

Research proposal

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Abstract

Du and Etisalat are the major internet providers in the United Arab Emirates. The two companies are seen as a duopoly in providing internet service in the country. They compete to attract new customers while retaining the existing ones. Customer satisfaction is one of the areas in which each company can gain a competitive advantage. It helps to build customer loyalty and guarantee the long-term survival of an organization. Therefore, the study will examine the customer satisfaction levels of internet services provided by Du and Etisalat.

Introduction

The invention of the internet significantly transformed communication in the world. People in different locations can communicate easily and quickly, connect with friends, obtain information around the world quickly, and carry out searches. Therefore, it is seen as an important medium today.

The World Bank (2015) states that 91 percent of the population in the United Arab Emirates use the internet. The main internet service providers in the country are Du and Etisalat. The two companies are engaged in an intense competition to attract new customers while retaining the existing ones. One way of appealing to customers is ensuring that they obtain high levels of satisfaction with the services provided. The study seeks to understand the degree of customer satisfaction of internet services provided by the two companies.

Literature review

Customers have certain expectations of the value that a particular service provides. The expectations-disconfirmation model states that customers have certain expectations regarding a service before buying it (Oliver, 1980). It is based on a consumer's belief that a service (internet service) has particular desired features. After the customer has purchased the service, he or she evaluates whether the service meets his or her expectations.

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Customer satisfaction is an important element for an organization. Wang and Wu (2012) state that customer satisfaction leads to customer loyalty, which ensures the long-term survival of an organization through revenues and profits. Customer loyalty is seen as important to a business because it is more expensive to attract new customers than retaining them. Therefore, companies can obtain revenues throughout their life. Spiller, Vlastic, and Yetton (2007) state that a one percent retention rate of clients may increase as much as 5 percent profit of an internet service provider, which lowers the pressure to look for and attract new customers.

Previous studies have examined the internet service customer levels in different countries. Erevelles, Srinivasan, and Rangel (2003) carried out a study on the customer satisfaction levels for internet service providers in the United States. They used focused groups with twenty customers in the first phase and seventy-five customers in the second phase of the study. They found that the customer satisfaction levels for the Internet services were very low in the country (Erevelles, Srinivasan, & Rangel, 2003, 87). Thaichon and Quach (2015) carried out a study on the link between service quality and satisfaction of Internet service providers' customers in Thailand. They used an online survey in all parts of the country and found that customer satisfaction led to customer loyalty among internet service providers (Thaichon & Quach, 2015, 307). However, there has been no study examining the level of customer services among Internet service customers in the United States. Therefore, the study will examine the internet services customer level satisfaction by comparing the customer level satisfaction for Du and Etisalat.

Methodology

The study will use the questionnaire method to collect data. The study will have a sample size of at least 200 people. The participants will be aged above 18 and regular users of the internet. Participants will be randomly selected in all the seven emirates of the UAE to

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ensure that the findings can be generalized in the whole country. The participants will consist of the citizens and non-citizens. However, it will require that the participant must have been a resident in the country for at least six months. The researcher will approach and explain to them the goals and requirements of the study. They will be given a letter from the university that provides the researcher the permission to carry out the study. Their consent will be obtained orally and in written form. A questionnaire will then be given to them to fill. The questionnaires will then be collected after a week.

The questionnaire will require that participants rate the customers' experience with their internet service providers (Du and/or Etisalat). They will rate each item using a Likert scale, with 1 representing "strongly disagree" while 5 represents "strongly agree." The customer satisfaction levels will be measured by attributes that include the overall service quality, value, commitment, and loyalty.

Conclusion

I predict that the internet service provider that offers the better overall service quality will have higher satisfaction levels. Also, higher customer satisfaction levels will be linked to higher levels of customer loyalty and commitment. The study will provide a ground for the internet service providers to create retention strategies through improving customer satisfaction levels. It will also affect customers and businesses because they can understand the internet service provider that is likely to offer them better internet services.

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