



SURVEY ON CUSTOMER'S SATISFACTION IN THE FIELD OF TELECOMMUNICATIONS IN MALI

Keita Oualyⁱ

PhD, Department of International Relations,
Central China Normal University,
Wuhan, China

Abstract:

Liberalization in the field of telecommunication has created a competitive dynamic between two operators Orange-Mali and Sotelma-Malitel in Bamako, Mali. This research examined the satisfaction of the customers in the field of telecommunications in Bamako, given that previous research has found that increase in the number of users helps telecommunication companies generate a new appreciation for consumers. This study relied on questionnaires and observation to obtain data from a sample size of 400 consumers, whose majority consisted of males. About 60% of respondents agreed that Orange Mali's employees are knowledgeable and readily available to assist customers, keep customer information private and confidential, they meet customer needs, respondents reported to feeling like they can trust Orange Mali's employees and believe that they receive individual attention from the front line staff. Results are further discussed in the research.

JEL: L10, L63, L96

Keywords: customer satisfaction, telecommunications, Orange-Mali, Bamako

1. Introduction

Globalization and the diversification of telecommunications are marked by the convergence of the dynamics coming from the telecommunication; the information and the audio-visual discovered the new sites of the networks of communication. This innovation in technology and communications has brought one of the greatest upheavals in the history of mankind. Indeed, the world today has totally new prevention measures and horizons with a logical movement of technology and imagination towards emergence. This new concept of information is at the origin of new cultures, new actors, new strategies, new markets and new organizations. This

ⁱ Correspondence: email oualy.keita@yahoo.com

factor leads to a wide distribution of sources of work and production, which has an effect on humanity and the different networks. Telecommunication is the meaning of new information, communication and media technologies. The scientific and technical progress of the telecommunication sector is mainly dependent on the quality of the service and the evolution of the information. Telecommunication has contributed to developments in global markets for services, commodities, money and information. On November 29th, 1960, Mali entered the race of the evolution of telecommunication thanks to the creation of the post office and telecommunications (OPT). It was to manage national telecommunications and postal services.

Mali's telecommunications industry is currently facing some obstacles, notably the growing market rivalry in Bamako and the growing expectations of customers for the quality of service. Customers have the choice between Mobile Phone Operators based on the level of satisfaction, the level of accessibility and the quality of service provided. This customer demand model is a source of sharp competition among mobile telecommunications companies. This forces them to reject old customer satisfaction strategies and accept new innovative strategies that will allow them to take a significant share of the market share. The place of strategic management of a company is of paramount importance for the development of its activities.

Providing quality services or possessing quality products for customers easily distinguishes the service. The overall goal is to determine the role of Orange-Mali in customer satisfaction. The study consists of measuring the satisfaction of consumers of the mobile operator Orange-Mali within Bamako, Mali, to examine the degree of satisfaction of the customers and thus to make recommendations allowing Orange-Mali to retain customer loyalty.

2. Background on Mali

Mali is a country located in West Africa and is home to 17.99 million peopleⁱⁱ It is a dominant agricultural and livestock farming country, most of the labor force is engaged in agriculture and fishing. From 2002 to 2017, telecommunication has played a remarkable role in the national economy and socio-cultural of the country. Mali's telecommunications has a system that is characterized by high costs, also struggling to cover the entire territory, but the government is looking for ways to make improvements with the help of investors and the International Monetary Fund (IMF), the processes have already launched since 2002. The improvements have strengthened the telecommunication of the country with the installation of optical fibers and many other materials, which are at the base to innovate the communication sector with the help of new technology. In spite of everything much remains to be done for the improvement and the fall of the high price.

ⁱⁱ Wikipedia. Mali, Journal Article .2018.

