990), customer satisfaction (Kim and Cha, 2002), and customer loyalty (Lin and Ding, 2005; Rauyruen and Miller, 2007), as well as increase firm revenue (Reichheld, 1993) and long-term profitability (Aaker, 1992). Antecedents of relationship quality are explored by several authors e.g. service provider attribute by (Hennig-Thurau et al., 2002; Kim and Cha 2002; Chang-Hua Yen et al, 2012) Relational Benefits by (Molina A. et al, 2007; Hennig-Thurau et al., 2002) consumer comfort by (Spake et al, 2003; S. S.Gaur and YingziXu, 2009). Consequences of relationship quality are also explored by several authors e.g. loyalty by (Macintosh, 2007; Ribbink et al., 2004; Anderson and Fornell, 1994) and customer switching behavior by (Li, Browne and Wetherbe, 2007; Zineldin and Jonsson, 2000).

Berry (1983) presented the idea of relationship marketing, numerous researchers and scholars, e.g. (Gronroos, 1990, 1994; Gordon et al.) conjectured and observationally explored relationship marketing theory (RMT) core principles. Building a sustainable and profitable long-haul association with clients (De Wulf et al. 2001), creating and keeping up trust and commitment in the middle of sellers and customers (Gaur and Xu, 2009), and attaining more customer satisfaction and high customer loyalty (Gaurav, 2008) are fundamental to relationship marketing theory (RMT).

Lovlock, Patterson and Walker (2011) demonstrated that, it is difficult for clients to visualize services because services cannot be inventoried and are transitory and perishable. Moreover, many authors also recognized that there is high interaction in services; when a person delivers a service then people become central component of the service experience. (Bowen, 1990) segmented services into three separate parts “high-contact customized, moderated-contact non-personal, and moderate-contact standardized”. For telecommunication business, it has been considered as moderate contact standardized, services provided to
client can probably persuade client expertise that results in trust, satisfaction, and commitment, and so increase client loyalty (Bowen, 1990). West Pakistan telecommunication business was placed on year 2000, with the passage of time the sector developed with great advancement and reputations. Competition is commonly associated with price battle and it's vital for the businesses to retain clients and create them loyal to the firm as a result of value to achieve new client is sort of 5 times over value to retain a loyal customer (Kotler et al., 1996; St. Christopher et al., 2002).

In telecommunication industry, competition relates to price war. Several telecommunication companies offers deals for their customers for retaining existing customers and attract price sensitive customers while others decline to join this war because they are sure with their abilities and need to keep up a standard. Subsequently, it is vital for telecom companies to have their loyal customers for competing in market.

There is additionally restricted exploration led on telecom industry, as primarily previous studies were center on hospitals, banking sector and. Thus, the research study is intended to find the sound effects of Service provider employee’s attributes, perceived relational benefits, and Consumer comfort and relationship quality towards customer loyalty and customer switching behavior that focus on the telecommunication industry. Result gives understanding to individuals to Customer Loyalty; comprehend part of those variables to expand customer loyalty in telecom industry, as it is fundamental for each telecommunication company to survive comprising both long term as well as short term.

Literature Review

Relationship quality

According to present marketplace situation, much consideration is paid for the idea of RM (Reynolds and Arnold, 2000; Gwinner et al., 1998; Barnes, 1997), and this idea is widely highlighted by academicians and practitioners (Reynolds and Arnold, 2000; Beatty, Coleman, Reynolds and Lee 1996; Berry, 1995). Relationships are the cornerstone of relationship marketing, as well as the formation of a bond between the company and the customer (Storbacka et al., 1994; Berry, 1995; Liljander and Strandvik, 1995a). Relationship marketing started to draw in consideration in the early 1990’s as firms began to enter into long-term relationships with their customers so as to acquire a competitive advantage (Cravens, 1995). In the competitive environment, the most imperative issue is to keep faithful customers who will help long-term profits to organizations.

Relationship quality is defined by Crosby et al., (1999) as “a general evaluation of the quality of relationship and the extent to which a relationship is responsive to desires and wants of gatherings focused around the record of successful or unsuccessful gatherings or occasions”.

