Title

ASSESSING THE FACTORS THAT INFLUENCE CUSTOMERS' CHOICE OF AIRTEL MOBILE INTERNET BUNDLES IN AREA 25 LILONGWE MALAWI

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ABSTRACT

The study aimed at assessing the factors influencing customers' choice of Airtel mobile internet bundles in Area 25, Lilongwe, Malawi. As mobile data continues to shape communication, education, and economic participation, understanding what drives customers to select specific bundles has become increasingly important.This study was guided by The *Consumer Choice Theory (1870),* which states that a microeconomic branch, examines how individuals decide what to purchase and consume to maximize their satisfaction or *"utility"* within budget limitations. This theory operates on the assumptions that consumers have preferences, face budget constraints, A mixed-methods approach was employed, combining quantitative surveys with qualitative interviews, to capture both measurable trends and the underlying experiences that shape customer decisions.The findings revealed that weekly bundles are the most commonly purchased option among Airtel users in Area 25, followed by monthly bundles, while daily bundles are the least preferred. Income level emerged as the only statistically significant predictor of bundle choice, with higher-income customers more likely to select monthly bundles. Price, data volume, and promotional offers were consistently identified as the most influential factors in customer decision-making. Key challenges reported by users included slow internet speeds, rapid data depletion, unclear bundle information, and ineffective customer support services. Based on these findings, the study concludes that customer choices are strongly guided by perceived value, affordability, and convenience. It is recommended that Airtel Malawi enhance network quality, simplify bundle descriptions, strengthen customer support systems, and introduce more flexible and affordable data options. Improved transparency and increased promotional incentives may also contribute to higher customer satisfaction and retention.

KEYWORDS: mobile internet bundles, customer choice, Airtel Malawi, consumer behavior, pricing factors, network quality, Area 25 Lilongwe.

INTRODUCTION

Mobile data has become a vital component of daily life in the current digital era, facilitating communication, information access, and involvement in the digital economy. Mobile data is used by any activity on your phone that requires an internet connection, especially when not connected to Wi-Fi. This includes browsing the web, streaming videos or music, using social media and messaging apps, playing games and more. Essentially, anything that involves sending or receiving information over the internet consumes mobile data.

According *Bhattacharyya et al. (2017),* applying the practice perspective of Technology Affordances and Constraints Theory, we found that UPI adoption was shaped through a dynamic interplay of emerging affordances and constraints. New features, such as All-in-one QR, enabled actions like cross-platform money transfer but also introduced challenges like fraud. Advancements in the technology addressed previous challenges but also created new hurdles. This cycle of evolving affordances and constraints within the contextual use of UPI payment technology shaped its adoption process.

Airtel as one of Malawi's top telecom companies, provides a variety of mobile data packages to meet the demands of its clients. To enhance service delivery and customer happiness, it is still essential to comprehend the factors that influence customers' decisions to select particular data bundles. The purpose of this study is to assess the major determinants of Airtel Malawi mobile data bundle selection. Specifically, the study delves into the primary research questions include; price, choice, speed, promotional marketing and brand loyalty, and the secondary research questions include; demographic differences, flexibility, and social influence. There are multiple cell phone network types, including 3G, 4G, 5G, LAN, and WAN. The main difference between these

systems is that they use different radio frequencies to transmit signals *(Hepler, 2023)*

BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

In today's digitally connected world, internet access is crucial, and Airtel plays a central role globally in meeting this demand. It offers competitive internet services, diverse data bundles, mobile money platforms, and digital services meticulously tailored to local needs, reaching millions of customers worldwide and reflecting its commitment to adapting to evolving consumer choices across its vast operational footprint.

