

Enhancing Customer Satisfaction in Internet Service: Unveiling the Key Factors

Pradeep Acharya* and Omkar Poudel**

*Freelance Researcher, MBA, Tribhuvan University, Kathmandu, Nepal

Email: pradeep.acharya197@gmail.com

** (Corresponding Author), Lecturer, Birendra Multiple Campus, Chitwan, Nepal

Email: omkar60475@gmail.com

Abstract

With the development of technology, there has been also the simultaneous development and advancement in the internet service and also the number of people using the internet service has been increasing every day. Thus, the number of internet service providers has also increased with time and it's hard to decide to choose from the lot of options available. Thus, the service providers should also work to increase the satisfaction of the customers. Keeping this in mind the purpose of the study is to examine the impact of network quality, price, trust and perceived value under study on customer's satisfaction towards internet service providers. Data from 244 valid samples were recorded and analyzed using partial least square structural equation modeling (PLS-SEM) to determine the result of the study. The analysis of the study indicated that Network quality, Price and Perceived value have a significant positive impact on customer satisfaction and Trust of the customers towards internet service providers has no significant impact on customer satisfaction.

Key Words: Network quality, Price, Perceived value, Customer's satisfaction, Trust, Smart Pls, PLS-SEM

1. Introduction

One of the most important inventions of the 20th century, according to Saadat and Soltanifar (2014), is the Internet. The development of the Internet as a tool for wireless communication and electronic data transfer began in the 1960s with the creation of the first practical prototype. The Internet has now permeated both organizational sectors and the everyday lives of ordinary people in developed countries. However, there are many other reasons why people use the Internet, and its use is increasing rapidly (Ngai & Wat, 2002). Internet is a foundation for social networking and information searching in the everyday lives of ordinary people (Tkacz & Kapczynski, 2009).

An organization that oversees the operations and public distribution of Internet services is known as an Internet service provider (ISP). A study by Greenstein (2001) demonstrated the significance and contemplative function of ISP in the advancement of contemporary civilization. Consumers are not only sold Internet services by ISPs; they also maintain and continuously create applications required for efficient operation, address issues as they emerge, and customize generic solutions to specific difficulties (Chiou, 2004).

ISPs are always looking for and creating new technologies to improve their services for both acquiring new consumers and giving their current customers high-quality services. As a result, ISPs seek to boost customer satisfaction by bridging the gap between client expectations and their service offerings. It's important to note, however, that this does not imply that the clients are always happy with the services rendered by their ISPs. Unhappy customers may not only cancel their subscriptions with their service providers, but they may also vent their annoyances to a large number of friends, acquaintances, the media, and consumer advocacy groups (Nimako & Freeman, 2014).

As a result, the ISP doesn't only lose a few of its current clients; rather, it loses the trust of future clients. In addition, poor service quality can have negative effects such as a bad reputation, losing customers, and losing money (Mmutle & Shonhe, 2017). These outcomes can eventually cause an Internet service provider to dissolve. On the other side, a happy customer spreads word about the wonderful services and how happy they are with their Internet service provider. Customer happiness and service quality have a favorable influence on both customer loyalty and profitability, according to research by Storbacka et al. (1994).

Because it has a significant impact on customers' retention, customer happiness is seen to be one of the most crucial tools a supplier may employ to outperform other competitors. According to Khatibi et al. (2002), Internet service providers with a greater market share may anticipate better profits. Because it costs more to acquire new customers than it does to keep existing ones, rising customer happiness may result in increased customer loyalty,

which will support the profitability of the firm being created (Frederick, 1996). Therefore, it is crucial for every organization operating in the telecommunications sector to have a comprehensive understanding of how to maintain and raise customer satisfaction levels.

2. Literature Review

2.1 Customers Satisfaction

Market share and firm investment have both been significantly influenced by customer happiness. The term "customer satisfaction" has been defined in a number of ways by experts in the industry. The denial of all expectations is emphasized in several definitions. According to certain ideas, a consumer will be pleased whenever they are happy with the product that has been delivered to them, regardless of whether it meets their needs or not. According to Kotler and Keller (2009), "customer satisfaction is a process of consumer's response to the evaluation of the perceived discrepancy between prior expectations and the actual performance of the product as perceived after its consumption."

