

**DETERMINANTS OF CUSTOMER RETENTION IN  
CELLULAR INDUSTRY OF BANGLADESH: A STUDY ON  
YOUNG CUSTOMERS**

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**ABSTRACT**

The telecommunication industry in Bangladesh, with the global trends, has been considerably grown up during the last two decades. At the end of December 2020, the number of cellular phone subscribers reached 170.137 million under four operators in the country. The telecommunication industry has been experiencing increased competition because the government has introduced uniform call rates for all operators and launched mobile number portability (MNP) in 2018, resulting in an easy switching for a customer to other operators. This situation has originated a great challenge for the cellular service providers in Bangladesh to retain the existing customers, especially the young subscribers who have more switching trends. The hyper-competition in the industry also induced mobile operators to work hard to attract new customers and retain the existing ones. The paper, therefore, aims to find out the determinants of young customer retention in the cellular industry of Bangladesh. This study is exploratory based on primary data collected from 415 young cellular phone users of the age of below 40 years in the two largest cities (Dhaka and Chittagong) in Bangladesh. The study examined eight determining factors of customer retention using the statistical tools: mean and standard deviation. The study found that price perception, customer satisfaction, switching barriers, and brand image are the strongest customer retention determinants. This study's findings have important implications for cellular phone operators to tailor their services and strategic priorities for maximizing customer satisfaction, loyalty, and retention to gain market growth and higher returns.

## 1. INTRODUCTION

The annual escalation pace of the cellular industry in the world is mounting at a high rate, and many nationwide and intercontinental cellular services providers have been fascinated by this remarkable expansion. Consequently, a competitive environment originated in the industry and cellular companies, fighting for superiority and earnings, have started to prioritize customer retention rather than possession (Ali et. al., 2010.) . Likewise, previous studies have shown that companies increasingly pay attention to user retention when the outlay of obtaining fresh customers and the competitions get heightened (Danish et al., 2015; Qadri & Khan, 2014; Ali et. al., 2010). As a result, keeping long-standing customer relationships turn out to be a crucial operation for businesses. It is commonly observed that once customers have been obtained by a particular service provider in the service industries, maintaining durable relations with their latest customers is of significant meaning to the success. In the expanding competitive market, consumer retention is considered the more steadfast basis of excellent performance, competitive advantage and an advancement factor for the cellular business (Qadri & Khan, 2014). With a view to thriving customer retention, organizations should initiate a range of actions and experiments. At present, as there is a repletion in key markets of the world, investigators are focusing on the courses that please and hold customers through long-term relationships and loyalty. Lee et. al., (2001) uttered that to build up excellent strategies to favour customer retention; customer satisfaction is noteworthy for cellular companies. Consequently, numerous studies (for example, Ali et. al., 2010; Danish et. al., 2015; Gerpott et. al., 2001; Qadri & Khan, 2014; Ruiz Díaz, 2017; Mohd Kassim & Souiden, 2007; Alshurideh, 2016) were performed regarding this vital subject.

To examine the relationship between customer satisfaction, price awareness, faith, brand image, switching barriers and customer retention, researchers shaped and built diverse potential models (Qadri & Khan, 2014). Through their strivings, many researchers have been emphasized the significance of customer retention. For the businesses, the most precious asset is there on hand customer, and long-term relationships with customers are blessing because of their lucrativeness or profitability for the business (Qadri & Khan, 2014). It is also documented that more customer retention results in more products, which is considered advantageous for businesses to construct a long-lasting relationship with the present customers (Qadri & Khan, 2014). However, customer retention depends on customer satisfaction when they comprehend product options, their usefulness, reasonable prices, and the augmented value of money they paid for (Qadri & Khan, 2014).

