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Reasons behind brand switching in telecom sector in India

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Abstract---This paper tries to focus on the reasons behind Brand Switching amongst telecom service users in National Capital Region (NCR) in India. There can be several factors behind switching of brand by a mobile telecom service user. But after Preliminary investigations seven most relevant reasons were shortlisted to study further.

Keywords---Telecom Service Provider (TSP), Reasons Behind Brand Switching (RBBS), Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA), Telecom Services in India, Brand Switching in Telecom Sector.

Introduction

The success of any country depends extremely upon the expansion of three extensive businesses present in the nation, specifically the farming, manufacturing and the service industry. The expansion of all these important industries requires sufficient accessibility of appropriate energy, control, credit & assurance, transportation conveniences and also having a superior communication arrangement in the organisation. The telecommunication service-providing sector is the rapid emergent trades worldwide as well as in India too. After China, India's is the second-largest telecommunication network in the whole World. According to the press release by Telecom Regulatory Authority of India (TRAI) on telecom subscription data as on dated 31st December 2019 explained that the cell phone subscribers reached at the entire figure of 1172.44 (662.45 Urban & 509.99 Rural) million in India. The wireless subscribers reached the entire figure of 1151.44 million and the wireline subscribers reached the entire figure of 21.00 million in India as on 31 December 2019. The total Telephone density or teledensity in India is 88.56%. Most accepted telecom companies' market share in India is Reliance Jio (32.14%), Vodafone Idea (28.89%), Airtel (28.89%) and Bharat Sanchar Nigam Ltd. (BSNL) (10.55%). As per the TRAI report

in India, there are total numbers of 1151.44 million wireless customers as of 31st December 2019. In India presently are the overall number of telecom service providers is major 6 telecom service suppliers in India such as Bharti Airtel, Vodafone-Idea, JIO, BSNL, MTNL, AEROVOYCE as per the year 2020. In the year 2017 the telecom service provider Bharti Airtel declared a merger agreement with Tata Telecom service suppliers and attainment of Tata Docomo services. Additionally, the telecom service provider Tata Docomo consumers are compound with the Bharti Airtel telecom service network and supplied with every the Airtel services as dated 21 July 2019 in the Indian Telecom service sector. In the years 2017, AEROVOYCE was commenced by the association of BSNL and Adpay Group with equal part of shares 50% each and presently provides their services in Tamil Nadu via 2G, 3G & 4G internet accesses on Band 1.

Table 1: Major Telecom Service Providers and their Subscribers & Market Share

Grade	Service Providers	Subscribers (in millions)	Market Share (in Percentage)	Ownership
1.	Jio	370.07	32.14	Reliance industry
2.	Vodafone Idea	304.00	28.89	Vodafone, Aditya Birla Group
3.	Airtel	327.35	28.43	Bharti Airtel Group
4.	BSNL	121.47	10.55	Govt. of India

Source: TRAI Reports

The telecom industries have been working under the control of the central government in India since independence. The initial flourish of transformation in the telecommunication business was considered during the middle of the 1980s. During that time most of the industrialized countries established to liberalize their telecom segment. Though, a drastic change in the telecom business formation came after 1991 in India because succeeding implementation of the liberalization, privatization and globalization (LPG) to recover from the economic crisis. In 1997, the Indian government created the Telecom Regulatory Authority of India (TRAI) as an authoritarian organization that protects the customers from telecom sector monopoly as well as regulates the rules & policies for the telecommunication sector which ensure fair competition among telecom service providers. The National Telecom Policy 1994 has altered the formation of the marketplace, primarily from domination to competition. The New Telecom Policy 1999 also provided a superior point competition platform to telecom industries in India. After NTP 1994 & 1999, the entrance of the new players in the segment of Indian telecom has noticed the commencement of the latest epoch in terms of operational configuration. The significant revolutionary change in the business of Indian telecom has been enlarging in the occurrence of cellular announcement in the nation that grabbed the most market share in India. The simple way of consumption, moveable nature with the little price of handsets and best services after sales have improved the attractiveness of the wireless service providers in the country (Sridhar, 2010)¹.

