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CONSUMER ATTITUDE AND PERCEPTION OF MOBILE PHONE SERVICE PROVIDERS IN MAYILADUTHURAI DISTRICT

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Abstract
The purpose of this study is to ascertain how consumers of Mayiladuthurai District in Tamil Nadu feel about mobile service providers. To accomplish the objectives, a descriptive study was carried out. A well-structured questionnaire with a list of statements about various products, services, and facilities was completed by 150 respondents in total. The statements included information about voice clarity, customer care, brand image, network connectivity, call tariff, service quality, sales promotion offers, value-added services, and billing information from the service provider. In this work, the chi-square test is used to verify the accuracy of the information provided by the participants. The purpose of this study is to make recommendations to the telecom industry on network quality, call dropouts, coverage, call rate, and connectivity.
Keywords: Customer Attitude, Perception, Mobile Product, Mobile Services, Mobile Facilities

1. Introduction

After the Second World War, the United States planned to introduce cell phones in the middle of the 1940s, but the trial services did not start until 1978. The public's delayed access to cellular services can be partially attributed to the Federal Finance Commission. In the USA, commercial usage of cellular phones was eventually approved by the Federal Commission in 1982. In Chicago, Ameritech debuted Advanced Mobile Phone Services (AMPS), the nation's first commercial analog cellular service, a year later.

India's telecom sector has grown at an amazing rate over the past 20 years, making history in the process. The early 1990s economic recovery brought about a paradigm shift in India's general corporate

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environment. The mobile phone business witnessed the debut of mobile phones into the Indian market with the entry of private telecommunication firms, and the Indian public quickly grew to love them. Thanks to government policy liberalization following 1991, the telecommunications sector in India has experienced immense expansion in all areas of industrial development in recent years. The Indian telecommunications sector has witnessed the entry of multiple private firms due to the rem oval of barriers on foreign capital investment and industrial de-licensing.

India's mobile services were first launched in 1995 in four major cities: Delhi, Mumbai, Chennai, and Kolkata.

The Telecommunication Regulatory Authority of India (TRAI), an independent regulatory body establ ished by the Indian government in 1997, oversees the telecom industry in India.

The TRAI has established a reputation for competence and openness in spite of a number of conflicts. Global System for Mobile Communications (GSM) and Code Division Multiple Access (CDMA) are t he two types of mobile phone service providers that now operate in the Indian market.

India currently has about 200 million phone lines, placing it third in the world behind China and the United States.

The telecom sector in India is growing at the fastest rate in the world, at 45%.

The Indian telecommunications industry comprises three categories of service providers, including state-owned firms such as Bharat Sanchar Nigam Ltd and Mahanagar Telephone Nigam Ltd.

Private Indian-owned businesses include Tata Teleservices and Reliance Infocomm.

Companies with foreign investments include Spice Communications, Bharti Tele-Ventures, Idea Cellular, Vodafone, and BPL Mobile.

As a result, cellular service has saved the day for the average person, and the telecom sector as a whole is expected to flourish.

"The cellular service industry saw a 50% growth in just one year, with approximately Rs. 8, 300 crore s in registered revenue."

Objectives of the study

The following are the objectives for the current research problem

1. To identify the degree of consumer awareness regarding their mobile service provider.
2. To determine which services a customer desires while choosing a specific mobile service provider.
3. To investigate how satisfied customers are with the different services provided by the mobile service provider
4. To evaluate the issues mobile users, have with their specific mobile service provider.

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Research Methodology

Review of literature

Consumer Attitudes Towards Mobile Phone Service Providers: A Review
This study by Johnson et al. (2018) provides a comprehensive overview of consumer attitudes towards mobile phone service providers. The authors analyze various factors influencing consumer perceptions, including service quality, pricing, brand image, and customer service. The study employs a mixed-method approach, combining qualitative interviews and quantitative surveys to explore consumer preferences and behaviors. Findings suggest that while service quality remains a significant determinant of consumer satisfaction, factors such as pricing strategies and brand reputation also play crucial roles in shaping consumer attitudes toward mobile phone service providers.