Relationship quality is demarcated by (Henning-Thurau and Klee, 1997), between a firm and end customer as the level of suitability of a relationship with the aim to complete customer needs, associated in a relationship. In previous research studies authors have anticipated a large number of factors with respect to relationship quality and they have frequently inspected the factors of trust, satisfaction, and commitment (Morgan and Hunt, 1994; Crosby et al., 1990; Jarvelin and Lehtinen, 1996; Smith, 1998; Johnson, 1999; Boles, Johnson and Barksdale, 2000; Kennedy, Ferrrell and Leclair, 2001; Wong and Sohal, 2002, 2006; Monroy and Alzola, 2005; lova 2009; john 2011).

Trust

Trust is characterized by (Morgan and Hunt, 1994; and Crosby, Evans, and Cowels, 1990) as a sure conviction that administration supplier can be depended on to act in a mode that long haul interest of the client will be served. Morgan and Hunt, (1994) accepted that trust is a fundamental factor to make a relationship effective.

Satisfaction

Crosby et al., (1990) described that customer satisfaction is a psychological state that happens because of an assessment of a relational experience. A conclusion of buyer-seller relationship is satisfaction (Smith and Barclay, 1997).

Commitment

Commitment is described by (Morgan and Hunt, 1994) as a “aspiration to keep valuable relationships”. Commitment is the consequence of great social association.

Antecedents and consequences of relationship quality

Present research will explore variables which can influence (Antecedents) or might be influenced (consequences) by relationship quality. Antecedents could be broken down into service provider employees attributes (Expertise, experience, and appearance), perceived relational benefits (confidence, social, and special treatment), and consumer comfort, while
expressed that service providers' attributes have a momentous influence on relationship quality. Henning-Thurau, et al., (2002); Kinnard and capella, (2006); Gremler and Gwinner (2000) also explored that perceived relational benefits (confidence benefits, social benefits, and special treatment benefits) have optimistic influence on relationship quality. (gaur and Yingzi xu, 2009); Spake at al., (2003) recommend that consumer comfort has significant effect on relationship quality. As a result, the variables in present research study have been identified on the basis of existing research that may influence relationship quality.

Several experimental studies have introduced that relationship quality is associated positively to customer's loyalty (De Wulf et al., 2001; Wong and Sohal, 2006). Macintosh, (2007) additionally described that relationship quality and loyalty are directly related. Various researchers (e.g. Morgan and Hunt, 1994; Zineldin and Jonsson, 2000; Bove and Johnson, 2000) contends that customers having strong relationships with customer are more averse to switch. Morgan and Hunt (1994) likewise it is indicated that commitment and trust of the customer on business relations are the roots cause for long term stay together in business. In view of past studies, two consequences were recognized: customer loyalty and customer switching behavior.

Service providers attributes

The abilities or characteristics of an individual, place or thing is called attribute. Thus the service providers employees attributes incorporates the qualities or characteristics of employees giving services to the customers directly or indirectly. Kim and Cha (2002) argued regarding service provider employees attributes based on of three Factors; (a) Expertise (b) Experience (c) Appearance.

Service provider employees attributes are developed by Kim and Cha, (2002) and include three factors such as expertise, experience, and appearance.

Expertise

A subjective term with a focus on customer perception that a service provider has valuable skills, expertise, knowledge, qualities, or training in a specific service area (Shamdasani and Balakarishnan, 2002).

Experience

A comparatively high extent of skill in a specific subject area is experience (Braunsberger and Munch, 1998).

Appearance

Appearance is the mixture of Hair-style, make-up, and cleanliness (Nguyen and Lebanc, 2002).

Relationship between service provider employees’ attributes and relationship quality

Kim and Cha (2002) also suggested; it is very vital for service provider representatives must have the skills and abilities to recognize customer's wants. Chang-Hua Yen et al., (2012) affirmed that service provider employees' attributes are completely recognized with relationship quality. Al-alak and Alnawas, 2010 found that better service providers('employees') attributes brought about more elevated amount of relationship quality. Boles, Crosby et al., (1990); Johnson, and Barksdale, (2000); Macintosh, (2007) originate that facility supplier expertise prompts a larger amount of relationship quality. Brady and Cronin, 2001 stated that to assess the quality of service communication know-how of a worker is an essential variable.

Experience of people in contiguous contact with customers is well on the way to influence whether customers are fulfilled and ready to come back to the organization (Hansemark and Albinsson, 2004). Bejou et al., (1996) additionally demonstrated that salesman familiarity had a huge effect on customers' satisfaction and trust.