An imperative proposal that has been used by the central government in the present era of advancement is the Digital India movement to improve Digital

communications and construct the Indian market as a digitally authorized civilization. The digital sector promotes elevated pace internet & web facilities to customers and makes services obtainable in the authentic instance for together online facilities as well as a mobile podium. Additional another most essential proposal commenced by the central government of India is Green Telecom for plummeting carbon hoof marks in the mobile sector throughout fewer utilize of power. Some more steps taken by Indian government are the use of Internet sector services by consumers for allocation and congregation of the information, Mobile Banking Services, provides the budget for the Optical Fibre Cables, development of telecommunication sector facilities to the agricultural marketplace, Make in India agenda to enhance cell phone producing in the nation and another scheme proposed by the government administration of our nation for telecom services is 'Project Sangam' for ability growth as well as provides monetary support to service providers in rural & untapped regions, etc. Some other essential initiative taken by the Department of Telecom Services to improve ease of doing business is given below such as:

- Magnitude specified to online cashless transactions as well as Digital mode of payment.
- Aadhaar pedestal e-KYC for fresh customers providing connections by TSP.
- Dynamic communications allocation between TSP based on reciprocated conformity to improve services, Infrastructure, etc.
- Virtual Network Operators (VNO) permitting mobile phone service suppliers to successfully make use of their spectrum and network services by allotment in lively and reactive communications frameworks.
- Right of Way regulations started in the year 2016 to make simpler funding authorization for Infrastructure in the telecom sector.

Several other strategies have been commenced by the government of India to expand the contact of mobile phone networks to rural areas (villages) and also get better digital communications in rustic and isolated regions. The companies in the telecom sector now face hard competition from the innovative & creative competitor in the marketplace. The best example of the telecom market in Indian perspective is Reliance Jio which provides better and low price services to customers and captured the Indian telecom market in a short period. That result in other service providers also provide their services at low prices to survive in the market. In the telecom service sector, there is limited accessibility of spectrum and its allotment between the various telecom service providers. That increases the competition amongst telecom service providers in the market which motivates the telecom service providers to innovate and consume scarce resources more efficiently. New creation helps to raise the demand for their brand that decreases the cost of services. Innovations are supposed to attract more customers and increase the efficiency & productivity of the telecom sectors. Telecom service providers need to increase their productivity of the services by using returns to scale of operation that helps in reducing the cost of production and adoption of the foreign technology in their production system too (Uri, 2002)². Madden and Savage (1999)³ employed data of 74 countries across the world for the term between years 1991-1995 to understand how telecom industries can increase the productivity & services in the telecom sector to attract more customers.

Ros (1999)⁴ examined the consequences of privatization and opposition on network development and competence in the telecom service sector. Competition in telecom sectors increases customer satisfaction and customer choices. The Telecom sector that provides better services captures the market share and customer loyalty. Moshi *et al.* (2013)⁵ emphasized that better production competence transforms into the telecom sector of Africa. The author has found confirmation of development in the productivity & services of the telecom industries changed in their technology efficiency and more focus on the customer's demand. Prasad and Sridhar (2009)⁶ focused on the competences of the telecom service sectors and also studied the best insinuation of spectrum policies. The author suggested that in Indian market telecom service providers need to focus & pay attention on enhancing productivity and its determinants as well as customer satisfaction.

Statement of Problem

To study the reasons behind Brand Switching among telecom service users in National Capital Region India.

Literature Review

Switching of brand in telecom services is a common problem for the entire telecommunication sector all over the world. Customer's shifting of brand changing behaviour develops into a subject of deliberation in our country related to telecommunication segment after permitting MNP facility by the TRAI. As everyone knows that TRAI permitted the MNP service in time 2010 in Haryana state of our nation and after that commenced MNP service to the whole country in January 2011 (Rao, 2016)⁷. Afzal *et al.* (2013)⁸ enlightened in the investigation that there are numerous elements behind brand trustworthiness; such as; value, excellence, capacity, and accessibility. Telecom service provider makes available these services to customer than it is not constantly simple to change brands in telecom services. Kumar and Charlas (2011)⁹ delineated that shifting of brand in the telecom service sector is a systematic process in which customers change from the solitary supplier to another service suppliers of an identical category. In strongly serious marketplace similar to India with lofty eccentrics and slight item separation, brand name dedication is a significant component in advertising procedures and strategies (Fournier and Yao, 1997)¹⁰. The superior service quality provided by telecom services enhances the eagerness of customers to pay more price, proposal such as generous suggestions, and increasing trade worth (Zeithaml, 2000)¹¹. The trust and desires for the clients from the specialist organization assume a significant job when contrasted with the business image of the specialist service contributor. Another key factor is the valuing; also, for example, the measure of talk-time, administration quality, approval of the revive offers are likewise viewed as significant by the clients (Chen, 2018)¹². Silva (2009)¹³ produced a research study on telecom service industry in Sri Lanka; it was found that the most significant aspect of enduring a presented telecom service provider was the capability to present worth to the consumer. This was chased by reassurance and receptiveness. The slightest imperative factors were lawful responsibility tangibility and reimbursement conditions. Brand loyalty also facilitates telecom service providers to attract other network customers and help to prevent consumers from changing actions for their existing consumers.