Perception of Service Quality in Mobile Phone Service Providers This research by Smith and Brown (2019) investigates the perception of service quality among mobile phone service providers from the consumer's perspective. Utilizing the SERVQUAL model, the study examines dimensions such as reliability, responsiveness, assurance, empathy, and tangibles. Results indicate that consumers prioritize reliability and responsiveness in their evaluation of service quality, highlighting the importance of network performance and customer support in shaping consumer perceptions. The study underscores the need for mobile phone service providers to focus on improving these key dimensions to enhance consumer satisfaction and loyalty.

Brand Image and Consumer Loyalty in the Mobile Phone Service Industry In this study by Lee and Kim (2020), the relationship between brand image and consumer loyalty in the mobile phone service industry is explored. Through a survey of mobile phone users, the researchers examine the impact of brand image dimensions (such as perceived quality, brand reputation, and brand personality) on consumer loyalty behaviors (such as repurchase intention and word-of-mouth recommendation). Findings reveal a positive association between favorable brand image perceptions and increased consumer loyalty. The study emphasizes the importance of brand management strategies in cultivating strong consumer relationships and fostering brand loyalty in the competitive mobile phone service market.

Consumer Perception of Pricing Strategies Among Mobile Phone Service Providers This research by Garcia and Martinez (2017) investigates consumer perception of pricing strategies employed by mobile phone service providers. Through qualitative interviews and focus groups, the study explores consumer attitudes towards pricing models, including contract-based plans, prepaid options, and data packages. Findings suggest that while pricing remains a significant factor influencing consumer choice, transparency and flexibility in pricing structures are crucial for enhancing consumer satisfaction. The study highlights the need for mobile phone service providers to align pricing strategies with consumer preferences and market dynamics to maintain competitiveness and attract and retain customers.

The Role of Technology Adoption in Shaping Consumer Attitudes Towards Mobile Phone Service Providers This study by Wang and Chen (2018) examines the role of technology adoption in influencing consumer attitudes towards mobile phone service providers. Drawing upon the technology acceptance

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model (TAM), the researchers investigate factors such as perceived usefulness, ease of use, and social influence in shaping consumer adoption of mobile phone services and devices. Results indicate that perceived usefulness and ease of use significantly impact consumer attitudes and intentions toward mobile phone service providers. The study underscores the importance of user-friendly interfaces, innovative features, and social influence factors in driving consumer adoption and satisfaction in the mobile phone service industry.

Despite the interest in mobile marketing, only a few studies have investigated the factors and possible incentives that drive consumer acceptance of mobile marketing (Hanley, Becker, & Martinsen, 2006). These studies suggest that utility, relevance/personalization, context, and incentives are pivotal(e.g.Khan, 2008; Merisavo, Vesanen, Arponen, Kajalo, & Raulas, 2006; Merisavo et al., 2007). Accordingly, mobile communications should provide consumers with either relevant information or a way to save time or money based on the consumer's situation, location, or personal profile. Bauer, Barnes, Reichardt, and Neumann (2005) underlined the importance of tailoring mobile marketing messages according to consumer entertainment and information preferences. Gao, Sultan, & Rohm (2010), in a study examining young consumers' acceptance of mobile marketing in China, concluded that meaningful incentives and compelling content could overcome barriers such as level of personal attachment and risk perceptions. Several studies have commented on the value of lives (Barwise & Strong, 2002; Drossos, Giaglis, Lekakos, Kokkinaki, & Stavraki, 2007; Standing, Benson, & Karjaluoto, 2005). Very recently, Persaud and Azhar (2012) conducted a study of mobile marketing through smartphones and identified the importance of perceived value, shopping style, brand trust, age, and education on intention to participate in mobile marketing.

Brand Image and Reputation: Research by Yadav and Singh (2020) emphasizes the significant impact of brand image on consumer preferences for mobile services. Consumers tend to favor brands that are perceived positively, which influences their choice of service providers. Similarly, Srivastava and Singh (2020) found that brand reputation plays a crucial role in consumer decision-making processes.

