



The Role and Impact of Mediating Factors in Grameenphone's Success: A Study on Bangladesh Perspective

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Abstract

Grameenphone attains its leading position by continuously offering better services to its existing and potential customers. This study also explains how the mediating factors of Grameenphone like network coverage, internet service, information service, emergency balance, 4G service, voice call, voice message, my zone facilities, mobile banking facilities, SMS & MMS service, customer care service, CSR activities, advertisement & promotion, variety of package, call rate, quality of telecommunication service, video call service, responsiveness to the customer, hotline service 121, available retail store & physical product, internet service, healthcare service, GP offers, etc which influence to the success of Grameenphone. The article is devoted to the study of a quick overview of the subscribers' demographics for Grameenphone in Bangladesh. The paper seeks to explore the role and impact of mediating factors, which in turn, lead to the success of the grameenphone. The main purpose of this study is to substantiate the position of the relationship between mediating factors and customer satisfaction that helps to divert potential customers to loyal customers and the ultimate objectives to achieve the company's mission. A business can gain the trust and loyalty of its customers as well as long-lasting, successful business relationships if it can recognize and meet true customer expectations.

Keywords: Mediating factors; Customer satisfaction; Customer loyalty; Grameenphone.

1. Introduction

GrameenPhone is considered one of the finest telecom brands in Bangladesh as well as the leading telecommunication service provider in the telecommunication industry. The Grameenphone (GP) is a market leader in the telecommunication industry in Bangladesh (Azmat and Md Hasebur, 2015). And it is a well-accepted mobile operator throughout the country (The Daily Star [online], 2022). GSM technology was introduced in Bangladesh with the help of Grameenphone Limited (GP). Grameenphone, widely abbreviated as GP, is the top telecommunications service provider in Bangladesh, with 83.87 million subscribers (as of March 2022). Here, it revealed that the majority of the mobile phone user in Bangladesh are Grameenphone customers.

It is a joint venture between Telenor and Grameen Telecom Corporation. Telenor, a telecommunication company from Norway, owns a 55.8% share of Grameenphone, Grameen Telecom owns 34.2%, and the remaining 10% is publicly held. The total number of Mobile Phone subscribers reached 182.92 Million at the end of March 2022 (www.btrc.gov.bd). The number of subscribers of Grameenphone Limited (GP) operator is 83.87 million, the number of subscribers of Banglalink Digital Communications Limited is 38.09 million, the number of subscribers of Robi Axiata Limited (Robi) is 54.07 million and the number of subscribers of Teletalk Bangladesh Ltd. (Teletalk) is

6.89 in millions (www.btrc.gov.bd). The total number of Internet subscribers reached 124.89 Million at the end of March 2022. The number of subscribers of Mobile Internet is 113.90 in million and the number of subscribers of ISP & PSTN is 10.99 in million (www.btrc.gov.bd).

The main objective of this paper is to assess mediating factors that led to Grameenphone's success. Based on the importance of the study the researchers are encouraged to provide a snapshot of the subscribers' demographics for Grameenphone in Bangladesh. This study also measures the relationship between mediating factors and customer satisfaction.

2. Literature Review

2.1. Network Coverage

It is a very salient strategy for the cell phone operator industry. Without proper network coverage, a phone service company can't be acceptable and popular to general people or customers. Proper network coverage service ensures that the proper telecommunication service and telecommunication service quality ensure customer satisfaction.

2.2. 4G Network

Today, an advanced communication system based on the internet has spread across the country. The country's most powerful 4G network has spread from the capital to remote areas. In February 2018, Robi and Banglalink formally launched their 4G mobile network. After some days, Grameenphone launched a 4G mobile network. And from last year, Grameenphone tries to increase its 4G mobile network coverage in the whole of Bangladesh. Not only that, but Grameenphone is also delivering strong 4G network service in deep-sea areas. Our 4G network service has uninterrupted 4G coverage on the plains, in the remote haors, and every corner of the country. So, an online business can be conducted from anywhere in Bangladesh (Grameen Phone, 2022). Hence, H_1 is presented as follows:

H_1 : Satisfaction with 4G Service of GP.