A. Sotelma-Mali

In January of 1965, the government of Mali and France set up a cooperation in the framework of the International Telecommunications of Mali (TIM) with 65% for Mali and 35% for the RCF. Later in 1989, a rehabilitation program for Post and Telecommunications utilities including Postal Checks (CCP) telecommunication company) and Caisse National d'Epargne (CNE) was set up as part of the restructuring program for the telecommunications sector. Thus, by law n ° 89-32 / P-RM on October 9th, 1989, ratified by the law n ° 90-018 / AN-RM in February of 1990 splits the Office of Posts and Telecommunications in three separate entities: Technical Services of the former OPT and the International Telecommunications Company of Mali (TIM) within a state-owned company (SOTELMA), Postal Services within the National Post Office (ONP) and Chèques Postaux and Caisse d'Epargne under the name of Société des Chèques Postaux and Caisse d'Epargne (SCPCE). SOTELMA was therefore composed of a company with legal personality and financial autonomy and placed under the supervision of the Minister of Culture and Communication with a Board of Directors. Later, the lack of evolution of technology led to the dissatisfaction of services and the population.

B. Orange-Mali

Orange-Mali is a Malian telecommunications company, mobile phone operator. It is the second mobile operator in Mali since February 2003 initially called Ikatel, which was renamed on November 30th, 2006 to Orange-Mali. Its network covers Bamako, Mali. IKATEL-SA was created in 2002 to operate in Mali; France Telecom acquired the license of operation of telecommunications networks and services in August 2002, following an international call for tenders. From its creation to present day, the global telecommunications operator has achieved unprecedented performances in the field of telecoms in Mali. In February 2003, as soon as it launched its activities, the company made a commitment to make the phone accessible to all Malians by multiplying promotional sales. Ikatel-SA was the first mobile phone company in Mali offer the cheapest chip at the price of 1000 FCFA with 1000 FCFA free credit. The integration of Ikatel in the Orange network resulted in the user of an Orange chip to enjoy many benefits including the ability to communicate with people from different countries. Indeed, the Orange roaming service is one of the most effective. It allows customers to keep the same number when traveling; stay connected on the same chip and has preferential rates. With a range of innovative products and services, Orange-Mali is the leader in the telecommunications market in Mali today.

3. Method

The study adopted the survey research design method because it measures variables by asking the participants questions and then examining and analyzing any connections among the different variables. The questionnaire method was most applicable and appropriate for this study as the researcher is assessing customer's emotions about their

level of satisfaction with telecommunication services provided by telecommunication organizations in Bamako, Mali. The questionnaire consists of a series of written questions participant are required to answer. This study also used quantitative observation; statistical analysis was done to interpret and form conclusions of the results of the data.

3.1 The questionnaire

A self-administered, structured questionnaire was utilized to gather data from respondents as recommended for a large survey. Questions from the survey sought respondents' attitude and emotions about overall customer satisfaction. The questionnaire was accessible via web and paper-pencil. The questionnaire was also mailed to customers. It contained thirty-four questions. Participants could respond to the questions based on a scale rating from one to five; one being strongly disagree and five strongly agree. The first part of the questionnaire identifies customer demographic, assesses customer familiarity with Orange Mali and their most used telecommunication service. The second part of the survey requires participants to rate; quality of service, recovery service, price, brand, and customer orientation based on a rating scale. The last four questions of the survey are checklists; customers have the option to select one or more options for company feedback. Questions asked pertain to the factors that drive customer satisfaction.

3.2 Procedure

The questionnaire was distributed among 500 populations of the six communes in Bamako Capital, on a random basis. The respondents were asked to complete the questionnaire regarding their perception on the Orange Mali telecommunication service provider. From the target sample 400 questionnaires were received and the remaining 100 questionnaires were either incomplete or had multiple selections in the demographic questions, (male and female both completed for gender). The study used 400 questionnaires for final analysis and conducted descriptive statistics and correlation.

3.3 Participants

The researcher collected data from Customer of Orange Mali in Bamako, Mali. The selection of the Bamako, Mali as the area of the research coverage was due to the diversity of customers, the level of concentration of the inhabitants and the researcher believed the location would provide a more representative result of the study. The sampled population was 500 residents from the six communes in the Bamako Capital in Mali. Commune I, Commune II, Commune III, Commune IV, Commune V, Commune VI. The survey was conducted from individuals who have access to Orange Mali telecommunications services.