Continuously augment in brand representation that will also enhance consumers' loyalty to the brand concurrently. An optimistic brand image is invented to congregate consumer's anticipation and present more benefit to the consumer, which may escort consumer satisfaction and confidence (Ibok and Etuk 2015)¹⁴. Venkatachalam and Harikaran 2015)¹⁵ concluded that clients consistently remember their family members and companions are utilizing which organize in picking a telecom service provider. The customer forced to change service providers in the telecom sector starting with as any of the relatives and friends has already switched. Telecom service providers need to contribute on arrange inclusion, good network coverage, better family & friend (FNF) offers and tries to improve their administrations ceaselessly to maintain a strategic distance from the conduct of switching. A research study conducted by (Kim, 2004)¹⁶ in the U.S. found that client fulfillment, switching boundaries, and socioeconomics altogether influences endorsers' goal to switch in telecom services. Among them, switching boundaries had the most critical impact, which brings up an issue of the viability of MNP. Shin (2006)¹⁷ accomplished an investigation research study on six hundred eighty-four respondents in U.S.A. to know about the awareness, perception, and behaviour of customers regarding the use and impact of Mobile Number Portability (MNP) in U.S. telecom market. A major reason for showcasing includes the procurement and maintenance of clients, given the steady cost contrast between obtaining another client and holding a current one.

Consumers' happiness with the present service provider is in a straight line influenced by cost whereas not directly by the insight of value equality. That point out that worth in telecom services has a psychosomatic consequence on the client, apparent cost affects consumer happiness and a pleased client remains faithful to the product. As in the telecom transmission service segment, the switching of brand charge is moderately little, so clients effectively change to an additional system. Right now, ought to be progressively cautious in deciding and keeping up cost structure of call and assortment of administrations offered to clients, in any case exchanging propensity of clients across administrators will be expanded and coming about reducing the faithfulness of clients (Zeithaml, 1988)¹⁸. . Lee and Murphy (2005)¹⁹ explained in their research investigates variables that reason behind for brand switching in telecom services by customers. The author described the issues that a loyal consumer forced to switch. A study accomplished that present is diverse reasons which influence the consumers to change from faithfulness to exchanging intentions such as pricing, technological service excellence, repair superiority, switching costs, etc. High price or fluctuation in prices is the most significant cause which influences the patrons to change loyal customers to other telecom service providers. To compose customers imagine concerning changing the brand in a telecom service provider involves applying all promotional strategies & practices by the competitors to make sure customers trust that they will obtain additional reimbursement if they shift brand. Consumers compare the prices, services provided by the telecom service provider, and their budget in an era of competition, this simply knocks clientele to choose the name of brand as per their requirement and satisfaction. The procedure of attracting and maintaining clients have been associated with shaping a strong consumer relationship (Harris and Reynolds 2003)²⁰. Chaudhuri and Holbrook (2001)²¹ recommended two major dimensions of product determinants of brand faithfulness- brand name faith and brand name influence.

The product's faithfulness has a straight collision on the durability of a product (Howell, 2004)²². Shifting of brand, supplementary, happens since diminish in brand dependability and rising recognition of other brands. Brand switch increments the consumer's enthusiasm to undertake optional brand name. The research by (Ghatak, 2016)²³ point out the significant dissimilarities and support the current study outcomes. Elder age respondents have more concern and focus on the price, network coverage and brand image of telecom services as compare to the younger respondents in the brand switching in the telecom services. Younger age respondents illustrate more concern regarding the service quality, competitive offers, after-sale services and mobile number portability as compare to the elder age respondents in predicting variables in the brand switching in telecom services.