Regionally, particularly in Africa, the telecommunications landscape has been shaped by significant deregulation, such as the sector's liberalization in 2000, which spurred the widespread adoption of Global System for Mobile Telecommunications and Code Division Multiple Access services *(Peters et al., 2020).* Despite the perceived benefits, challenges concerning the quality of services and infrastructural constraints have persisted and largely remained uninvestigated *(Peters et al., 2020).* Within this dynamic environment, Airtel Malawi Limited, a subsidiary incorporated in Malawi and re-registered as Airtel Malawi Plc, functions to provide telecommunication services, with its holding company based in the Netherlands. Its commitment to the Malawian market was underscored by the Malawi Communications Regulatory Authority (MACRA) extending its operating license for another 10 years in February 2024, marking a quarter-century of its presence.

Airtel Malawi caters to the diverse needs and preferences of its national customer base by offering a comprehensive array of internet data bundle options. Customers choose from standard daily, weekly, or monthly general internet bundles, which vary in data usage patterns and budgets. Beyond these, the company provides specialized packages such as social media bundles for platforms like Facebook, WhatsApp, and Twitter, and value-added MoFaya bundles. Furthermore, Airtel Malawi offers tailored solutions like Scholar bundles for students and Office bundles for professionals, ensuring that a wide range of choices is available for customers to select data packages that optimally align with their specific usage patterns and financial capabilities *(Lawrence, 2024).*

PROBLEM STATEMENT

The rapid proliferation of mobile internet services has made internet bundles an indispensable commodity for consumers globally, including in Malawi. Telecommunication operators, such as Airtel Malawi, a leading player in the region, actively compete by offering a diverse array of internet bundles tailored to different data volumes, validity periods, and price points *(Joiner et al., 2024).* While this variety aims to cater to the diverse needs and preferences of their extensive customer base, a significant practical challenge emerges: despite the availability of these numerous packages, there remains a limited understanding, from the operator's perspective, of the specific determinants that influence customers' decisions when selecting one bundle over another *(Makoza, 2021).* This lack of insight can hinder effective product development, marketing strategies, and customer retention efforts.

Academically, this practical challenge translates into a notable research gap. Despite the evident importance of mobile internet access and the competitive landscape of telecommunication services, there is a lack of comprehensive scholarly understanding of the underlying factors that drive consumers' choices among diverse mobile internet bundles. Existing literature often addresses broader aspects of consumer behavior in telecommunications or general product choice, but specific studies focusing on the granular decision-making process for differentiated internet bundles, particularly within the Malawian context, are scarce. Previous research in consumer behavior and telecommunications has identified general factors such as price sensitivity, network quality, brand loyalty, and perceived value as influential in customer decision-making for mobile services.

For instance, studies by *Naing (2024)* highlighted the significant impact of network coverage on overall service adoption, while *Chen (2020)* emphasized the role of perceived value in subscription choices.

However, these findings often provide a macro view and do not sufficiently delve into the specific criteria consumers use when differentiating between seemingly similar internet bundles (e.g., a 1GB daily bundle versus a 1GB weekly bundle, or price differences between similar data volumes). This study was conducted to fill the gap by focusing on the demographic and socioeconomic factors influencing internet bundle choice by Area 25 Airtel customers.

RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

Main objective

- To assess the factors influencing customers' choice of Airtel mobile internet bundles in Area 5, Malawi.

Specific objectives

- To identify the commonly used Airtel mobile internet bundles by customers in Area 25
- To assess the socio-economic factors that influence the choice of Airtel mobile internet bundles by customers in Area 25.
- To determine the challenges faced by the Area 25 customers when using the Airtel mobile internet bundles.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

- What type of internet bundle do customers typically purchase (daily, weekly, and monthly)?
- Are there any significant relationships that influence customers' choice on the socio-economic factors of Airtel Malawi's internet bundles?
- What are the significant challenges that impact customer satisfaction?

SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

Internet has a number of numerous advantages. Examining each advantage and disadvantage of internet bundles includes. The internet is full of thousands of knowledgeable websites and valuable content. You can find all types of solutions via internet sites, whether academic or scientific information. The internet has made life easier and more flexible.