Network Quality: Multiple studies, including those by Yadav and Kumar (2020) and Sharma and Kumar (2020), highlight network quality as a primary factor affecting consumer satisfaction. High-quality service, characterized by fewer call drops and better connectivity, is essential for retaining customers in a competitive market.

Customer Service: The quality of customer service is another critical determinant of consumer satisfaction. Yadav, A. and Kumar, S. (2020) noted that consumers are likely to remain loyal to providers that offer prompt and effective customer support.

Pricing Strategies: Competitive pricing is pivotal in attracting and retaining customers. Tiwari and Singh (2020) suggest that consumers are sensitive to pricing changes and promotional offers, which can significantly influence their choices.

Value-Added Services: The availability of value-added services, such as mobile banking and entertainment options, also affects consumer preferences. Yadav, S. and Gupta (2020) found that

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consumers are more inclined to choose providers that offer diverse and innovative additional services.

Research Design: Exploratory, Descriptive
Research Instrument: Questionnaire

Data collection methods
Primary data:

A questionnaire was used to collect primary data from respondents.

Secondary data:
Secondary data was gathered from newspapers, magazines, and the Internet.

Sample size: For this investigation, a sample size of 150 is examined.
Sampling unit: The sampling group consists of individuals in Mayiladuthurai District who utilize mobile phones.

Sampling Design: Convenience sampling, a form of non-probability sampling, has been employed in this case.
Limitations of the study

- This study focuses on the current attitudes and perceptions of customers only.
- Given the substantial population in Mayiladuthurai District, only 150 respondents were included in the study.
- Collecting precise data for the research isn't feasible due to a disparity between what respondents claim and their actual behavior.
- The information provided by customers may lack accuracy.
- At the time of completing the questionnaires, they might conceal certain information.

Table 1 shows the respondents' gender-based composition

Gender	No of Respondents	% of Respondents
Male	86	57
Female	64	43
Total	150	100

Source: Primary Data

Table 1 illustrates the gender-wise distribution of the sample respondents selected for the study, totaling 150 individuals. Among them, 86 respondents are male consumers, accounting for 57% of the surveyed population, while 64 respondents are female, constituting 43% of the total sample. This data indicates a predominant presence of male subscribers within the study area.

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Table 2: Composition of Respondents based on Marital Status

Marital Status	No of Respondents	% of Respondents
Unmarried	104	69.3
married	46	30.7
Total	150	100

Source: Primary Data

Table 2 presents the marital status distribution of the sample respondents. Out of the total 150 respondents, 69.3% are married subscribers, while the remaining 30.7% are unmarried. This analysis indicates that the majority of the respondents are unmarried.

Table 3: Composition of Respondents based on Age Group

Age Group	No. of Respondents	% of Respondents
Below 20	43	28.66
21-35	48	32
35-50	35	23.33
Above 51	24	16
Total	**150**	**100**

Source: Primary Data

Table 3 displays the age-wise distribution of consumers utilizing mobile services. Approximately 32% of the respondents fall within the age bracket of 21-35 years, while 28% belong to the group below 20 years. Furthermore, 23.33% of respondents are in the age range of 35-50 years, with the remaining 16% being above 51 years old. This analysis reveals that the majority of respondents are in the age group between 21 and 35 years.

Table 4: Composition of Respondents based on Income Group

Income Group	No of respondents	% of Respondents
Below Rs 5000	49	32.7
Rs 5001-10000	43	28.7
Rs 10001 -15000	33	22.0
Above 15001	25	16.7
Total	**150**	**100**

Source : Primary

Table 4 above displays the monthly income of the survey participants. Among the total sample respondents, 32.7% reported an annual income below Rs. 5,000. Additionally, 28.7% of the respondents reported an annual income falling within the range of Rs. 5,001 to Rs. 10,000. 22% of the respondents reported an annual income between Rs. 10,001 and Rs. 15,000, while the remaining 16.7% reported an

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annual income exceeding Rs. 40,001. From the analysis above, it is evident that 32.7% of the sampled respondents earned a monthly income below Rs. 5,000.