According to research conducted by Cadotte and Turgeon in 1988, contentment is affected by satisfiers, neutrals, and dissatisfies. As a result, the satisfiers impact the intrinsic wants of the client, whilst the dissatisfies influence the extrinsic needs of the customer. As a result, clients' fundamental demands are ranked according to satisfaction. The consumer will have additional wants once their fundamental demands have been met. Once the demands that are intrinsic are satisfied, customer contentment will follow. Another customer satisfaction model views it as an exhaustive evaluation of cumulative consumption and buying experience that contrasts perceived benefits and experienced sacrifices.

In this sense, sacrifice includes both monetary expenses associated with the purchase of a service as well as intangible costs like the time and energy required to make plans and reservations (Iglesias & Guillén, 2004).

2.2 Customers Satisfaction and Network Quality

Network quality is one of the most significant influences on total service quality in the telecommunications industry (Vlachos & Vrechopoulos, 2008), which influences customer satisfaction in the telecommunications industry (Chun & Hahn, 2007; Wang, 2004). According to Thaichon et al. (2012), network quality in the Internet service sector encompasses the strength and quality of the network signal, the quantity of errors, and the speed of downloading and uploading. The three main components of network quality are stability, transmission speed, and network coverage (Junoh & Yaacob, 2011). Customer happiness and loyalty were examined to determine the influence that service uptime had (Wang, 2004).

Additionally, the impact of internet server uptime on customer satisfaction was investigated. ISPs must thus enhance their offerings if they wish to have a competitive advantage over their rivals. According to the research by Mandira et al. (2018), perceived quality is second in importance to network quality in terms of its beneficial effects on customer satisfaction.

H₁: There is a significant positive relationship between network quality and customers satisfaction.

2.3 Customers Satisfaction and Price

Consumers use price as a key factor in their purchasing decisions. The price is defined as "what is given up or sacrificed to acquire a service or a good," according to Bei and Chiao (2001). A consumer often makes a sacrifice or pays a price in the form of transaction charges and a certain amount of risk. Prior to paying the money, customers request the goods and services. The value will rise concurrently if the product price satisfies client expectations; otherwise, it may decrease. Along with pricing, quality, and other factors, it is also crucial to maintain relationships with clients (Khadka & Maharjan, 2017).

When it comes to pricing perception, Internet broadband consumers will contemplate switching to a different provider despite their willingness to pay more for better service (Junoh & Yaacob, 2011). Customer satisfaction is positively impacted by customer trust, service quality, and pricing perception, according to the findings of the study by Mandira et al. (2018). Customer satisfaction in the telecommunications industry has a clear linear relationship with pricing perception, according to research by Ranaweera and Neely from 2003.

H₂: There is significant positive relationship between price and customers satisfaction.

2.4 Customers Satisfaction and Trust

In the highly competitive business environment of today, companies must learn to trust their clients in order to keep them as clients and satisfy them. Guspul (2014) found in an earlier study on trust that the factor has a big impact on how satisfied customers are with financial services. Customer trust, according to Herawati and Prayekti (2011), has a positive and significant impact on customer satisfaction. Customer satisfaction is positively impacted by customer trust, service quality, and pricing perception, according to Mandira et al.'s (2018) study.

Customer loyalty was found to be positively impacted by satisfaction, which in turn affected trust. These results suggest a relationship between customer pleasure and trust, which is a critical antecedent of customer loyalty (Kim et al., 2011). The findings demonstrate a substantial association between customer happiness and imagery, a

significant relationship between imagery and trust, and a significant relationship between trust and customer loyalty (Amin et al., 2013).

H₃: There is a significant positive relationship between trust and customers satisfaction.

2.5 Customers Satisfaction and Perceived Value

According to Tam (2012), a key source of competitive advantage is the ability to create and provide better value to customers. According to Edward and Sahadev (2011), Indian mobile communications services showed a favorable correlation between perceived value and client retention. Companies may either improve the advantages offered to customers or lower the expenses of providing and using the service (Tam, 2012; Wang & Wu, 2012) in order to boost customer value.

The overarching goal of consistently and more effectively outperforming competitors, according to Schiffman and Kanuk (2004), is to have and keep highly pleased consumers. According to empirical data Walter et al. (2002), consumer perceived value has a favorable impact on customer satisfaction. According to Takala et al. (2006), perceived value affects consumer satisfaction both directly and indirectly. According to Petrick (2004), a key component in determining consumer happiness and repurchase intent is perceived value.