2.3. Customer Care Service

Customer care is the process of building an emotional connection with your customers, whereas customer service is simply the advice or assistance your business provides them. Customer care is less quantifiable than customer service and is more concerned with one-to-one customer interactions. Essentially, the 3 important qualities of customer service center around three P's: professionalism, patience, and a "people-first" attitude. Although customer service varies from customer to customer, as long as you're following these guidelines, you're on the right track. Customers go to the customer care center for solving their problems, if they are not getting proper service from the service center, customers will be disappointed to companies after-sale services. Therefore, the following hypothesis is presented:

H_2 : Satisfaction with GP customer care service.

2.4. Billing Cost of GP

Grameenphone offers different products at different price levels. GP offers a 1.1 Poisha/second call rate to any local number by recharging the amount Tk. 21 or Tk. 29 or Tk. 39 or Tk. 49 or Tk. 79 or Tk. 109 or Tk. 209. All Grameenphone Prepaid & Consumer Postpaid customers (except MyPlan, Xplore Special & Monthly commitment plan users) are eligible for this offer. During the offer period, this special call rate (1.1 poisha/second to any local number) is applicable on regular package tariff, Super FnF, FnF, and community tariff. Grameenphone subscribers' minimum call rate is set to increase by 5 paisa a minute to Tk 0.50 as part of restrictions imposed on the operator for being declared a significant market power. Currently, the minimum call rate for operators is Tk 0.45 a minute and after adding the value-added tax and other duties the charge goes up to Tk 0.54 for any operator (The Daily Star, June 21, 2022). Therefore, the existing customers are disappointed with GP's call rate. So, the hypothesis can be presented as follows:

H_3 : Satisfaction with the Billing Cost of GP

2.5. Mobile Banking Platform of GP

We exist to provide our customers with simple and affordable financial solutions through the efficient use of communication technology. Customers can enjoy payment services through our mobile wallet GPAY and avail of partner bank services at our MobiCash outlets. Grameenphone has six (6) partners at the moment i.e. Rocket Mobile Banking – Dutch Bangla Bank Ltd., mCash - Islami Bank, MYCash – Mercantile Bank Limited, IFIC Bank Limited, Okay Banking – One Bank Limited and United Commercial Bank Limited for providing mobile banking service to the customers. Customers are gotten the benefit of smoothly transferring money in every corner of the world by using the mobile banking platform. Therefore, consequent hypotheses can be presented as under:

H_4 : Satisfaction with the Mobile Banking Platform of GP.

2.6. Customer Satisfaction

Satisfaction reveals to offer the performance of products and services equal to or surplus the customer expectation. If any business organization tries to achieve its goals, it should be satisfied the current and potential customers. Every business organization tries to offer high-quality goods, better service, high performance,

innovative features, low prices, well-after sell service, good relationships, updated information, regular communication, credit facilities, home delivery, return facilities, online and offline purchase, different allowance and discount for satisfying the customers because a customer is the king of the market and ultimately the company will sell the goods and services to the customers. The customer satisfaction literature shows that expectation is the most direct determinant of satisfaction, followed by the perceived performance (Kim, 2005). Customer satisfaction specifies realizing content after what the person expected or wanted. There is so troublesome to know whether the customers are satisfied with the availability of the goods or services. Therefore, ensuring customer satisfaction is a difficult undertaking because other factors must be taken into account. Customer satisfaction is influenced by specific product or service features and perceptions of quality. Satisfaction is also influenced by customers' emotional responses, their attributions, and their perception of equity (Zeithaml and Bitner, 2003). Manifestations of satisfaction vary from one person to another and from one product to another (Munteanu *et al.*, 2010). So, therefore, it is shown that customer satisfaction is an abstract and rather ambiguous concept.