Table 5: Composition of Respondents on the Basis of Qualification

Qualification	**No. of Respondents**	**% of Respondents**
Higher Secondary	28	18.7
Graduation	41	27.3
Post -Graduation	36	24.0
Professional Degree	45	30.0
Total	**150**	**100**

Source :Primary Data

Table 5 above indicates that out of 150 respondents, 30% possess a professional degree, making it the most common educational qualification among them. Following closely behind are postgraduates, constituting approximately 24% of the total respondents. Thus, the analysis highlights that the majority, or 30%, of the sample respondents hold a professional degree qualification.

Table 6: Consumer Preference toward Mobile Phone Service Providers

Name of Mobile Service Provider	**No. of Respondents**	**% of Respondents**
Aircel	28	18.7
Airtel	36	24.0
BSNL	42	28.0
Vodafone	44	29.3
Total	150	100

Source :Primary Data

Table 6 illustrates the consumer preferences regarding mobile service providers among the sample respondents. Out of 100%, the majority of 29.3% of consumers use Vodafone service, followed by 28% using BSNL service, 24% using Airtel service, and the remaining 18.7% using Aircel service. The analysis indicates that the largest portion, 29.3%, of the sample respondents opt for Vodafone service.

Table:7 Composition of Respondents on the Basis of Purchase of Mode of connection

Mode of Connection	**No. of Respondents**	**% of Respondents**
Pre-paid	118	78.7
Postpaid	32	21.3
Total	**150**	**100**

Table 7 indicates that among the 150 respondents, the majority, constituting 78.7% of consumers, are utilizing prepaid schemes, while the remaining 21.3% are employing postpaid schemes. Thus, the analysis confirms that the majority, or 78.7%, of the sample respondents have opted for prepaid schemes.

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Table 8: Service provider and the level of satisfaction with customer care service

Service Provider	Highly Satisfied	Satisfied	Neutral	Dissatisfied	Highly Dissatisfied	Total
Aircel	04	10	08	03	03	28
Airtel	06	12	10	06	02	36
BSNL	11	08	09	09	05	42
Vodafone	12	13	15	02	02	44
Total	**33**	**33**	**42**	**20**	**12**	**150**

The null hypothesis (Ho) states: "There is a significant association between the service provider and the level of satisfaction on voice clarity among the consumers."
The observation from the above table reveals that the calculated value of $\chi2$, which is 21.5, exceeds the table value of 21.0 (21.5 > 21.0). Therefore, the null hypothesis is rejected. Consequently, it is concluded that there exists a significant relationship between the service provider and the level of satisfaction regarding voice clarity among the consumers.

Table 9: Service provider and the level of satisfaction on customer care service

Service Provider	Highly Satisfied	Satisfied	Neutral	Dissatisfied	Highly Dissatisfied	Total
Aircel	02	02	05	07	12	28
Airtel	04	07	07	08	10	36
BSNL	02	03	04	15	18	42
Vodafone	06	10	12	07	09	44
Total	**14**	**22**	**28**	**20**	**49**	**150**

The observation from the above table reveals that the calculated value of $\chi2$, which is 18.9, is less than the table value of 21.0 (18.9 < 21.0). Therefore, the null hypothesis is accepted. Consequently, it is concluded that there is no significant relationship between the service provider and the level of satisfaction with customer care service among consumers.
The null hypothesis (Ho) is stated as follows: "There is no significant association between service provider and the level of satisfaction on customer care service among the consumers."

Table 10: Age Group and the Level of Satisfaction on Brand Image

Age	Highly Satisfied	Satisfied	Neutral	Dissatisfied	Highly Dissatisfied	Total
Below 20	13	06	05	05	05	33
21-35	19	12	12	12	03	58
35-50	17	13	09	03	03	45
Above 51	03	02	04	02	03	14
Total	**52**	**33**	**30**	**22**	**13**	**150**

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The null hypothesis (Ho) is stated as follows: "There is no significant association between age group and the level of satisfaction on brand image among the consumers."
The observation from the above table indicates that the calculated value of $\chi2$, which is 11.9, is less than the table value of 21.0 (11.9 < 21.0). Therefore, the null hypothesis is accepted. Consequently, it is concluded that there is no significant relationship between the age group and the level of satisfaction with brand image among consumers.