The telecommunication industry in Bangladesh, with the global trends, has been considerably grown up during the last two decades. At the end of December 2020, the number of cellular phone subscribers reached 170.137 million, and the number of mobile internet subscribers reached 102.353 million under four operators (BTRC, 2021). The active mobile subscriber penetration of Bangladesh reached 93.4% in 2018 from a meagre of 30.6% in 2008, and the unique subscriber penetration in Bangladesh rose to almost 55% by 2018 from only 1% in 2003 (BTRC, 2021). As a result, the Bangladeshi mobile market became the fifth-largest in the Asia-Pacific region and the eighth-largest in the world. The market has been experiencing increased competition because the government has introduced uniform call rates for all operators in the country. The industry launched mobile number portability (MNP) on the 1st of October 2018 resulted in an easy switching for a customer to other operators. In the first two months of launching MNP, 77,085 subscribers switched their operators (EBL Securities, 2019). This situation has originated a great challenge among the cellular service providers in Bangladesh to retain the existing customers, especially the young subscribers who have more switching trends. The hyper-competition in the industry also induced mobile operators to work hard to attract new customers and retain the existing ones, launching more innovative and eye-catching products. Therefore, cellular operators require identifying the

factors affecting the existing customers to retain them (Qadri & Khan, 2014). Many studies were done on customer satisfaction and customer loyalty in the cellular industry in different countries or regions (i.e., (Saha et. al., 2016; Rahman, 2014; Leelakulthanit & Hongcharu, 2011; Hanif et al., 2010; S. M. Ferdous Azam & Khondaker Sazzadul Karim, 2017), and only a few studies were conducted on the customer retention in the same industry in Pakistan (Ali et al., 2010; Danish et. al., 2015; Qadri & Khan, 2014), Jordan (Kassim & Souiden, 2007), Peru (Diaz, 2017), and Germany (Gerpott et. al., 2001). However, so far, no study was done on the customer retention determinants in the Bangladeshi cellular industry in recent years to the authors' knowledge. The paper, therefore, aims to find out the determinants of young customer retention in the cellular industry of Bangladesh. This study is exploratory based on primary data collected from the age group of below 40 years in the two largest cities (Dhaka and Chittagong) in Bangladesh. The study found that price perception, customer satisfaction, switching barriers, and brand image are the strongest customer retention determinants. This study's findings have important implications for cellular phone operators to tailor their services and strategic priorities for maximizing customer satisfaction, loyalty, and retention to gain market growth and higher returns.

The second section presents a brief literature review on the factors that determine customer retention. The third section describes the methodology consisting of sample, data collection, measurement. The fourth section analyses the results and presents a brief discussion on the findings. The final section draws upon the conclusion, implication, and future research directions. Companies maintain a long-term business relationship with their present customers to retain them. The customer retention is a process of developing customers loyalty to a specific company and repurchases products or services from that company (Danish et al., 2015). Most companies gain benefits from customer retention in long-lasting benefits. Two methods can be used to retain cellular customers: first, to make further purchases or to extend the customer's contract with the seller for a duration; and second, the intention to make future purchases to keep the contract. Since the cellular industry has experienced significant expansion, change, and competition both globally and nationally, customer retention has become a critical phenomenon (Alshurideh, 2016). The primary competitive issues that cellphone providers are currently facing are obtaining new users and retaining existing subscribers, particularly young users. However, researchers found numerous factors that determine customer retention in the cellular companies. The factors include customer satisfaction (Qadri & Khan, 2014; Ali et. al., 2010; Danish et. al., 2015), brand image (Qadri & Khan, 2014; Kassim & Souiden, 2007; Smith & Zook, 2011), price perception (Peng & Wang, 2006), customer trust (Danish et. al., 2015; Gounaris, 2005; Lin & Wang, 2006; Qadri & Khan, 2014), switching barrier (Qadri & Khan, 2014; Ranaweera, 2003), switching cost (Danish et al., 2015; Hess & Ricart, 2002), interpersonal relationship (Qadri & Khan, 2014; Jones et. al., 2003), and attractiveness of alternatives (Tahtinen & Vaaland, 2006).