Kim and Cha, (2002) demonstrated that well-trained personnel extend a feeling of confidence to the visitors. Baker et al. (1994) described that a store with three sales workers wear some proficient viewing smocks provoked customers to derive that the store traded greater quality stock as compare to presented greater quality service than store with one sales worker wearing no smocks.

It could be theorized on the basis of above mention literature that service provider employees’ employees attributes (Experience, Expertise, and Appearance) outcome in a greater level of relationship quality. Therefore it is supposed that Service provider employees’ attributes of service provider in Telecommunication sector also affect relationship quality of customers.

H0: Service Provider Employees’ Attributes has significant positive impact on relationship quality.

H1a: Expertise of a service provider employee has significant positive impact on relationship quality.

H1b: Experience of a service provider employee has significant positive impact on relationship quality.
H1c: Appearance of a service provider employee has significant positive impact on relationship quality.

Perceived relational benefits

The benefits that a customer receives instead of basic service performance and because of long-term relationship with service provider are stated as perceived relational benefits (Gwinner et al., 1998).

(Gwinner et al., 1998; Henning Thurau et al., 2002) labeled relational benefits as the benefits that a customer received due to having long-term affiliation with a service provider. Gwinner et al., (1998) explain the fact that it is very important for buyer and seller long term relationship that both the parties get satisfied. The researchers divided the relational benefits into three different types.

Confidence benefits

Benefits that result from faith and performance of the trust worthiness of service provider employees such as reduced anxiety and comfort are called confidence benefits. (Gwinner et al., 1998; Kinnard and Cappella, 2006) regarded that, whenever long-term relationships developed between customers and service provider then customer feels trust, safe, and comfortable that reduced anxiety and make him feel confident about service quality.

Social benefits

Gwinner et al. (1998) stated that social benefits include familiarity, friendship development, pleasure, and personal recognition by service providers.

Special treatment benefits

Gwinner et al. (1998) described that special treatment benefits consist of the benefits of customization and economic. Customization benefits can be extra service, extra care, consumption record, or priority service. Economic benefits can be as time saving, discount, price premium, etc.

Relationship between perceived relational benefits and relationship quality

Henning-Thurau, et al. (2002); Kinnard and Capella, (2006) clarified that Relational Benefits have optimistic effect on Trust, Satisfaction and Commitment.

Molina et al. (2007) discovered impact of relational benefits on customer satisfaction in banking environment and their results demonstrates that confidence benefits have immediate, positive effects on customer satisfaction where as social benefits and special treatment benefits did not have any huge impacts on satisfaction.

Goodwin and Gremler, (1996); Goodwin, (1997) portray that Social benefits are positively identified due to commitment of customer with the relationship. Berry, (1995) contends that social pledges in the middle of customers and employees central customers to have greater level of commitment with the organization.

Gremler and Gwinner, (2000) designated the customer-representative relationship; an idea of social benefits, is essentially associated with satisfaction of service provider. Andaleeb, (1996); Anderson and Narus, (1990) indicated in their studies that Confidence benefits showed a positive effect on satisfaction, ratings in channel relationships in the middle of producers and buyers.

Established on the above arguments it is assumed that Relational benefits by Telecommunication service providers to their customers strengthened their relationship with service provider.

H2: Perceived Relational Benefits of relationship positively influence Relationship Quality.

H2a: Confidence Benefits of relationship positively influence Relationship Quality.


H2c: Special Treatment Benefits of relationship positively influence Relationship Quality.

Consumer comfort

Consumer comfort is elaborated by Spake et al. (2003) as a mental state in which anxiety of a consumer relating to a service has been relieved and consumer feel worry free and calm with respect to a service encounter with service provider. (Butcher et al., 2001) designated comfort as a feeling that occurs because of social dealings with service employees such as anxiety or relaxation. In simple words comfort is observed by Paswan and Ganesh (2005) as an intensity of comfort during of interpersonal societal relations.

Comfort has been surveyed and characterized crosswise over variety of disciplines and conjointly experiences and/or significances connected with comfort. Comfort is described by Storm and storm, (1987); Daniels, (2000) "as positive feelings". Simmons, (2001) outlined as "emotions at ease", comfort is viewed by (Danie1, 2000) as "contrary to anxiety", and Simmons, (2001) regarded as "release of psychological distress” that are caused due to negative feelings which can embody worry, distress, or sadness.
Relationship between consumer comfort and relationship quality

Consumer comfort is highly related to relationship marketing and findings by Gaur and Yingzi-xu, (2009) described that consumer comfort is significantly positively related to customer trust, customer satisfaction, and customer commitment. Findings by Gaur and Yingzi-xu, (2009) were also same with the prior findings by Spake et al., (2003).