Customer satisfaction is a barometer that predicts future customer behavior (Hill *et al.*, 2007). Therefore, the product and its features, functionalities, dependability, sales activity, and customer assistance are the most crucial elements needed to reach or exceed customer satisfaction. Customer satisfaction is also based on customer knowledge, specifically the knowledge of the customer (Aghamirian *et al.*, 2015). "The knowledge from the customer is about products, suppliers, and markets" (Aghamirian *et al.*, 2015). So, concluded here customer knowledge disclosed the knowledge about products and services' perceived quality, perceived value, good service, price, good functioning of products, etc. "Customer satisfaction with a company's products or services is often seen as the key to a company's success and long-term competitiveness" (Hennig-Thurau and Klee, 1997). Customer satisfaction must be viewed in the context of competition because it greatly affects the competitiveness of the product and, by extension, the company.

When the customer is satisfied with the product or service of the company, it can make the customer purchase frequently and recommend products or services to potential customers. A business organization can't grow up in case the company ignores or disregards the needs of customers (Tao, 2014). In a nutshell, customer satisfaction is a vital component of a business strategy as well as customer retention and product repurchase. To maximize customer satisfaction companies should sell ideas and methods after the completion of all the necessary documents. If the behavior of the customers is positive to the service holder, then those customers are said to a loyal customers (Abdullah, 2012). The behavior and attitude of the customers towards particular goods and services matter the most.

Increased customer satisfaction can help the business in several ways, including increased customer loyalty, an extension of the customer's life cycle, and an increase in the amount of positive word-of-mouth advertising. Since a company's ability to succeed depends on its ability to satisfy its consumers, it is reasonable to infer that Grameenphone's customers are happy, which will help it dominate the Bangladeshi telecommunications market. Therefore, the hypothesis can be presented as follows:

H₅: GP is better than another operator.

2.7. Customer Loyalty

Customer loyalty is the promise and commitment to again purchase and re-patronize similar products from the same organization. Satisfied customers usually rebound and buy more. Customer loyalty is measured through questions on the likelihood to purchase a company's products or services at various price points. Customer satisfaction has a positive effect on loyalty, but the magnitude of that effect varies greatly across companies and industries (Cullen, 2001). Besides buying more they also work as a network to reach other potential customers by sharing experiences (Hague and Hague, 2016). Another crucial element in satisfaction is customer loyalty. The impact of satisfaction on loyalty has been the most popular subject in the study of marketing theory. As satisfied customers are loyal and dissatisfied customers are a vendor (Heskett and James, 2011). Chen and Wang (2009) suggest a view of customer satisfaction as a kind of consistency evaluation between prior expectations and perceived service performance. Customer satisfaction and loyalty should be incorporated into the long-term goal of a business. When satisfaction reaches a certain level, loyalty increases dramatically, at the same time satisfaction declined to a certain point, and loyalty dropped equally dramatically (Oliva *et al.*, 1992). Customer satisfaction is a key element for every organization wishing to increase customer loyalty and create better business achievement. While some research on the relationship between customer satisfaction and loyalty suggests that loyalty has strongly correlated with many different types of customer satisfaction measurements (Ashley and Sajeev, 2009; Boshoff, 2005; Butcher *et al.*, 2001; Carpenter *et al.*, 2005; Law *et al.*, 2004; Taylor *et al.*, 2002; Yang and Robin, 2004).

Consumer loyalty can be defined as attitude and behavior (Rai and Medha, 2013). Customer loyalty can be understood as a two-dimensional variable, which can be researched as each dimension separately or as both dimensions together (Kwong and Candinegara, 2014). However, customer loyalty mainly focused on the behavior and attitude that lead to the commitment of customers to buy from the same producer regardless of outside factors and re-patronize the potential customers. Customer loyalty is comprised of three distinct constructs: behavioral loyalty, attitudinal loyalty, and composite loyalty (Taylor *et al.*, 2006). Oliver (1999) demonstrated that ultimate loyalty can totally encompass satisfaction, satisfaction and loyalty can overlap, but also that satisfaction does not necessarily transform into loyalty and can indeed exist without the latter. While several researchers argue that loyal consumers return to purchase goods or services from the same organization (Lee *et al.*, 2006; Taylor *et al.*, 2002). Since Grameenphone is the market leader in the telecommunication industry in Bangladesh. Therefore, it can be assumed that GP's customers are loyal and loyal customers have committed to re-buy and recommended to others customers like as friends and relatives. So, consequent hypotheses can be presented as under:

H₆: Recommending GP to friends and relatives.