### **1.1. Customer Satisfaction**

From the moment businesses understood that customer satisfaction results in better economic profits, they are trying to enhance customer satisfaction. *Customer satisfaction* is the customer response and sentiment towards prospect and evaluation of performance (Danish et. al., 2015). To prescribe satisfaction, Kotler & Keller (2009) argued that satisfaction is a person's sentiment of happiness or displeasure, which results from the comparison between his or her anticipations and the actual realization after using the product or service. The customer becomes satisfied if his or her actual realization matches or overrun the prospects. On the other hand, if the customer's actual realization is less than their expectations, the client becomes displeased (Almossawi, 2012). According to the other investigators, satisfaction is the emotion or outlook of clients for a product that results from using them (Hansemark & Albinsson, 2004).

As an essential instrument for holding the competitive advantage, customer satisfaction is still considered a key concept for companies, although their assessment processes are complex and expensive (Almossawi, 2012; Mittal et. al., 2005). Researchers also found that high retention of on-hand customers requires high consumer satisfaction that assists in restraining existing customers from the competitors (Qadri & Khan, 2014). It also helps declining price elasticity, upcoming operation costs when the number of customers decreases, a potential outlay of breakdown reduces, intensively need to pull fresh customers are decreases, and overall, the image rises. It is affirmed that customer satisfaction is found as a straight upbeat impact on customer retention and businesses (Qadri & Khan, 2014). Businesses valued customers' satisfaction with their products and services as the most crucial thing, leading to firm possession and more success than others (Hanif et. al., (2010). In their study Anderson et. al., (2004) mentioned that pleased and faithful customers would be beneficial for a business despite it is expensive to manage them. Hence, to gratify their customers, an organization should focus on upgrading the service quality and suitable reasonable price, which would eventually help the firm retain their existing customers (Anderson et. al., 2004).

Any firm could face a drop in market share, and a decrease in the number of customers and stakeholders provided that it fails to please customers as effectively and efficiently as its opponents are performing (Anderson et. al., 2004). Customer satisfaction in cellular phone operation is the customer's post-purchase estimation and their fervent feedback or response to the wide-ranging thing and appreciation of management in the telecommunication business atmosphere (Lin & Wang, 2006). When client satisfaction is high, it helps to enhance customer repurchase motive that results in customer retention. Customer satisfaction helps manage low operational costs in the business, create high devotional customers, and boost its status (Ali et. al., 2010). Moreover, customer satisfaction has a super manipulation power to construct customer's buyback habits (Danish et. al., 2015). It is also found that satisfied customers share their affirmative understanding with their friends and relatives that extend company's fame and yield (Danish et. al., 2015). However, developing a product or service feat customer satisfaction facilitates customer retention (Danish et. al., 2015).

## **1.2. Brand Image**

The brand image is considered a priceless intangible asset for a rigid company to reproduce and ultimately helps the business attain a constant and more significant economic accomplishment (Roberts & Lombard, 2002). Through some substances, customers can distinguish a brand: services, perception, touch and taste, the aroma of the product, the sound and other unique accessions of the company (Smith & Zook, 2004). Also, businesses should be aware of their brand image by comparing their products and services with opponents' attributes and values, for example, worth of promise, concentration on meeting customers estimations that arise from using the company's product or services (Alvarez, 2001) because a feeling for a name or sign which is reflected in the junction of client's memory is prescribed as the brand image (Azam, & Karim, 2017). Brand Image conducts as a channel through which a company's prominence and its ill repute can be perceived easily by customers (Kim & Lee, 2011). Gupta (2002) investigated that brand image and competitive advantage have robust connectivity as brand image helps customers distinguish a product or service from its rivals.

Researchers claimed that a company's clear brand image could attract new customers and boost the retention level of on-hand customers (Qadri & Khan, 2014). Likewise, Christopher et. al., (2006) opined that a high level of customer retention results from a high company's figure. A superior brand image can make and keep hold of the pleased customer and enhance customer loyalty for the company (Azam, & Karim, 2017). An influential brand image boosts customer satisfaction and a great cause for healthier customer retention (Kassim & Souiden, 2007). In their study, Smith & Zook (2004) found that if brand image is thoroughly operated, it can result in a higher level of customer retention in the organization.