H₄: There is a significant positive relationship between perceive value and customers satisfaction.

2.6 Conceptual Framework

An analysis model is created using prior research on the connections between network quality, trust, pricing, and perceived value. A conceptual framework for the study, represented in Figure 1, was created using the literature as the basis. This conceptual study framework evaluates the link between consumer satisfaction with internet service providers and factors such as cost, network quality, perceived value, and trust.

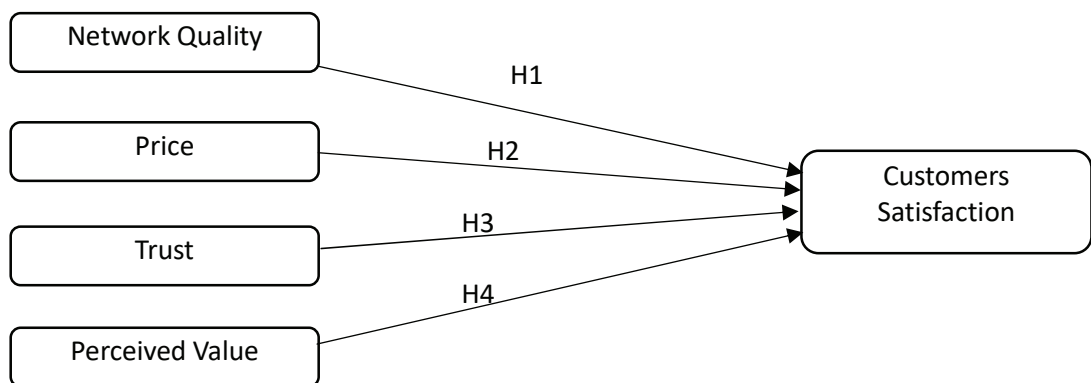


Figure 1: Conceptual Framework

3. Methodology

3.1 Instrument Development

Entirely constructs were graded on a five-point Likert measure that ranged from "strongly disagree" to "strongly agree." The stuffs were all occupied from prior research. Necessary changes and modifications were made where required to make the questionnaire suitable for research objectives. The items used in the research were taken from past research with complete validity and reliability. All the items for all variables were taken from (Luan & Vinh, 2012), with specific modifications.

3.2 Data collection

With the use of Google Forms, a survey was performed online for the study purpose, and some data were also gathered offline by asking participants to rate a topic on a 5-point Likert scale. Adding to the physical collection and online collection of data total of 100 sample responses were collected. The examination questionnaire was separated into two segments, the first of which asked about the respondents' age, gender, education, and age group as well as their demographics, and the second of which asked about the study's constructs (customer's satisfaction, trust, perceived value, price and network quality)(Poudel & Sapkota.2022;Poudel & Acharya,2023; Acharya & Poudel.2023).

3.3 Data Analysis Method

The four hypotheses were investigated using PLS-SEM, and the data from the respondent surveys was analyzed descriptively using SPSS version 24. For the investigation of theory generation and prediction causal models, PLSSSEM is based on a composite factor model(Hair et al., 2011) The measurement and structural model are the dual components of the PLS-SEM model. The former examines the reliability and validity of latent variables (Ringle et al., 2020). The latter examines how latent factors interact and impact one another and calls for latent variable path analysis (Hair et al., 2016).

4. Results and Discussion

4.1 Demographic Features

Table 1 Demographic Outline of the Respondents

Demographic Variables	Category	Frequency (N=244)	Percent (%)
Gender	Male	131	53.7

Demographic Variables	Category	Frequency (N=244)	Percent (%)
Age	Female	113	46.3
	16-26	191	78.3
	27-35	42	17.2
	36-50	10	4.1
	Above 50	1	0.4
Employment Status	Employed	71	29.1
	Self Employed	63	25.8
	Unemployed	110	45.1
Education Level	Certificate Level	26	10.7
	High school	75	30.7
	Bachelors	134	54.9
	Masters And above	9	3.7
Average duration for using ISP	Less than 1 year	40	16.4
	1-2 years	36	14.8
	2-3 years	23	9.4
	Above 3 year	145	59.4
		244	100

4.2 Measurement Model

Both measurement and structural models were tested using SmartPLS 4.0. Convergent validity and discriminant validity of the measurement model were tested. To measure convergent validity, factor loadings, Cronbach's alpha, CR, and AVE were utilized (Tenenhaus et al., 2005). An AVE larger than 0.5, outer loading of all items greater than

0.7, and composite reliability greater than 0.7 (Hair et al., 2017). As a result, Table 2 shows that all of the convergent validity requirements have been met.