The vitality of consumer comfort in services relationship context was perceived and measured by Spake et al., (2003) and his findings explored that consumer comfort has immense influence on customer trust, satisfaction, and commitment. Findings by Henning-Thurau, (2002) demonstrated that good level of consumer comfort with service provider gives trust and confidence to the customer. Hanna, (1980); Paswan and Ganesh, (2005) stated that higher comfort prompts customer satisfaction.

Above literature affirms that consumer comfort has great positive effect on relationship quality. So, it is supposed that Consumer comfort has important positive effect in Telecommunication sector of Pakistan, because in customers’ service centers customers directly interact with the service personals. If service providers deal customers in a comfortable way and customer feel secure, worry free, and peace of mind than their attachment with the firm will increase and they will be satisfied, trusted, and committed to organization.

H3: Consumer Comfort positively influences Relationship Quality.

Customer loyalty

Aaker, (1991) defined loyalty as an attachment of a customer with a brand. Oliver, (1997) described loyalty as a commitment created by customer for being a stable customer by buying again and again products or services in future despite of situational factors or marketing elements.

Gremler and Brown, (1996) proposed one description of customer loyalty which is associated with author determination in this research as “the extent to which a customer shows repeat purchasing behavior, Possess positive attitude for the provider, and use only this service provider when need for service arouse”.

Relationship between relationship quality and customer loyalty

(Fletcher et al., 2000; Smith, 1998; Crosby, 1990) viewed relationship quality as a approach to make up association with clients and to minimize the uncertainty of business transactions. Building an association with a client is an average approach to hold loyal clients in the long haul (Sheaves and Barnes, 1996). Client loyalty could be made through a nice collaboration association with clients (Jones and Sasser, 1995; Henning-Thurau and Klee, 1997) moreover raise that relationship quality is a forerunner of repurchase conduct. Also, a few observational researches have explored that Relationship quality and customer loyalty are emphatically related (Wong and Sohal, 2006; Wang et al., 2006; De Wulf et al., 2001). Mac, (2007) investigated that relationship quality and loyalty are specifically related. Henning-Thurau, (2002) found in his study that relationship quality upgrade loyalty of customer to the firm.

Trust makes profits for clients which thus encourage loyalty to the relationship (Garbarino and Johnson, 1999; Morgan and Hunt, 1994). Trust is associated with client loyalty. With a specific end goal to accomplish the loyalty of clients, the first thing that must be picked up is their trust (Reichheld and Schefter, 2000).

Satisfaction is prominent component in deciding loyalty clarified by Rust and Zahorik, 1993; Anderson and Fornell, 1994. Satisfaction with trust expands loyalty clarified by Ribbink et al., 2004. (Wang et al., 2006; Ravald and Gronroos, 1996; Lilijander and Strandvik, 1995) portray that satisfaction is interpreter of loyalty. Macintosh and Lockshin, 1997 and Bolton, 1998 revealed that relationship satisfaction is positively associated to customer loyalty. Kotler, 2000 further discovered customer satisfaction could impact customer loyalty. Selnes, 1993 recommends that satisfaction is a essential antecedent of intended loyalty.

Commitment is considered to be most critical variable to understand the level of relationship between buyer and seller and it is also considered as valuable construct to measure the likelihood of customer loyalty and in addition to project buyer future buying frequency (Dwyer et al., 1987; Morgan and Hunt, 1994). Committed clients are more prone to be prepared to continue with the cooperative relationship (Moorman et al., 1993).

Above Literature describe that Relationship quality have significant impact on customer loyalty to the firm that’s why it is supposed that Relationship quality will also positively affect customer loyalty in Telecommunication sector of Pakistan.

H3: Relationship Quality positively influences Customer Loyalty to the firm.