### **1.3. Price Perception**

According to Kotler & Armstrong (2010) defined the price as a sum of money that buyers paid for a product or service. Customers consider reasonable price as the criteria to evaluate the fairness of price, its suitability or its acceptability (Xia et. al., 2004; Kukar-Kinney et al., 2007). When companies charge a competitive price, it assists in improving customer satisfaction and retention.

Researchers explored that, clients carry on their relationship with their existing service providers if they have positive insight about the cost of the company's products or services (Qadri & Khan, 2014). On the other hand, if a company's products or services become too costly, customers immediately switch the company to find the cheaper one. Peng & Wang (2006) found that when customers face some problems related to price, they frequently switch their existing service providers. In a study, Zielke (2008) discovered that the level of the positive and negative impression of a customer depends on the incentive and price levels offered by the company on their products and services, while a high level of pricing harms the sustainable relationship with customers.

### **1.4. Customer Trust**

Trust is the willingness of a party to act or perform the expected actions upon another party (Danish et. al., 2015). Customer trust is an essential element for any organization to retain customers (Danish et. al., 2015; Gounaris, 2005). Lin & Wang (2006) found customer trust as a value that has a meaningful positive outcome on customer retention. Customer trust enhances the customer retention level (Qadri & Khan, 2014), and it can be used to improve a long-term relationship between company and customer, which leads to retention behavior (Danish et. al., 2015).

### **1.5. Switching Barrier**

According to Qadri & Khan (2014) provide evidence that customer retention is the primary outcome of higher switching barriers to alternative attractions. Likewise, according to (Valenzuela, 2005), positive switching barriers may bring positive outcomes for that company trying to hold their existing customers. Ranaweera (2003) proposed that to retain their clients, companies can construct switching barriers on the current services that they provide.

### **1.6. Switching Cost**

Switching cost is the customer's sacrifice in shifting from one firm to another (Mouri, 2005) and switching cost changes the customer's mind to switch the organization (Danish et al., 2015). It is considered a critical element that significantly impacts customer retention in an organization (Qadri & Khan, 2014). Burnham et. al., (2003) opined that switching cost is recognized as the most fundamental reason for customer retention. Hess & Ricart (2002) mentioned that in the cellular business, the same outlay of switching is growing nowadays, resulting in an increasingly more networked environment and up-to-the-minute cost of switching projection of service operators assists them to retain existing customers.

### **1.7. Interpersonal Relationship**

According to Qadri & Khan (2014) found a significant impact of interpersonal relationships on customer loyalty which finally retains the customer. A constant interpersonal relationship between the firm and customer creates customer values include customization opportunities, individual recognition, financial benefits, sentimental benefits and communal benefits (Qadri & Khan, 2014). Also, interpersonal relationships and customer care strengthen the switching barriers. According to Jones et. al. (2003), when a firm maintains a strong

interpersonal relationship with its customers through customer relationship management and responsive customer care, the existing customers repurchase motive increases.

### 1.8. Attractiveness of alternatives

According to Colgate & Norris (2001), when customers realize that alternative firm has similar attributes, they are most likely to switch. If the valuable substitutes are available at the existing firm, customers' likelihood of leaving is diminished. Kim et. al. (2004) explored that unique and exclusive services result from appealing alternatives that other service providers or competitors cannot offer at all. An investigation revealed that businesses that offer incomparable services in the market, their customers are more likely to reside with that organization (Ali et. al., 2010). However, Qadri & Khan (2014) provide evidence that the more attractive is the alternative, the less the customer will be retained. On the other hand, Tahtinen & Vaaland (2006) proposed that the low attractiveness of substitutes help a specific firm to retain their customers.