Research Methodology

The present research is exploratory and descriptive research. This research was conducted after identifying and short listing seven parameters after preliminary investigation. The factors studied were **Price** (RBBS1), **Service Quality** (RBBS2), **Product Features** (RBBS3), **Competitive Offers** (RBBS4), **After Sales Service** (RBBS5), **Mobile Number Portability** (RBBS6) and **Customer Satisfaction** (RBBS7).

Sample

The data for research was conducted through face to face interview and e mails. Data was collected from mobile users of NCR. Non Probability Convenient Sampling method was used. After scrutiny responses of 984 (582 Males and 402 Females) respondents were included in the study. 390 respondents were from rural area whereas 594 were from urban area.

Objective of the study

The prime objective of research is to identify the main reasons of Brand Switching among telecom service users in National Capital Region of India (consisting of National Capital Territory Delhi, 13 Districts of Haryana, 7 Districts of Uttar Pradesh and 2 Districts of Rajasthan).

Limitations of the study

During face to face interview questionnaire was translated from English to Hindi language for people with lesser education. Some possible faults in on the spot translation may have crept in. The study focuses on NCR hence, the conclusions so drawn can't be generalized for whole country. Non Probability Convenience sampling was used for data collection the limitations of non probability sampling are inherent in the research. Respondents you chose the option 'Can Not Say' were put in neutral category.

Data Analysis

Respondents were analysed on certain parameters initially like have they ever switched from one Telecom Service Provider (TSP) to another, their level of contentment with the existing TSP, their TSP in coming six months, factors preferred while switching and source of information for Brand Switching. The outcomes are discussed below.

Table 2: Switched one TSP to another TSP

Term	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	630	64
No	354	36

Source: Primary Data

Above table 2 describes that consumers switched from one TSP to a different TSP. Most of the consumers 64 percent have switched from one telecom service contributor to a different TSP while the remaining 36 percent of respondents did not change their telecom service suppliers/providers. Commencing the results, it can be fulfilled that in the past above one third of the consumers switched from one TSP to a different TSP.

Table 3: Pleased with Current TSP

Term	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	738	75
No	246	25

Source: Primary Data

Table 3 explains that patrons are pleased with their present telecom service contributor in the telecom services. The majority of respondents 75 percent are pleased with their present telecom service supplier while 25 percent of the respondents are not satisfied with their present telecom service provider. From the output, it can be said that most of the consumers satisfied with their current TSP/telecom service contributor but a sizeable one fourth respondents are not satisfied with their existing TSP.

Table 4: Thinking of Switching TSP in Next Six Months

Term	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	378	38.4
No	606	61.6

Source: Primary Data

Table 4 explains that around two fifth of the respondents are thinking of changing from present telecom service contributor to another in the next six months. Most of the respondents 61.6 percent are not thinking about switching from one TSP to a different. Remaining 38.4 percent of respondents are thinking about switching. This is a big figure and cause of concern for the TSPs.

Table 5: Factors Considered while Switching Telecom Service Provider

Term	Preference
Good Network Coverage	1 st Preference
Internet Services	2 nd Preference
Reasonable Price	3 rd Preference
Value-Added Services	4 th Preference
Attractive Offerings	5 th Preference
Good Customer Relations	6 th Preference
Available at Convenience	7 th Preference

Source: Primary Data

Table 5 explains factor's consideration while switching telecom service providers by consumers. The preference starts from 1st Preference to 7th Preference as good network coverage, internet services reasonable price, value-added services, attractive offerings, good customer relations and available at convenience. Good network coverage and internet service factors are the most preferred variables for switching telecom service provider by consumers in the telecom services.

Table 6: Source of Information for Brand Switching in Telecom Services

Term	Frequency	Percentage
Words of Mouth	762	77.4
Print Media	300	30.5
Radio/Television	246	25.0
Outdoor Hoardings	174	17.7
Online Sources-Internet	456	46.3
Sales Executives	276	28.0

Source: Primary Data (Multiple responses projected more than 100% responses)

Above table 6 describes the source of information for consumers for brand switching in the telecom services. Word of Mouth, online sources-internet and print media (newspapers, magazines) are the most excellent source of information for consumers to brand switching in the telecom services that is 77.4, 46.3 & 30.5 percent respectively. Followed by sales executives, radio/television and outdoor hoardings (28, 25 and 17.7 percent) respectively. So, it can be said that Word of Mouth, online sources-internet and print media (newspapers, magazines) are the most excellent source of information for consumers to brand switching in the telecom services.