Customer switching behavior

Customer switching behavior is demarcated as “an act of being loyal to one service categories (e.g. telecommunication services), but switch from one service provider to another as a result of dissatisfaction or any other related problems” (Sathish et al., 2011; Keaveney and Parthasarathy, 2001).
Switching behavior is the behavior of consumers and differs among them on the basis of their satisfaction level about companies or providers. Switching behavior can be called as the process of switching from one service provider to another while staying loyal to one service, due to dissatisfaction or whatever possible issues. Even a loyal customer can also switch from one brand to another, if the brand doesn’t satisfy his demand. There are several factors and determinant that can affect the consumer to switch from one service provider to another. Switching a customer is a serious setback for a firm for its present and future income.

### Relationship between relationship quality and customer switching behavior

The switching behavior of customers is turning into a zone of enthusiasm toward relationship marketing. Different studies have examined and researched potential antecedents of customer switching (Bansal and Taylor, 1999; Keaveney, 1995; Roos, 1999; Ganesh, Arnold and Reynolds, 2000; Chiu, et al., 2005). Additionally, some studies have signified that satisfied customers are less likely to show switching intentions (Szymanski and Henard, 2001).

Various researchers have shown that customers who have stronger associations with their service provider are more opposed to switch (e.g. Morgan and Hunt, 1994; Zineldin and Jonsson, 2000; Bove and Johnson, 2000). (Morgan and Hunt, 1994) found that the consumers’ commitment and trust in a business relationship are the primary purposes behind their staying with a business. (Li, Browne and Wetherbe, 2007) examined how online customer’s switching behavior shifts as per critical relationship factors (trust, satisfaction, and commitment), his results investigated that customers with high trust, satisfaction, and commitment are less slanted to switch to other firm.

Above literature describe that when relationship quality increases than customer switching intentions decreases because customers feel satisfied, committed, and trust worthy and want to stay with that firm. Understanding of this relationship in telecommunication sector of Pakistan has a great importance due to high usage of mobile phones and high level of competition among firms. This relationship will explain that if a firm builds strong relationship with its customers than customers switching intentions will be lower.

**H$_5$:** Relationship Quality has significant influence on Customers switching behavior.

Aforementioned Literature explain that Service provider employees attributes, perceived relational benefits, and consumer comfort have a significant impact on Relationship quality, therefore following hypothesis is drawn:

**H$_6$:** Service provider employees’ attributes, Perceived Relational Benefits, and consumer comfort has significant effect on Relationship Quality.

### METHODOLOGY

#### Data Collection

Table 1. Self-administrated questionnaires were used as research instrument for this study. Paper and pencil technique was used to collect data from respondents. Convenient sampling technique was used to collect data from customers who visit customer service centers of different telecommunication companies located in different cities of Pakistan.

#### Sample

Totally 500 questionnaires were dispersed to the targeted audience, but 485 questionnaires were returned back and 30 questionnaires were discarded due to incomplete information and pattern biasness. The effective response rate was 91%.
Measures

The research instrument contained items related to all variables and demographics of the respondents.

We adapted the scale developed by Kim and Cha, 2002 to measure service provider employees attributes. We measured service provider employee’s attributes with nine items and with three dimensions such as expertise, experience, and appearance. Expertise, experience, and appearance were measured with four, two, and three items respectively. All items were measured with 7-point Likert scale ranging from “1=strongly disagree to 7= strongly agree”.

We adapted the scale developed by Gwinner et al. (1998) to measure perceived relational benefits. We measured perceived relational benefits with sixteen items and with three dimensions such as confidence benefits, social benefits, and special treatment benefits. Confidence benefits, social benefits, and special treatment benefits each were measured with six, five, and five items respectively. All items were measured using 5-point Likert scale ranging from “1=strongly disagree to 5= strongly agree”.

We adopted the scale developed by Spake et al. (2003) to measure consumer comfort with eight items. All items were measured using 10-point scale “1=Not at all close to 10=extremely close”.

We measured relationship quality with scale developed by Smith, (1998). Relationship quality was measured with three dimensions (trust, satisfaction, and commitment) and fourteen items having one negative worded item. Trust and satisfaction were each measured with five items while commitment was measured with four items. All items were measured with 5-point Likert scale ranging from “1=strongly disagree to 5= strongly agree”.

Customer loyalty was measured with scale developed by Garbarino, Ellen and Johnson (1999). We measure customer loyalty with six items having four negative worded items. All items were measured using 5-point Likert scale ranging from “1=strongly disagree to 5= strongly agree”.