## 2. METHODS

### 2.1. Sample and Data Collection

The objective of the study is to examine the factors that determine the customer retention in the cellular industry in Bangladesh. This study mainly concentrates on young subscribers of cellular phone operators in Bangladesh: Grameen Phone Ltd., Robi Axiata Ltd., Banglalink Digital Communications Ltd., and Teletalk Bangladesh Ltd. The young customers who belong to the age group of below 40 years have been chosen as the population for the study because the operator switching rate is higher in this age group (BTRC, 2021). The non-probability (convenience) sampling techniques are applied to execute this study (Roberts-Lombard, 2002). Individual reflection of researchers has an impact on choosing the sample size in the convenience sampling method. A convenience sampling method and its application are identical with the previous equivalent investigations' sampling methods (for instance, Mokhlis et. al., 2008).

The following statistically accepted (Saunders et al., 2009; Malhotra & Dash, 2016) formula was used to calculate the sample size:

$$\text{Sample Size} = \frac{Z^2 \times p \times (1-p)}{d^2}$$

Where;

$Z^2 = 95\%$  of confidence level and equals 1.96

P = expected prevalence which equals 50%

$d^2 =$  is the level of precision or sampling error and equals 5% (0.05)

$$\text{Sample Size} = \frac{1.96^2 \times 0.5 \times (1-0.5)}{0.05^2} = 384.16 \approx 385$$

Therefore, a minimum of 385 young cellular subscribers is adequate sample size for the study. A total of 600 questionnaires were sent to the respondents aged below 40 years through Google Form. Finally, 415 questionnaires were received within the deadline and used for analysis.

### 2.2. Measurement

Questionnaires were used to collect data on the variables concerned with the determinants of young customer behavior to perceive the cellular industry's services. The questionnaire used in the study has two main sections. The first part of the questionnaire consists of demographic variables including gender, age, education, occupation, monthly

expense for cellular phones, number of connections/subscriptions, and duration of using mobile phones. The demographic variables are considered to investigate the influence of young customers' demographic characteristics on their cellular subscription and using patterns. In addition, the personal information is presented in this study, measuring the frequency, percentage, and cumulative numbers. The second part of the questionnaire includes the variables of determining factors of customer retention in the cellular industry. All of the measures used in the study were adapted from the existing literature. The respondents were asked a set of questions about each of the eight determining factors of customer retention in the cellular industry: customer satisfaction, brand image, price perception, customer trust, switching barriers, switching cost, interpersonal relationship, and attractiveness of alternatives. In the second part of the questionnaire, all respondents' answers about the variables are measured on a five-level Likert scale ranging from 1 = strongly disagree to 5 = strongly agree. The respondents' ratings were analyzed using the statistical tools: mean and standard deviation. The mean score of the factors indicates the degree of influence on customer retention or the significance of the factors, while the standard deviation measures how dispersed the data is concerning the mean. The determinant factors were ranked according to their mean scores, and the higher mean indicates the higher importance of the determinant.

### 3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Table-1 exhibits the demographic characteristics of the young cellular customers in Bangladesh. The sample size in this survey was 415, in which 246 (59.28%) were male respondents and 169 (40.72%) respondents were female. Table-1 shows that the highest number of young customers (44.34%) are in the age range between 21 and 25 years. The second-highest number (29.39%) of young customers aged 26 to 30 years, and the lowest proportion (1.93%) of the customers were under 16 years. The majority of the participants in the study (48.92%) have master's degrees, 28.43% of respondents completed a higher secondary level of education. There were five occupational groups: students (254) consisting of more than half (61.21%) of the total sample size. The second-largest group was employees (25.29%), whereas the smallest number of participants (2.89%) were housewives (2.89%). Also, in Table-1, the monthly expenditures of the highest number of (26.99%) customers are between Tk.400 and Tk.600, while the least number of customers (7.71%) spent below Tk.200 per month. The demographic experiment also revealed that 71.81% of customers had only one number of connections, whereas 22.65% of customers had two subscriptions and more than two connections used by only 5.54% of customers. The last section of the Table-1 shows that only 7.47% of customers had less than two years of user experience of service, 32.53% of customers were using from 2 to 5 years, and more than half (60%) of the sample size of the customers were continuously using the telecommunication service more than five years.