3. Materials and Methods

3.1. Questionnaire Design

The questionnaire has been conducted from the perspective of the existing literature, the opinion of GP users, existing strategic service factors of GP, and experts' opinions and direction. We have reviewed management, and marketing (service marketing, relationship marketing, brand management, and other telecommunication service-related papers). The questionnaire was designed by profiles of respondents, service factors of GP, the satisfaction of the customer, and loyalty of the customer. Data are collected through observation and questionnaire methods. The structured questionnaire sampling procedure has been applied to collect data. The survey conducted total 150 numbers of Grameenphone users at Pabna University of Science and Technology at the graduate level has been taken for this study. A few new items were also included in different constructs to get a good response from data collection through the survey. The questionnaire has 2 (two) parts.

The first part was intended to understand the personal information of respondents using a nominal scale. The second part establishes the respondent perceptions regarding (service, satisfaction, and loyalty) in the setup of the model. All constructs were measured using multiple items by a five-point Likert scale (1= strongly disagree, 2= disagree, 3= slightly agree, 4= agree, and 5= strongly agree). Some factors are fixed for the respondent like age below 30, bachelor, student, and gender male or female.

3.2. Data Collection and Data Analysis

This study is mainly based on primary data originating from a survey. For this purpose, a constructed questionnaire has been developed. Data are collected through the questionnaire method. The questionnaire includes profiles of the respondent, leading success factors of GP, customer satisfaction, and customer loyalty. Data are analyzed through statistical tools and measurement systems. Data are analyzed by statistical method, SPSS statistics 17.0 software is used for the analysis of the data. Descriptive statistics, frequency distribution (frequency, percent, and cumulative percent), and the chi-square test method are used to analyze data and test the hypotheses. Decision criteria are taken based on the frequency distribution (frequency, percent, and cumulative percent), and the chi-square test method is used to test the hypotheses and accept and reject decisions (Ullah *et al.*, 2017).

4. Results and Discussion

The given below discusses the respondent's profiles variable, frequency, percent, a valid percent, and cumulative percent.

Table-1. Respondent's Demographic

Heading	Variable	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
First Operator	GP	128	85.3	85.3	85.3
	Banglalink	12	8.0	8.0	93.3
	Robi	3	2.0	2.0	95.3
	Airtel	1	.7	.7	96.0
	Teletalk	2	1.3	1.3	97.3
	Citycell	4	2.7	2.7	100.0
	Total	150	100.0	100.0	
Multiple Operator	Yes	137	91.3	91.3	91.3
	No	13	8.7	8.7	100.0
	Total	150	100.0	100.0	
Year of Connection	bellow 3 years	45	30.0	30.0	30.0
	3-6 years	62	41.3	41.3	71.3
	above 6 years	43	28.7	28.7	100.0
	Total	150	100.0	100.0	
Age	bellow 30 years	150	100.0	100.0	100.0
Monthly Mobile Expense	bellow Tk. 500	104	69.3	69.3	69.3
	Tk. 500-1000	37	24.7	24.7	94.0
	above Tk. 1000	9	6.0	6.0	100.0
	Total	150	100.0	100.0	
Educational Level	Bachelor	150	100.0	100.0	100.0
Profession	Student	150	100.0	100.0	100.0
Gender	Male	143	95.3	95.3	95.3
	Female	7	4.7	4.7	100.0
	Total	150	100.0	100.0	