Without waiting for news headlines, you can easily access current news on the internet within seconds. Twitter, Facebook, and LinkedIn are all social media platforms that allow users to stay aware of current affairs worldwide. Social networking is made easily; the internet's greatest advantage is that it helps you to stay connected. You can reach anyone, anywhere in the world, at any time. You can instantly converse with friends and family wherever they are *(Coulibaly et al., 2016).* On the other hand, the drawbacks of internet bundles are that most internet users waste a lot of time on social networking sites while doing nothing productive. Users become addicted to these online services because of this activity. And this diverts users from other productive pursuits in their lives this creates Users spend hours on social media with no real purpose, which Increase distractions from work and studies, Leads to delays in tasks, Reduce focus on important activities and Addiction to non-productive sites and apps *(Balta et al., 2023).*

The study provides a comprehensive understanding of the factors that influence customer decisions when selecting mobile internet

bundles. The study findings helped the Airtel Company learn from their customers, helping them strategize better in as far of designing and development of internet bundles is concerned so as to maximize their customers' satisfaction. This can lead to increased.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This chapter describes the research methods used for this study. It describes the research design, population, and sample strategies, data collection methods, instrumentation, validation and reliability procedures, and data processing approaches. The technique is meticulously planned to ensure the collection of relevant and reliable data that addresses the research objectives and questions. This chapter maintains the study's credibility, rigor, and explicability by utilizing a methodical approach to research design and implementation *(Weijun, 2008).*

The chapter opens by discussing the study's overarching research philosophy and design, which is followed by a full discussion of the target demographic and the sampling method used to choose respondents. It then describes the techniques and instruments utilized to collect data, as well as how the research instrument was created and tested. Ethical concerns are also addressed, as are the actions required to assure the data's veracity and validity. Finally, the chapter discusses the procedures for analyzing the acquired data, including the statistical tools used to test the study's hypotheses or research questions *(Mendis, 2021).*

RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

According to *Purwanto (2023)* research design is a general plan to answer a research question *(Zhen Chen 1, 2012).* A mixed-methods research design was adopted for this study. This approach integrates both quantitative and qualitative methods, allowing for a comprehensive understanding of the research problem by converging different data sources *(Salkind, 2012).* The concurrent triangulation design was specifically used, where quantitative and qualitative data are collected concurrently and then compared to determine if there is convergence, differences, or some combination *(Mackiewicz, 2018).* This design is chosen to provide a more holistic view of the factors influencing customer choice and the challenges they face.

For the quantitative approach, this approach primarily was involved during the collection of numerical data through structured questionnaires to identify commonly used mobile internet bundles and assess the prevalence of various influencing factors.

Sample Size

The sample size for the quantitative component was determined using a widely accepted statistical Cochran's formula for an infinite population (large/unknown N) or prevalence study. The formula is specified as below:

$n = [Z^2*P*(1-P)]/E^2$

Where:

- n= sample size Z= z-score
- P= population
- E= margin of error

For example: in this survey, the population is unknown. And 90% confidence level and a margin of error of 10%. By using the infinite population formula, which Z= 1.645, P=0.5, and a margin of error E=0.1

N= [1.645^2*0.5*(1-0.5)]/0.1^2 N=67.650625

Approximately **68** participants were targeted for the quantitative survey.

Research Instrument

According to *Oben (2021),* The primary research instrument used for this data collection in this study is structured questionnaire. The questionnaire was designed to gather both demographic/socio-economic information and data related to factors influencing customers' choices on mobile internet bundles. It comprised closed-ended questions (e.g., multiple-choice) to facilitate quantitative analysis. For the qualitative data collection, a semi-structured interview guide was used for key informant interviews. This guide contained open-ended questions designed to elicit detailed narratives, opinions, and experiences from participants regarding their choices and challenges with mobile internet bundles.

This questionnaire was developed specifically for this study, drawing upon relevant theoretical frameworks of consumer behavior and decision-making *Ashman et al., (2015)* and previous research on mobile telecommunications adoption and usage in developing contexts [e.g., refer to specific journal articles on mobile internet usage in Africa]. Items were carefully formulated to ensure clarity, conciseness, and relevance to the Malawian context.