The present investigation research also accomplishes the CFA method for motive behind to switch brand in telecom services. RBBS in telecom services have seven sub-dimensions such as Price is a significant variable to change from one TSP to a different TSP (RBBS1), Service quality is a significant variable to brand change in telecom services (RBBS2), Product feature and application is a significant variable to brand change in the telecom services (RBBS3), Competitive Offer is a significant variable to brand change in the telecom services (RBBS4), After Sales Service is a significant variable to brand change in the telecom services (RBBS5), MNP (Mobile Number Portability) is a significant variable to brand change in the

telecom services (RBBS6) and Customer Satisfaction is a significant variable to brand change in the telecom services (RBBS7). Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) method confirms the factor reasons behind brand switching in telecom services by fulfilling the validating and reliability criteria of CFA for the factor RBBS. CFA is an extraordinary shape of the factor examination, mainly employed in social science & humanities investigate studies. CFA is a comprehensive examination of factors and applied to investigate whether actions of a construct dependable with a investigator considerate of the character of that latent factor. In this study, the most important objective of CFA is to examine whether those statistics in shape for the RBBS model.

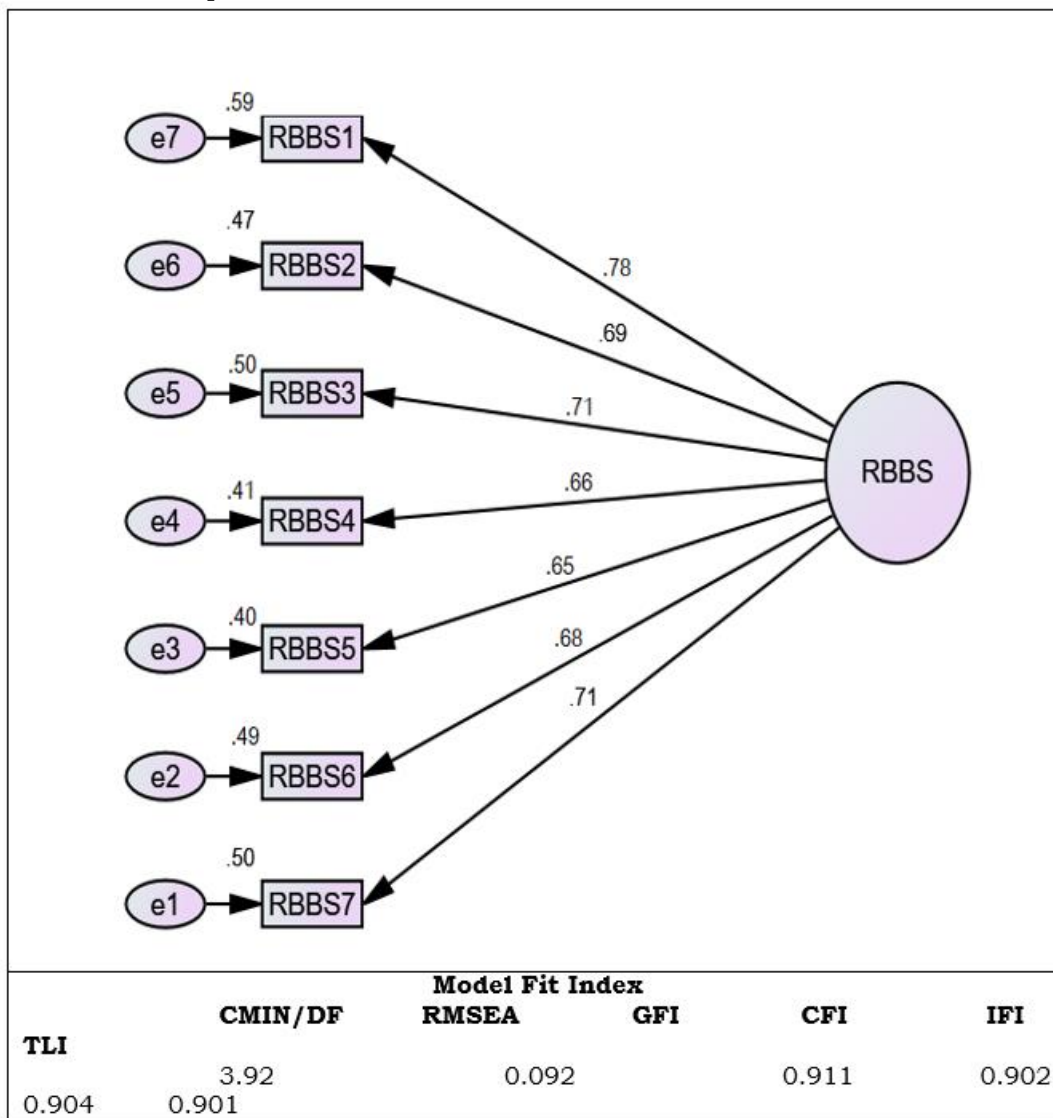


Figure 1: CFA Model for Reasons behind Brand Switching in Telecom Services
Source: Primary Data
AMOS Output

Table 7: CFA Validation for Reasons behind Brand Switching in Telecom Services

Items	CFA Loadings	Cronbach's Alpha	CR	AVE
RBBS1	.78	.752	.764	.504
RBBS2	.69			
RBBS3	.71			
RBBS4	.66			
RBBS5	.65			
RBBS6	.68			
RBBS7	.71			

Source: Primary Data
AMOS Output

Findings

CFA Model Fit Values of reasons behind brand switching given in table 7 in telecom service sector presents that all index (**Chi-Square Test**- CMIN/DF=3.92, **Absolute Fit** - RMSEA=0.092, GFI=0.911, **Relative Fit**- CFI=0.902, TLI= 0.901, IFI=0.904) meet up satisfactory stage for the CFA Model Fit of RBBS. Reliability and Validity for CFA Model for reasons behind brand switching in telecom services have been accomplished as CFA factor loadings for all statements are larger than 0.5, CR > 0.7 and A.V.E. > 0.5. Outcomes of CFA of reasons behind brand switching in telecom services explain that all measurement criteria have been achieved mandatory for the CFA validation.