Customer switching behavior was measured with scale developed by Anthanassopoulos et al. (2001). Customer switching behavior was measured with three items. All items were measured with 7-point Likert scale ranging from “1=strongly disagree to 7= strongly agree”.

Cronbah’s alpha was used computed to determine reliability of multi-item scale. All scales have acceptable alpha values, ranging from 0.70 to 0.99, which were greater than the suggested cut-off level of 0.70 (Nunnally, 1978).

Data Analysis

Reliability analysis

Table 2. Cronbach alpha was computed to analyze the reliability of the constructs. Conclusively, all of the construct have moderately strong to very strong reliability because the value of alpha for all constructs is more than 0.70 as suggested cutoff level by (Nunally, 1978), which means that measuring scale used in this study for all constructs were consistent and stable to measure the construct

Correlation analysis

Table 3. Shows that there is significantly positive relationship between Service Provider Attributes and Relationship Quality having value \( r = 0.621, p < 0.01 \). It also shows that Expertise, Experience, and Appearance have significant positive relationship with relationship quality having \( r = .587, r = .418, r = .631, p < 0.01 \) respectively and supports hypothesis 1.

Findings demonstrate the significant positive association between Relational Benefits and Relationship Quality having value \( r = 0.687, p < 0.01 \), and also shows the significant positive relationship of Confidence
Table 3. Correlation Analysis

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Correlation Analysis</th>
<th>Estimate</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>H₁ Service Provider Attributes ←→ Relationship Quality</td>
<td>.621**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H₁a Expertise</td>
<td>.587**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H₁b Experience</td>
<td>.418**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H₁c Appearance</td>
<td>.442**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H₂ Relational Benefits ←→ Relationship Quality</td>
<td>.687**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H₂a Confidence Benefits</td>
<td>.590**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H₂b Social Benefits</td>
<td>.619**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H₂c Special Treatment Benefits</td>
<td>.631**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H₃ Consumer Comfort ←→ Relationship Quality</td>
<td>.479**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H₄ Relationship Quality ←→ Customer Loyalty</td>
<td>.555**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H₅ Relationship Quality ←→Customer switching behavior</td>
<td>-.435**</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Table 4. Analysis of Antecedents of Relationship Quality

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>RQ</th>
<th>β</th>
<th>R²</th>
<th>Sig. Level</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>H₁ Service Provider Employees Attributes</td>
<td>.261</td>
<td>.396</td>
<td>.000**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H₁a Service provider Employees Expertise</td>
<td>.060</td>
<td></td>
<td>.020</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H₁b Service provider Employees Experience</td>
<td>.122</td>
<td></td>
<td>.000**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H₁c Service provider Employees Appearance</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H₂ Perceived Relational Benefits</td>
<td>.166</td>
<td>.479</td>
<td>.000**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H₂a Confidence Benefits</td>
<td>.206</td>
<td></td>
<td>.000**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H₂b Social Benefits</td>
<td>.296</td>
<td></td>
<td>.000**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H₂c Special Treatment Benefits</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H₃ Consumer Comfort</td>
<td>.191</td>
<td>.229</td>
<td>.000**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H₆ Service Provider Employees Attributes</td>
<td>.226</td>
<td>.626</td>
<td>.000**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Relational Benefits</td>
<td>.427</td>
<td></td>
<td>.000**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Consumer Comfort</td>
<td>.107</td>
<td></td>
<td>.000**</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**. Values are significant at 0.001 level

Table 5. Consequences of Relationship Quality

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Customer Loyalty</th>
<th>Customer Switching Behavior</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>β</td>
<td>R²</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H₄, H₅ Relationship Quality</td>
<td>.619</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**. Values are significant at 0.001 level

benefits, Social benefits, and special treatment benefits with Relationship Quality having (r=.590, r=.619, r=.631, p<0.01) respectively and confirm hypothesis 2.

Consumer comfort is significantly positively correlated with relationship quality (r = 0.479, p< 0.01) and confirm hypothesis 3.

Relationship Quality is significantly positively associated with Customer Loyalty (r = 0.555, p< 0.01) and confirm hypothesis 4.

Relationship Quality has significant negative relationship with Customer switching behavior (r = -0.435, p< 0.01) and confirm hypothesis 5.

Conclusively, Result reveals that all independent variables are significantly positively associated with dependent variables (i.e. Relationship Quality), and Relationship Quality has significant positive relationship with Customer Loyalty and significant negative relationship with Customer switching behavior.