Pilot Study

According to *Lowe (2019),* a pilot study is a preliminary, smaller-scale test of the methods, procedures, or intervention to be used in a larger study. It's not designed to provide definitive results, but rather to assess feasibility, identify potential problems, and refine the study design before the main research is conducted. The primary purpose of the pilot study is to; assess the clarity, comprehensiveness, and readability of the questionnaire items, Identify any ambiguities, confusing language, or redundant questions, Evaluate the feasibility of the data collection procedure (e.g., time required to complete the questionnaire), Estimate the response rate, Test the reliability of the questionnaire scales using Cornbrash's Alpha and Identify any practical challenges or logistical issues that may arise during the main study *(Ummah, 2019)*

The pilot study involved approximately 10-15 participants who are mobile internet bundle customers from an area in Lilongwe similar to Area 25, but who were not included in the main study sample. This ensures that the main sample remains untainted by prior exposure to the questionnaire. Approximately 10 participants per day were used for collecting data.

Participants in the pilot study administered the questionnaire in the planned main study. Following the completion of the questionnaire, brief follow-up discussions or feedback sessions was conducted with a subset of pilot participants to gather their direct input on the instrument's effectiveness and any difficulties encountered. Based on the findings of the pilot study, necessary revisions and refinements made to the questionnaire (e.g., rephrasing questions, adding/removing items, adjusting response options) and data collection procedures to enhance their effectiveness, validity, and reliability, ensuring the smooth execution of the main study *(Saunders et al., 2023).*

Data Analysis

The Quantitative Data was analyzed using Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) software. Measures of central tendency (e.g. frequencies, percentages, means, and standard In addition, Beneficence: This research aims to produce beneficial knowledge that contributes to a better understanding of customer choices in the mobile internet bundle market in Malawi. *Dr. Suhas Shetgovekar (2018).* Also, Data Protection and include all data protection principles [e.g. Principles, if applicable, or relevant local regulations].

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This chapter presents a refined description and analysis of the data collected for the study titled *"Assessing the Impact of Customers' Choice of Airtel Mobile Internet Bundles."* The chapter

begins with a clear overview of the demographic characteristics of respondents and proceeds to present results from descriptive statistics and multinomial logistic regression analysis. These results provide insight into how socio-economic and service-related factors influence customers' choice of mobile internet bundles.

Response Rate

A total of 70 questionnaires were distributed to Airtel mobile internet users. Out of these, 64 were correctly completed and returned, representing a response rate of 91.4%. This high response rate was considered satisfactory for the analysis, as it provided adequate representation of the target population.

Description of Data

The study used quantitative data collected from 64 Airtel mobile internet users. The dataset captures key demographic variables (age, education level, occupation, and income level), as well as user perceptions and factors influencing bundle choice. The data were analyzed using SPSS to generate frequencies, percentages, and regression outputs that explain customer behavior in selecting daily, weekly, or monthly bundles.

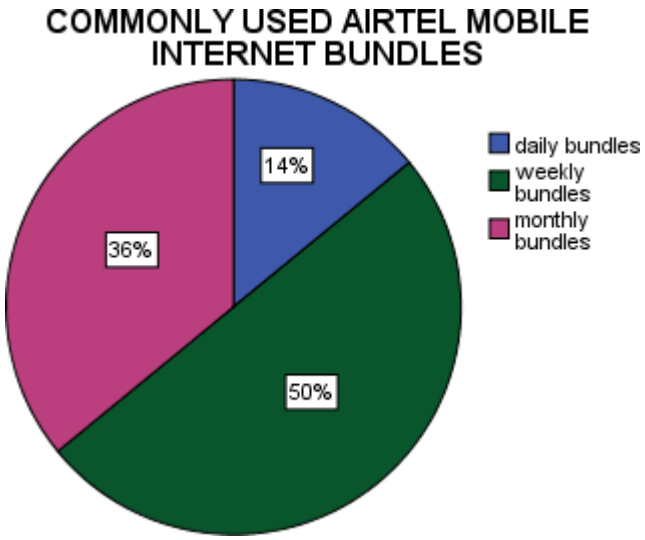
Demographic Information

This section summarizes the demographic characteristics of respondents, including gender, education level, occupation, and income. Understanding these characteristics helps explain the differences in customers' bundle preferences.