Respondent's Demographic The questionnaires were distributed to the users (n=150) of GrameenPhone among them 85.3% of respondents thoroughly use GP as their first mobile operator, 8.70% users were Banglalink users, 2.0% users were Robi, .7% users were Airtel, 1.3% were Taletalk, 2.7% were Citycell users. Among the respondents, 91.3% of users use multiple operators' services, and 8.7% use only the GP service. 30.0% of users use GP below 3 years, 41.3% of respondents use it within 3-6 years, and 28.7% used it for 6 years and above. For

respondents below 30 years, using GP is 100%, 69.3% of respondents' monthly expenses bellows Tk.500, and 24.7% incur expenses within Tk. 500-1000 and 6.0% of respondents have above Tk.1000 monthly expenses. Among the respondents 100% Bachelor, 100% Students, 95.3% were Male, and 4.7% are Female respondents. From the table, we can see that the majority percent of respondents use GP as the first mobile operator.

4.1. Customer Satisfaction Factor

Table-2. Satisfaction with 4G Service

	Observed N	Percent	Expected N	Residual
Strongly Disagree	19	12.7	30.0	-11.0
Disagree	34	22.7	30.0	4.0
Slightly Agree	31	20.7	30.0	1.0
Agree	59	39.3	30.0	29.0
Strongly Agree	7	4.7	30.0	-23.0
Total	150	100.0		
Chi-Square	50.267 ^b			
df	4			
Asymp.Sig	.000			

Satisfaction with 4G service 39.3% agrees, 4.7% strongly agree, 22.7% disagree, 12.7% strongly disagree and 20.7% slightly agree. The chi-square amount of satisfaction with four G service is 50.267^b. We can see that a high percentage agree (39.3%) with satisfaction with 4G service.

Table-3. Satisfaction with Customer Care Service

	Observed N	Percent	Expected N	Residual
Strongly Disagree	26	17.3	30.0	-4.0
Disagree	41	27.3	30.0	11.0
Slightly Agree	22	14.7	30.0	-8.0
Agree	57	38.0	30.0	27.0
Strongly Agree	4	2.7	30.0	-26.0
Total	150	100.0		
Chi-Square	53.533 ^b			
df	4			
Asymp.Sig	.000			

Regarding satisfaction with customer care service, 38% agree, 2.7% strongly agree, 27.3% disagree, 17.3% strongly disagree and 14.7% slightly agree. The chi-square amount of satisfaction customer care service 53.533^b. We can see that a high percentage agree (38%) with satisfaction with customer care service.

Table-4. Satisfaction with Billing Cost

	Observed N	Percent	Expected N	Residual
Strongly Disagree	25	16.7	30.0	-5.0
Disagree	35	23.3	30.0	5.0
Slightly Agree	38	25.3	30.0	8.0
Agree	46	30.7	30.0	16.0
Strongly Agree	6	4.0	30.0	-24.0
Total	150	100.0		
Chi-Square	31.533 ^b			
df	4			
Asymp.Sig	.000			

Satisfaction with billing cast 30.7% agree, 4% strongly agree, 23.3% disagree, 16.7% strongly disagree and 25.3% slightly agree. The chi-square amount of satisfaction with billing cost is 32.667^b. We can see that a high percentage agree (30.7%) in satisfaction with billing cost.

Table-5. Satisfaction with Mobile Banking Platform

	Observed N	Percent	Expected N	Residual
Strongly Disagree	10	6.7	30.0	-20.0
Disagree	16	10.7	30.0	-14.0
Slightly Agree	24	16.0	30.0	-6.0
Agree	84	56.0	30.0	54.0
Strongly Agree	16	10.7	30.0	-14.0
Total	150	100.0		
Chi-Square	124.800 ^b			
df	4			
Asymp.Sig	.000			

Satisfaction with mobile banking service 56% agrees, 10.7% strongly agree, 10.7% disagree, 6.7% strongly disagree and 16% slightly agree. The chi-square amount of satisfaction with mobile banking platforms is 124.800^b. We can see that a high percentage agree (56%) with satisfaction with mobile banking service.