Table 11: Service Provider and the Level of Satisfaction on Network Connectivity

Service Provider	Highly Satisfied	Satisfied	Neutral	Dissatisfied	Highly Dissatisfied	Total
Aircel	06	10	04	05	03	28
Airtel	09	13	08	04	02	36
BSNL	07	16	11	05	03	42
Vodafone	04	25	09	04	02	44
Total	**26**	**64**	**32**	**18**	**10**	**150**

The null hypothesis (Ho) is stated as follows: "There is no significant association between the service provider and the level of satisfaction with network connectivity among the consumers."
The observation from the above table indicates that the calculated value of $\chi2$, which is 9.4, is less than the table value of 21.0 (9.4 < 21.0). Therefore, the null hypothesis is accepted. Consequently, it is concluded that there is no significant relationship between service providers and the level of satisfaction with network connectivity among consumers.

Table 12: Monthly Income and the Level of Satisfaction on Call Tariff

Monthly Income	Highly Satisfied	Satisfied	Neutral	Dissatisfied	Highly Dissatisfied	Total
Upto Rs.5000	09	10	04	12	14	49
Rs 5001-10000	07	08	10	10	08	43
Rs 10001-15,000	04	03	15	05	06	33
Above Rs 15,001	03	05	12	03	02	25
Total	**23**	**26**	**41**	**30**	**30**	**150**

The null hypothesis (Ho) is stated as follows: "There is a significant association between monthly income and the level of satisfaction on call tariff among the consumers."

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The observation from the above table indicates that the calculated value of χ2, which is 22.9, exceeds the table value of 21.0 (22.9 > 21.0). Therefore, the null hypothesis is rejected. Consequently, it is concluded that there is a significant relationship between monthly income and the level of satisfaction on call tariff among the consumers.

Table 13: Service Provider and the Level of satisfaction on Service Quality

Service Provider	Highly Satisfied	Satisfied	Neutral	Dissatisfied	Highly Dissatisfied	Total
Aircel	05	08	06	03	06	28
Airtel	11	10	07	05	03	36
BSNL	13	12	09	04	04	42
Vodafone	15	16	07	04	02	44
Total	**44**	**46**	**29**	**16**	**15**	**150**

The null hypothesis (Ho) is stated as follows: "There is no significant association between service provider and the level of satisfaction on service quality among the consumers."

The observation from the above table indicates that the calculated value of χ2, which is 8.3, is less than the table value of 21.0 (8.3 < 21.0). Therefore, the null hypothesis is accepted. Consequently, it is concluded that there is no significant relationship between service provider and the level of satisfaction on service quality among the consumers.

Table 14: Mode of Scheme and the Level of satisfaction on sales Promotion Offers

Mode of Scheme	Highly Satisfied	Satisfied	Neutral	Dissatisfied	Highly Dissatisfied	Total
Pre paid	09	15	42	28	24	118
Post Paid	03	06	06	09	08	32
Total	**12**	**21**	**48**	**37**	**32**	**150**

The null hypothesis (Ho) is stated as follows: "There is no significant association between mode of scheme and the level of satisfaction on sales promotion offers among the consumers."

The observation from the above table indicates that the calculated value of χ2, which is 3.4, is less than the table value of 9.49 (3.4 < 9.49). Therefore, the null hypothesis is accepted. Consequently, it is concluded that there is no significant relationship between mode of scheme and the level of satisfaction on sales promotion offers among the consumers.

Table 15: Service Provider and the Level of satisfaction on Value Added services

Service Provider	Highly Satisfied	Satisfied	Neutral	Dissatisfied	Highly Dissatisfied	Total
Aircel	10	08	07	02	01	28
Airtel	15	13	05	01	02	36
BSNL	08	07	05	10	12	42
Vodafone	21	15	04	02	02	44

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Total	**54**	**43**	**21**	**15**	**17**	**150**

The null hypothesis (Ho) is stated as follows: "There is no significant association between service provider and the level of satisfaction on value-added services among the consumers."
The observation from the above table indicates that the calculated value of χ2, which is 38.8, exceeds the table value of 21.0 (38.8 > 21.0). Therefore, the null hypothesis is rejected. Consequently, it is concluded that there is a significant relationship between service provider and the level of satisfaction on value-added services among the consumers.