The results show the fairly balanced gender of respondents among Airtel customers who participated in the study, the majority of Airtel bundle users are individuals with middle-level education, reflecting a wide range of customer literacy levels. Airtel mobile internet bundles are used across different occupational groups. And most Airtel customers belong to middle and higher income groups, suggesting affordability of mobile data service.

Presentation of Research Findings

To identify the commonly used Airtel mobile internet bundles by customers in Area 25



The distribution of how internet bundles for Airtel are selected by purchasers

The provided pie chart illustrates the relative popularity of commonly used Airtel Mobile Internet Bundles. The data clearly indicates that weekly bundles are the most frequently used option, accounting for exactly 50% of the total usage. Following weekly bundles, monthly bundles constitute the second-largest share at 36%. The least popular option among users is the daily bundles, which make up the remaining 14%. This distribution suggests that the majority of Airtel's mobile internet users prefer medium to long-term data commitment, with half of the market opting for weekly packages, potentially reflecting a balance between cost, data volume, and usage flexibility.

Multinomial Logistic Regression Analysis

To further analyze the factors influencing customers' choice of Airtel mobile internet bundles, a multinomial logistic regression model was conducted using IBM SPSS Statistics. The dependent variable was the type of bundle chosen

(Daily, Weekly, or Monthly), while the independent variables included monthly income, promotions, network stability, validity period, work-related needs, price importance, and frequency of use. The objective was to determine how these factors collectively and individually affect the probability of choosing a particular bundle type.

The Nagelkerke R^2 value of 0.396 suggests that approximately 40% of the variance in bundle choice is explained by the predictors, demonstrating a moderate explanatory power suitable for behavioral studies, The model fitting results showed that the multinomial logistic regression model significantly improved the prediction of Airtel bundle choice compared to the intercept-only model, The Likelihood Ratio Chi-Square of 26.781 with 12 degrees of freedom was statistically significant ($p = .008$), confirming that the set of predictors collectively provided a better fit to the data. The Pseudo R-square statistics further supported this conclusion, with Cox and Snell (.342), Nagelkerke (.396), and McFadden (.210) indicating that the model explained approximately 21% to 40% of the variance in bundle choice. These values suggested a moderate level of explanatory power, meaning the predictors captured a meaningful portion of the consumer decision-making process, consistent with the assumptions of Consumer Choice Theory, although additional unmeasured factors may also have influenced respondents' bundle preferences.

Income was found to have a significant and positive effect on the likelihood of purchasing monthly bundles compared to daily bundles. Respondents with higher income levels were 2.6 times more likely to choose monthly bundles than daily bundles. Consumer Choice Theory, argues that individuals make consumption decisions based on utility maximization within their budget constraints. Since monthly bundles require a larger upfront cost, only consumers with more flexible budgets tended to select them. This finding aligns with other studies *(Aguiar, 2019)* which reported that higher-income users often prefer long-term data packages because they provide greater convenience, stability, and better per-unit value. This meant that monthly bundles offered higher perceived utility for higher-income consumers, consistent with Consumer Choice Theory, which argues that individuals make consumption decisions based on utility maximization within their budget constraints. Since monthly bundles require a larger upfront cost, only consumers with more flexible budgets tended to select them. This finding aligns with other studies *(Shimray & Ramaiah, 2019)* which reported that higher-income users often prefer long-term data packages because they provide greater convenience, stability, and better per-unit value.

The statistical result of the Age variable for monthly bundles has an Odds Ratio of 0.88 and an associated p-value of 0.88, which indicates a non-significant negative relationship between age and the choice of monthly bundles, based on a Discrete Choice Theory framework. Specifically, the of 0.88 suggests that for every one-year increase in age, the odds of an individual choosing the monthly bundle category decrease by 12% (relative to the reference category), implying that older users derive less utility from this option compared to younger users. However, because the p-value (0.88) is substantially greater than the conventional significance threshold ($\alpha=0.05$), this 12% decrease is not statistically reliable; there is insufficient evidence to conclude that age truly influences bundle choice, and the observed effect is likely due to random sampling variability.