Standardized regression weights/factor loadings of all 7 statements such as Price is a significant variable to switch/change from one TSP to other TSP (RBBS1), Service quality is a significant variable to change in telecom services (RBBS2), Product feature and application is a significant variable to change in telecom services (RBBS3), Competitive Offer is a significant variable to change in telecom services (RBBS4), After Sales Service is a significant variable to change in telecom services (RBBS5), MNP (Mobile Number Portability) is a significant variable to change in telecom services (RBBS6) and Customer Satisfaction is a significant variable to change in telecom services (RBBS7) are given by 0.78, 0.69, 0.71, 0.66, 0.65, 0.68 and 0.71 that describes a strong association of dimensions to reasons behind brand switching in telecom services. From the outcomes, it can be said that price, service quality, product features, competitive offers, after-sale services, mobile number portability and customer satisfaction are significant variables to switch the brand in the telecom services.

Suggestions/ Recommendations

The above data and its analysis indicate that above one third respondents have switched their TSP at least once. One fourth of the respondents are not satisfied with their existing TSP. Two fifth of the respondents are thinking of switching from one TSP to another. The main reasons behind brand switching are Network Coverage, Internet Services and Price in that order. Word of mouth, internet and print media are the chief sources of information for brand switching. Hence, it is recommended that a major part of mobile service users are ready to switch it

offers a big challenge to the TSP to retain their existing customers besides gives an opportunity to attract competitor's customers. TSP with good network coverage, better internet services and competitive prices will be marching ahead in this cut throat competitive market.

Conclusion

RBBS in telecom services have seven important statements such as Price is a significant variable to change from solitary telecom service supplier to a different service supplier (RBBS1), Service quality is a significant variable to change in telecom services (RBBS2), Product feature and application is a significant variable to change in the telecom services (RBBS3), Competitive Offer is a significant variable to change in the telecom services (RBBS4), After Sales Service is a significant variable to change in the telecom services (RBBS5), MNP (Mobile Number Portability) is a significant variable to change in the telecom services (RBBS6) and Customer Satisfaction is a significant variable to change in the telecom services (RBBS7). It can be concluded that a large number of customers are satisfied with their Telecom Service Provider but still Brand Switching takes place among the customers who are not satisfied. As it is visible that all parameters play a significant role in Brand Switching but it can be said that network coverage, internet services and competitive pricing are the main factors considered by a customer before brand switching.

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