Table-6 Better than Other Operator

	Observed N	Percent	Expected N	Residual
Strongly Disagree	23	15.3	30.0	-7.0
Disagree	30	20.0	30.0	.0
Slightly Agree	21	14.0	30.0	-9.0
Agree	57	38.0	30.0	27.0
Strongly Agree	19	12.7	30.0	-11.0
Total	150	100.0		
Chi-Square	32.667 ^b			
df	4			
Asymp.Sig	.000			

In better than another operator, 38% agree, 12.7% strongly agree, 20% disagree, 15.3% strongly disagree and 14% slightly agree. The chi-square amount of the better other operator is 32.667^b. We can see that a high percentage agree (38%) in better than another operator.

Table-7. Recommending Friends and Relatives

	Observed N	Percent	Expected N	Residual
Strongly Disagree	6	4.0	30.0	-24.0
Disagree	31	20.7	30.0	1.0
Slightly Agree	24	16.0	30.0	-6.0
Agree	79	52.7	30.0	49.0
Strongly Agree	10	6.7	30.0	-20.0
Total	150	100.0		
Chi-Square	113.800 ^b			
df	4			
Asymp.Sig	.000			

Recommending friends and relatives, 52.7% agree, 6.7% strongly agree, 20.7% disagree, 4% strongly disagree and 16% slightly agree. The chi-square amount of recommending friends and relatives is 113.800^b. We can see that a high percentage agree (52.7%) in recommending friends and relatives. Most of the respondents are satisfied to use the GP service, that's why they are committed to repurchasing the same product from the same company and patronize other persons which means recommending friends and family members.

Table-8. Result of Hypotheses

Serial No.	Contents	Result
01	Satisfaction with 4G Service of GP.	Accepted
02	Satisfaction with GP Customer Care Service.	Accepted
03	Satisfaction with Billing Cost of GP.	Accepted
04	Satisfaction with the Mobile Banking Platform of GP.	Accepted
05	GP is Better than Other Operators.	Accepted
06	Recommending GP to Friends and Relatives.	Accepted

5. Conclusion and Recommendations

The primary purpose of this study is to identify whether mediating factors can impact customer satisfaction and loyalty formation leads to repurchase behavior, which in turn, leads to a company's success. This article first provides an overview of the conceptual foundations of mediating variables, loyalty, repurchase, and satisfaction, and their relationships. After analyzing the metadata all hypotheses are accepted, so GP would try to improve and

develop their existing strategic services like as covert 4G to 5G, setting up customer care service centers in rural areas from where customers will get available after-sell service, GP should maintain the low call rate and try to decrease the billing cost, GP tries to add different Bank for providing banking services. Grameenphone will diversify its current service and include new services to capture potential customers, and competitor's customers and retain existing customers. Some strategic limitation like as high call rate, limitation of account balance validity, limited FnF number, time consumption, costly customer and insufficient GP offer, etc has a negative ancillary effect on customer satisfaction level. So, GP tries to mitigate its limitations to provide uninterrupted service to its customers. Nowadays, the telecommunication service market is very competitive and dynamic, so to take a competitive environment positively the company must increase customer services and ensure proper customer satisfaction. Compared with other operators, Grameenphone has gained a successful position to set up a superior strategic service to the consumers. In the other words, GP has a clear benefit rather than the competitors. GP has some critical success factors in comparison to its competitors. Furthermore, the result shows a favorable relationship between mediating factors and customer satisfaction. Finally, this study concludes that the mediating factors are playing a burning role to improve the subscribers of GP, which in turn, leads to Grameenphone's success. This study will help the Grameenphone telecommunication company's authority to assess its position in the marketplace. Besides the positive aspects of the study, the Research limitations of the study are the respondents are not cooperating with a researcher for collecting data. The researcher couldn't accumulate sufficient samples to measure the exact result, this was the study of a specific arena and time was not adequate for collecting sample data.

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