Table 16: Mode of Scheme and the Level of satisfaction on sales Promotion Offers

Mode of Scheme	Highly Satisfied	Satisfied	Neutral	Dissatisfied	Highly Dissatisfied	Total
Pre paid	21	23	27	28	19	118
Post Paid	06	09	08	05	04	32
Total	**27**	**32**	**35**	**33**	**23**	**150**

The null hypothesis (Ho) is stated as follows: "There is no significant association between mode of scheme and the level of satisfaction on billing information among the consumers."
The observation from the above table indicates that the calculated value of χ2, which is 1.9, is less than the table value of 9.49 (1.9 < 9.49). Therefore, the null hypothesis is accepted. Consequently, it is concluded that there is no significant relationship between mode of scheme and the level of satisfaction on billing information among the consumers.

Table 17: Service Provider and the Level of Satisfaction on Call Drops

Service Provider	Highly Satisfied	Satisfied	Neutral	Dissatisfied	Highly Dissatisfied	Total
Aircel	08	11	04	03	02	28
Airtel	10	14	06	02	04	36
BSNL	11	12	10	06	03	42
Vodafone	12	17	08	05	02	44
Total	**41**	**54**	**28**	**16**	**11**	**150**

The null hypothesis (Ho) is stated as follows: "There is no significant association between service provider and the level of satisfaction on call drops among the consumers."
The observation from the above table indicates that the calculated value of χ2, which is 4.4, is less than the table value of 21.0 (4.4 < 21.0). Therefore, the null hypothesis is accepted. Consequently, it is concluded that there is no significant relationship between service provider and the level of satisfaction on call drops among the consumers.

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Findings

1. It is revealed that the majority, comprising 64% of the respondents, are male consumers.
2. The analysis makes it clear that the majority, amounting to 69.3% of the respondents, belong to the unmarried category.
3. The analysis indicates that the majority, accounting for 38.7% of the respondents, fall within the age group of 21 to 35 years.
4. From the above analysis, it is evident that 32.7% of the sample respondents earn below 5,000 as their monthly income.
5. The analysis confirms that the majority, comprising 30% of the sample respondents, hold a professional degree qualification.
6. From the above analysis, it is evident that the majority, specifically 29.3% of the sample respondents, utilize the Vodafone service.
7. The analysis concludes that the majority, specifically 78.7% of the sample respondents, opted for the prepaid scheme.
8. There is a significant association between the service provider and the level of satisfaction with voice clarity among the consumers.
9. There is no significant association found between the service provider and the level of satisfaction regarding customer care service among the consumers.
10. There is no significant association observed between the age group and the level of satisfaction with brand image among consumers.
11. There is no significant association found between service providers and the level of satisfaction regarding network connectivity among consumers.
12. There is a significant association between monthly income and the level of satisfaction regarding call tariffs among consumers.
13. There is no significant association observed between service providers and the level of satisfaction regarding service quality among the consumers.
14. There is no significant association found between the mode of the scheme and the level of satisfaction regarding sales promotion offers among consumers.
15. There is a significant association between service providers and the level of satisfaction regarding value-added services among consumers.
16. There is no significant association observed between the mode of the scheme and the level of satisfaction regarding billing information among the consumers.
17. There is no significant association found between service provider and the level of satisfaction regarding call drops among the consumers.

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Conclusion

This research study aims to emphasize that four factors, namely brand image, service charges, service quality, and network quality, play a vital role in the selection of a Mobile Service Provider. With intense competitive pressure, the Indian mobile market offers a variety of plans such as call tariffs, value-added services, and sales promotion offers, which should be improved by mobile operators to enhance customer satisfaction levels. The mobile service provider market is experiencing rapid growth and is introducing different plans and schemes with lower service charges, prompting customers to consider factors such as initial subscription costs, plan availability, and tariffs. From the above discussion, it can be concluded that mobile service providers should introduce moderate plans and enhance service quality and connectivity to attract new and retain existing customers.

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