4. Results

The data was analyzed by the use of descriptive statistics to summarize and connect variables that were obtained from the administered questionnaires. Mean, standard deviation and frequency distribution was used to classify, arrange and summarize the data.

4.1 First part of the questionnaire

4.1.1 Participants

- From the data is seen that the majority of participants were male respondents; out of the 400 participants 255 were male and 145 were female. 36.5% of customers were between the ages of 20-29 and 33% 30-39 age group; these age groups make up the majority of Orange Mali users. Age group of 40 and up was 30.5%.
- Customer demographic results indicate that the majority of users possess some high school and university educational experience. 3% of users have no educational experience and 20.8% have primary level education.
- More than half of participants are students, a small percentage of customers are unemployed coming in at 4.5% and others are employed with public or private sectors.

4.1.2 Telecommunication products

- The questionnaire also assessed customer's familiarity with Orange Mali products and services; 89.3% of respondents are familiar with the company's telecommunication service.
- When asked to select the preferred telecommunication company; Orange Mali or Sotelma-Malitel, the majority of participants reported to preferring Orange Mali telecommunication services over their competitor with 72% of users voting for Orange Mali.
- 50.5% of respondents are internet users, 20.8% use Orange Mali's telecommunication services to make calls, 12.5% of participants are users of Orange Mali's mobile money service called Orange Money while 16.3% of customers use other telecommunication services the company offers.

4.2 Second part of the questionnaire

The second part of the questionnaire is centered on factors affecting customer satisfaction and contains a ranking system. The quality of service is the superior service delivery process to those with consumer expectations. Two main factors affect quality of service; expected service and perceived service. About 60% of respondents agreed that Orange Mali's employees are knowledgeable and readily available to assist customers, keep customer information private and confidential, they meet customer needs, respondents reported to feeling like they can trust Orange Mali's employees and believe that they receive individual attention from the front line staff.

The determinants; Quality of Service, Service Recovery, Price, Brand of the Company and Customer Orientation are all positively correlated at the 0.01 level of significance. The strongest correlation is between the variables Quality of Service and Service Recovery with a strong positive relationship of 0.896. The weakest relationship is between the Price and Customer Orientation variables with a weak positive relationship of 0.402. These variables are all fit to be included in a linear regression model to predict Factor Satisfaction.

- More than half of participants agreed that Orange Mali has a strong and effective recovery service.
- The price of the service factor of customers satisfaction results indicate that majority of participants believe Orange Mali's pricing is very competitive, about 25% agree that the price is costly while a 17.80% believe the price is reasonable and affordable.
- Respondents also agree that Orange Mali's brand is good, very innovative, they believe the company demonstrates a sense of social responsibility.
- When it comes to Orange Mali's customer orientation assessment, a large percentage of customers either gave the company a ranking of three which indicates that they did not agree or disagree or agreed that Orange Mali is a customer centric company or a four indicating they believe the company is customer orientated.

The results from the study revealed that quality of service, service recovery, and pricing, branding and customer orientation are drivers of customer satisfaction. The results of the study indicate that Orange Mali customers in Bamako are either truly satisfied with the company's products and services or that customers are new to satisfaction measurement and do not know how to express their perceptions wellⁱⁱⁱ. The study may also reveal that customer satisfaction level differs among the specific demographic sections. The majority of respondents; 278 participants, range from ages 20-39 and 195 of respondents reported to being either satisfied or very satisfied with the company's overall customer satisfaction attempts. The low satisfaction rate of participants who were 40 or older could be due to a poor familiarity and education of mobile technologies.