The heterotrait-monotrait (HTMT) criteria is used to assess discriminant validity, which assesses measurements that are not meant to be associated and are unrelated (Hair et al., 2017). The acceptable level of discriminant validity, according to Henseler et al., (2015), is less than 0.90, and Table 3 shows that discriminant validity is established.

Table 2: Convergent Validity

Variables	Outer Loading	Cronbach's alpha	CR	AVE
CS1	0.931			
CS2	0.861	0.898	0.903	0.832
CS3	0.942			
NQ1	0.901			
NQ2	0.821	0.874	0.887	0.727
NQ3	0.888			
NQ4	0.797			
PRC1	0.875			
PRC2	0.895	0.911	0.919	0.788
PRC3	0.88			
PRC4	0.901			
PV1	0.953			
PV2	0.944	0.957	0.958	0.886
PV3	0.927			
PV4	0.94			

Variables	Outer Loading	Cronbach's alpha	CR	AVE
TRU1	0.941			
TRU2	0.966			
TRU3	0.948	0.962	0.965	0.897
TRU4	0.933			

Table 3: *Discriminant validity heterotrait-monotrait (HTMT) criterion*

Variables	CS	NQ	PRC	PV	TRU
CS					
NQ	0.783				
PRC	0.78	0.642			
PV	0.83	0.802	0.734		
TRU	0.766	0.688	0.753	0.816	

4.3 Structural Model

We initially explored the problem of collinearity in the research regression to guarantee that it was free of bias and that the independent variables in the regression model were not associated before evaluating the study's hypotheses. As a result, beforehand appraising the structural model, it is critical to check the variance inflation factor (VIF) scores. Table 4 demonstrates that the VIF scores of all variables are smaller amount than 3.3, representing that multi-collinearity is not a possibility(Hair et al.,2016).

Table 4: *Variance inflation factor (VIF) results.*

Variables	CS	NQ	PRC	PV	TRU
CS					
NQ	2.281				
PRC	2.255				

Variables	CS	NQ	PRC	PV	TRU
PV	3.61				
TRU	3.034				

Table 5: Structural Model and Hypothesis Testing

Hypothesis	Beta	Standard deviation	T statistics	P values	Decision
NQ -> CS	0.216	0.078	2.748	0.006	Supported
PRC -> CS	0.282	0.094	3.017	0.003	Supported
PV -> CS	0.317	0.1	3.176	0.002	Supported
TRU -> CS	0.126	0.105	1.198	0.231	Rejected