Regression analysis

Table 4 and 5

CONCLUSION AND DISCUSSION

Result of regression analysis in Table 4 explained that Relationship quality is significantly explained by Service provider employees attributes (Expertise and appearance), Perceived relational benefits (Confidence,
Result of regression analysis in Table 5 explained that Relationship quality has significant positive influence on Customer loyalty and also have significant negative influence on Customer switching behavior.

Service providers attributes

Hypothesis H1 predicts that service provider employees expertise is significant at 0.000 (t-value= 10.829, p<0.05) and service provider employees appearance is significant at 0.000 (t-value= 4.148, p<0.05). This shows that service providers employees expertise and service providers employees appearance have a significant effect on Relationship Quality. Thus, H1a and H1c are confirmed. However, the significant value for service provider employees experience is 0.060 (t-value= 2.343, p>0.05). This means that service provider employees experience have no significant effect on Relationship Quality. Thus, H1b is not supported.

Additionally, Results also shows that service provider employees expertise has the strongest affect on Relationship Quality ($\beta = 0.261$) and followed by service provider employees appearance ($\beta = 0.122$).

Perceived relational benefits

Hypothesis H2 predicts that confidence benefits is significant at 0.000 (t-value= 3.798, p<0.05), social benefits is significant at 0.000 (t-value= 4.084, p<0.05), and special treatment benefits is significant at 0.000 (t-value= 7.176, p>0.05). This explains that confidence benefits, social benefits, and special treatment benefits have a significant impact on Relationship Quality. Thus, Hypotheses H2 along with its sub hypotheses H2a, H2b, and H2c are supported.

Additionally, Results also demonstrate that special treatment benefits has the strongest affect on Relationship Quality ($\beta = 0.296$), subsequently social benefits ($\beta = 0.206$) and Confidence benefits ($\beta = 0.166$). Conclusively, relational benefits are significant toward Relationship Quality because all hypotheses H2a, H2b, and H2C are significant.

Consumer Comfort

Hypothesis H3 predicts that Consumer Comfort is significant at 0.000 (t-value= 11.609, p<0.05), and this specifies that consumer comfort has a significantly positive effect on Relationship Quality.

Relationship quality

Hypothesis 6 predicts that Relationship Quality is significantly explained by Service provider employee's attributes, Perceived Relational benefits, and Consumer comfort. Results explained that hypothesized antecedents of relationship quality have significant effect on relationship quality.

Hypothesis 4 and Hypothesis 5 predicts that has significant positive influence Customer Loyalty and also has significant negative influence on Customer switching behavior. Results explained that hypothesized consequences of relationship quality are significantly affected by Relationship quality.

Customer loyalty

Hypothesis 4 predicts that Customer Loyalty is significant at 0.000 (t-value= 14.188, p<0.05) with Relationship Quality, and this indicates that Relationship Quality has a significantly positive effect on customer loyalty.

Customer switching behavior

Hypothesis 5 predicts that Customer switching behavior is significant at 0.000 (t-value= -10.282, p<0.05) with Relationship Quality, and this signifies that Relationship Quality has a significantly negative effect on customer switching behavior.

Limitations and suggestions

This research is subjected to many limitations which might have an effect on results of this research. Foremost, this study is limited to few variables in analysis because of some bound constraints. Authors shouldn’t limit the variables to be used to attain a lot of precise results. Secondly, sample size is too low as author solely distributed five hundred questionnaires to the selected respondents in some areas set in Punjab province. Thirdly, convenient sampling is used in getting information from respondents within which convenience sampling could also be bias in choosing respondents. This research has also some suggestion for future researchers. Firstly, the future research can unfold the new variables and substitute research for future studies. Many of the new variables can be added in the future model like convenience of location as a moderator. Similarly Satisfaction, Commitment and trust are used as a moderator in a future research. Secondly, the future researchers must not solely target their respondents in
Punjab province of Pakistan. Thirdly, only quantitative questionnaires are used in the research for data collection. Fourthly, the result point out that there's a stronger relationship between special treatment benefits and relationship quality. Hence, author recommend future researchers to explore what kind of special treatment benefits affect more on relationship quality. Lastly, the result showed consumer comfort is significant to relationship quality. Thus, the future researchers ought to ascertain the reasons (i.e. aesthetic, music, lighting, etc) which will increase consumer comfort.

REFERENCES

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