Table 1 Demographic information of the respondents

Demographics	Frequency	Percentage	Valid %	Cumulative %
<b>Gender</b>				
Male	246	59.28	59.28	59.28
Female	169	40.72	40.72	100
Total	415	100	100	
<b>Age</b>				
Under 16 years	8	1.93	1.93	1.93
16-20 years	37	8.92	8.92	10.85
21-25 years	184	44.34	44.34	55.19
26-30 years	122	29.39	29.39	84.58

31-35 years	51	12.29	12.29	96.87
36 – 40 years	13	3.13	3.13	100
Total	415	100	100	
<b><i>Education</i></b>				
SSC	11	2.65	2.65	2.65
HSC	118	28.43	28.43	31.08
Bachelor	76	18.31	18.31	49.39
Masters	203	48.92	48.92	98.31
Other	7	1.69	1.69	100
Total	415	100	100	
<b><i>Occupation</i></b>				
Student	254	61.21	61.21	61.21
Housewife	12	2.89	2.89	64.10
Professional/Self employed	18	4.34	4.34	68.44
Employee	105	25.29	25.29	93.73
Businessman	26	6.27	6.27	100
Total	415	100	100	
<b><i>Average monthly expense</i></b>				
Below Tk.200	32	7.71	7.71	7.71
Tk. 200 - Tk.400	85	20.48	20.48	28.19
Tk. 400 – Tk.600	112	26.99	26.99	53.93
Tk. 600– Tk.800	74	17.83	17.83	69.88
Tk.800 – Tk.1000	58	13.98	13.98	84.56
Above Tk. 1000	54	13.01	13.01	100
Total	415	100	100	
<b><i>Number of Connections/Subscriptions</i></b>				
One	298	71.81	71.81	71.81
Two	94	22.65	22.65	94.46
More than two	23	5.54	5.54	100
Total	415	100	100	
<b><i>Using Experience</i></b>				
Less than 2 years	31	7.47	7.47	7.47
2 to 5 years	135	32.53	32.53	40.00
More than 5 years	249	60.00	60.00	100
Total	415	100	100	

Source: Survey

Table-2 presents the influencing factors of customer retention with their mean scores ranging from 3.0217 to 4.1976 and standard deviation. Mean and standard deviation are calculated from the customer's responses through a survey. In terms of mean scores, the factors price perception (4.1976), customer satisfaction (4.1277), switching barriers (4.0843), and brand image (4.0144) are the most significant factor improving customer retention in the cellular industry in Bangladesh. The price perception depends on the company's accessible and attractive pricing policies, reasonable calling rates, flexible and competitive pricing. Similarly, in the study of Qadri & Khan (2014), price perception was considered the most significant factor that impacts the client's decision to stay with their present service providers. Likewise, the studies of Ali et. al., (2010), Almossawi (2012), and Gerpott et. al., (2001) identified the most substantial effects of reasonable mobile service price on customer retention in the cellular industry. Customer satisfaction is the second most crucial factor that enhances customer retention in the telecommunication sector in Bangladesh. Service quality, professional competency, accurate execution of customer care, and cordial relationship with



customers are the factors to improve customer satisfaction in the cellular industry. In the study, Díaz (2017) also exposed that customer satisfaction strongly influences customer loyalty, ultimately resulting in customer retention. However, in a study in Pakistan, Qadri & Khan (2014) found that customer satisfaction does not significantly positively impact improving customer retention in the cellular industry. The third significant determinant of customer retention in the study is switching barriers, which is also found by Valenzuela et. al., (2005), and Qadri & Khan (2014). Finally, brand image is found as the fourth important determinant in the study. It is tiny in magnitude compared to the other three significant factors, but still, it has a crucial positive impact that influences young customers switching decisions or willingness to continue their relationship with their current service provider.