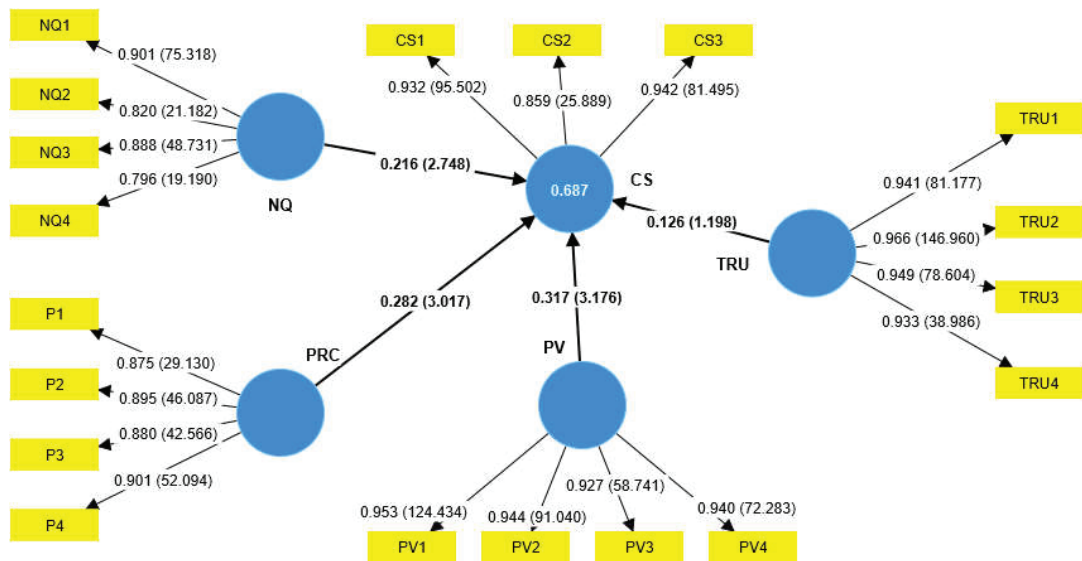


Table 5 represent the hypothesis testing through the structural model, the table concluded that all the hypothesis except H3 (TRU -> CS) were supported. It showed that hypothesis H1: (NQ -> CS, Beta: 0.216, T-stat: 2.748, p-value: 0.006) is supported and accepted indicating that network quality has significant a role to play in customers satisfaction towards the internet service providers, again hypothesis H2: (PRC -> CS, Beta: 0.282, T-stat: 3.017, p-value: 0.003) is also supported which indicated the significant positive

relation between price and customers satisfaction. Again, in the same way through the hypothesis testing it was concluded that hypothesis H3: (TRU → CS, Beta: 0.126, T-stat: 1.198, p-value: 0.231) was rejected indicating that there is no significant relationship between the trust of the customer on internet service providers on customers satisfaction. Likewise, hypothesis H4: (PV → CS, Beta: 0.317, T-stat: 3.176, p-value: 0.002) is also supported and hence it indicated the noteworthy positive relation among the perceived value and customers satisfaction towards the internet service providers.

4.4 Discussion

With technology use of internet and its products has been increasing. As people are more connected to technology then before, different factors will impact the customers and their satisfaction towards the internet services. As customers pay the price for the internet they expect the better services, better quality and better value from the internet service providers (ISP), otherwise customers will change the ISP company. In today's competitive business world, it's hard to gain customers and it's even harder to retain them. So better services and better value should be generated to customers so that they feel satisfied and valued. But these days ISP are more concerned about staking out and gaining more market share rather than creating strong relationship with the customers. This is the short-term strategy because as market matures the company with strong relation with the customers are more likely to do more better business than company having more market share. And hence the ISP should ensure better price, quality and value to make customers satisfied towards the services.

5. Conclusion

In today's world with the increase of technology, the increase of the use of the internet has also increased. More and more people are using internet and are being connected with the channel of technology. The conducted research concluded that Network quality, Price, and Perceived value of the services have a significant positive relationship with customers satisfaction but Trust has no significant relationship with customer satisfaction. Thus, to increase the satisfaction of the customer towards internet services internet service providers need to make sure that customer perceived the value of the services to a greater extent and also network quality and price of the services should be perfect and price should be logical respectively.

In the context of our country Nepal, there is a significant competition in the internet services sector with the emergence of different service providers, thus all the service providers need to manage the network quality, price, and perceived value to the optimum level, maintaining the greatest obtainable satisfaction of the customers. The satisfaction of the customers determines whether, customers will continue to use the same network service or will shift to the next service. So, to remain competitive and increase the revenue of the

company, they need to maintain customer satisfaction to hold present customers and to attract new customers. According to Hendeniya and Fernando's study from 2022, there is a considerable correlation between customer satisfaction and internet service quality of ISPs. Furthermore, results showed that, except of the Tangibility variable and the dependent variable (Customer Satisfaction), there was a strong positive association between independent variables (Reliability, Assurance, Responsiveness, Empathy and Price).

The study by Buhaljoti, A. (2019), which found that customer happiness is heavily impacted by the quality of the service as the most crucial factor of perceived service value and can boost satisfaction in the eyes of customers, came to the same conclusion. The research holds the marketing specialists in the telecoms sector accountable for developing marketing plans that would encourage competition and expand market share. So, we can conclude that the criteria included in this research are not the only ones that affect how satisfied customers are. ISP providers must thus evaluate the variables affecting customers' happiness and keep those variables stable in order to increase customer satisfaction.

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