5. Discussion and conclusion

5.1 General conclusion

Customer satisfaction is the measurement of products or services a company provides that either meets or exceeds customer expectations. The results of this study imply that all companies not just telecommunication companies should not just rely on profit margins as a good indicator of business performance. Customers are important stakeholders of any business and businesses should develop strategies that better capture consumer's perceptions of their service offerings; these strategies complement

ⁱⁱⁱ Owiye, Atieno Emily. Analysis of customer satisfaction in the mobile telecommunication industry in Kenya: A case of study of customers in Mulolongo Area, Journal Article.2010

the internal perceptions of service offering^{iv}. Customer satisfaction is influenced by customer expectations; it is based on their own information, expectations, experience, time, location and environment. Results from the study reveal that customer orientation, quality, pricing, brand image, recovery service have a significant impact on customer satisfaction in every industry. Customer satisfaction strategies allow companies to compare and contrast their performances against customer's standards and expectations and against internal processes to determine and identify areas of opportunity. Results from the study indicate that Orange Mali has great room for improvement in their quality of service which, indicates that service quality is important to Orange Mali users and implies that it is closely linked with customer satisfaction. Consumers determine quality of service so, Orange Mali would need to do more market research to discover and identify customer desires in order to better serve those customers. From the above remarks we can retain two main results such as the high service quality of Orange Mali and the customer's satisfaction.

5.2 Service quality

According to our investigation, the success of Orange Mali is the outcome of the nature of the service it offers to the customers. That is why even though it is not the first mobile telecommunication service in Mali; it became the most influence one. From this perspective, the researcher is convinced that the quality of the service plays a key role in the success of the organization. So all effort must be made to maintain a high service quality. In addition to the service quality, Orange Mali distinguished itself from marketing perspective. These two aspects explain clearly the secret of Orange Mali's success. Another outcome of this study is the customer's satisfaction. This explains why the service keeps growing amazingly. It appears to us that customer's satisfaction is in itself a kind of marketing. The witness of customers about the product is more effective than what the company invest in other forms of marketing. Many of the customers have known Orange Mali from friends, neighborhood and so on. So when a client is satisfied, you can win more others. But the poor quality of the service can defile the image of the company.

5.3 Recommendations

Customer service has the ability to serve as hidden strength; the trained, knowledgeable, professional and charismatic customer service staff is helpful in addressing customer's complaints promptly. A brand with superior image for its technical capabilities in communication and state of art customer service program can gain the competitive edge, which will be required in later stage of a booming market. Telecommunication companies should launch products and services that cater to customer wants and needs in order to generate positive customer satisfaction and

^{iv} Ojo, Olu. The relationship between service quality and customer satisfaction in the telecommunication industry: Evidence from Nigeria, Journal Article.2010.

⁴ Owiye, Atieno Emily. Analysis of customer satisfaction in the mobile telecommunication industry in Kenya: A case study of customers in Mulolongo Area, Journal Article.2010.

⁵ Haafteen, Ronald. Customer satisfaction models, Journal Article.2017.

develop, build and strengthen customer loyalty in order to remain profitable in telecommunication market that is slowly intensifying in Mali. Telecommunication companies should also make it easy and effortless customers to switch to and from different service providers; the ease in which consumers can switch from their current service to another, demands that providers deliver the highest possible levels of service quality and performance. Delivering positive customer experiences and being customer centric enhances value-added services so, quality must be combined with all resources channeled towards customers^v.

5.4 Limitations

This study was conducted in order to identify the factors affecting customer's satisfaction in the telecommunication sector in Bamako, Mali however, some limitations did emerge in this study; the questionnaire was self-constructed instead of using an established research standard to better measure customer satisfaction, this made the data difficult to analyze and also affected the reliability of the results. Also the lack of customer satisfaction study in Bamako, Mali presented itself as a limitation in the study; this lack of knowledge hindered the study of possible insight and comparison of future projects; cooperation between academic bodies and telecommunication companies is necessary in order to achieve better customer-oriented research.

Suggestions for further research pertain to the location and region of study and competitor investigation; this study took place in Bamako, Mali and was conducted in the context of telecommunication services. Further research needs to be done in all of Mali to determine if the results will remain the same. Also, research needs to be done on the different telecommunication companies in Mali to determine and evaluate their perceived value on overall customer satisfaction and analyze the differences and similarities between companies.

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^v Owiye, Atieno Emliy. Analysis of customer satisfaction in the mobile telecommunication industry in Kenya: A case study of customers in Mulolongo Area, Journal Article.2010.

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