Table 2 Determinants of young customer retention (ranked in terms of their importance in determining customer retention)

<b>Factors</b>	<b>Number</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>Standard deviation</b>
1. Price Perception	415	4.1976	1.1741
2. Customer Satisfaction	415	4.1277	1.0412
3. Switching Barriers	415	4.0843	1.0741
4. Brand Image	415	4.0144	1.0162
5. Customer Trust	415	3.6024	0.2756
6. Attractiveness of alternatives	415	3.1879	0.2837
7. Switching Cost	415	3.0337	0.2621
8. Interpersonal Relationship	415	3.0217	0.0891

Source: Survey

On the other hand, the mean scores in Table-2 indicate that the factors, customer trust (3.6024), the attractiveness of alternatives (3.1879), switching cost (3.0337), and interpersonal relationship (3.0217) are the less significant factors among the given eight influencing determinants of customer retention. Also, Almossawi (2012) found similar results of these factors, which opposed the findings by Danish et. al., (2015) and Qadri & Khan (2014), where they explored that customer retention is enhanced through trust and interpersonal relationships.

## 5. CONCLUSION

The Bangladesh telecom market consists of a large portion of young subscribers. Therefore, to build and strengthen the long-term relationship between the company and customers, it is critically important to explore the determining factors of customer retention. The paper aimed to identify the critical determinants of developing customer retention of cellular customers in Bangladesh. Four hundred and fifteen young cellular phone users in the two largest cities in Bangladesh were surveyed using a structured questionnaire. The study examined eight determining factors of customer retention. The results were presented using the statistical tools: mean and standard deviation. The study found that price perception, customer satisfaction, switching barriers, and brand image are the most significant determinants among the eight determinants to retain young customers in the cellular phone operators in Bangladesh.

In this study, price perception is the key determinant of customer retention, which means that young customers are more aware of different alternative service providers' pricing levels. Therefore, the reasonable and competitive price is the most dynamic factor that helps retain customers sustainably and maintain satisfaction. When customers discover more reasonable

prices with alternative cellular service operators in the market, they tend to switch to other mobile network operators. Secondly, customer satisfaction was explored as the second most significant factor regarding retaining existing customers—more customer satisfaction results in more customer retention. The service quality, professional competency, accurate execution of the frontline employees, and cordial relationship with usual customers are critical factors of customer satisfaction to ameliorate the long-term relationship with their occupying customers. Thirdly, switching barriers have a significant relationship with consumer retention in the cellular service industry, contributing to building a sustainable relationship with users with positive experience and loyalty. Finally, a positive connection between customer retention and brand image has been found in the study. A robust corporate image can improve their on-hand customers' level of satisfaction, which leads to a higher level of customer retention. So, highly reputed organizations have a few customers who tend to switch to other service providers than any other less renowned companies in the market. On the other hand, young customers marked customer trust, the attractiveness of alternatives, switching cost, and interpersonal relationships as the less important that influence the relationship with their present mobile network service operators.

There are several implications that the study will provide insights to the concerning bodies. First, the study's findings provide experimental evidence on the determinants that influence young customers' decision to reside with their existing service providers, which will establish a comprehensive knowledge about the mobile network service industry of Bangladesh. Second, the outcomes of this investigation will guide regulators, policymakers, practitioners, and stakeholders to ensure the sustainable development of the telecom industry in Bangladesh. Third, the study results will also be helpful to future researchers and academicians, especially in this field.

The study has two specific limitations. Firstly, the study was experimented with based on young customers where more than half of the sample was the only student, which will result in a student-centric survey. Secondly, there could be the possibility of pivotal learning bias, acquiescence bias, and social elegance bias because of the Likert scale as the research tool for the study. However, despite these limitations, this study's outcomes will ascertain young customers' preferences, motives, and behaviors in the country's cellular industry. In addition, future research might be conducted on whether the government policy directly influences the execution and configuration of switching barriers and pricing levels for specific services, particularly in a developing country like Bangladesh, where government role is crucial.

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