The weekly bundles results also showed that none of the predictor variables significantly increased or decreased the likelihood of choosing weekly bundles relative to daily bundles. *(Karim & Rahman, 2022)* All variables (gender, age, education, marital status, occupation, and income) had p-values greater than .05, indicating no statistically significant effects.

To determine the challenges faced by the Area 25 customers when using the Airtel mobile internet bundles.The experience of slow internet speed is neutral with a percentage of 37.5% seconded by a percentage of 34.4% of

respondents who agree that slow internet speeds are frequently experienced. This suggests that a significant portion of customers encounter issues with slow speeds, but the experience is not universal, with a substantial number remaining neutral. A percentage of 48.4% of respondents regarding whether Airtel internet bundles run out quickly. While 23.4% of respondents believe the bundles run out quickly, this suggests that while there is a segment of frustrated users, the general perception is not overwhelmingly negative. customers are divided on the cost of Airtel internet bundles, with the largest group being neutral standing with a percentage of 40.6%. While 26.6% feel the cost is too high, while some customers find the bundles expensive, the majority are either comfortable with the pricing or are unsure.for inconsistent network coverage majority of respondents disagree that the coverage is a common challenge, with 25.9% of respondents disagreeing and 32.8% neutral respondents affirm this challenge. This suggests that network inconsistency is generally not the most prevalent issue for the surveyed customers in Area 25. For Airtel's customer support sentiment that Airtel's customer support is not effective. 35.9% of respondents and 25.0% of respondents strongly disagree. The conclusion is that a strong majority of surveyed customers are dissatisfied with the effectiveness of Airtel's customer support in resolving mobile internet issues.

Presentation of qualitative results

Theme 1: Patterns of Mobile Internet Usage

According to respondents, social media and streaming activities are the primary focus of consumer behavior. According to the participants, mobile internet is frequently used to stream news content and access websites like Facebook. People use mobile internet *"day and night for daily news and social media like Facebook,"* according to one respondent, indicating frequent and continuous use throughout the day. According to a different respondent, people primarily use mobile internet for *"social media and streaming purposes."*

Theme 2: Key Factors Influencing Mobile Internet Bundle Choice

Price and data allotment were specifically mentioned by respondents as the primary factors influencing consumers' selection of mobile internet bundles. Customers take into account *"price and the amount of data allowed," according to one respondent, and "price and data limit are the top two factors,"* according to another.

Theme 3: Customer Attraction and Retention Strategies

According to the respondents, service providers employ customer reward programs and promotional incentives to draw in and keep mobile internet users. Discounts, free trials, time-limited promotions, and free extra data were among the tactics discussed. Long-term and devoted clients are also rewarded. Providers *"offer discounts, free trials, and reward loyal customers,"* according to one respondent, while another mentioned *"limited time promotions, free extra data, and rewards for long-term customers."*

Theme 4: Challenges in Selecting and Using Internet Bundles

When choosing or utilizing internet bundles, respondents mentioned a number of difficulties. Slow data speeds, expensive prices, unclear plans, overage fees, and perplexing billing statements were among them. Customers deal with *"slow speeds, high cost, and confusing plans,"* according to one respondent, and *"overage charges, slow data speeds, and confusing billing statements,"* according to another.

Theme 5: Strategies for Improving Customer Satisfaction

Customer satisfaction would be increased, according to respondents, if customer support services were improved and internet bundle plans were made clear. Both participants emphasized the value of amiable, round-the-clock customer service and simple-to-understand plans. One respondent said that providers "should make their plans

clearer and have 24/7 support," while another said that they *"should have friendly 24/7 customer service support and plans that are easy to understand."*

Summary of key findings

Income was the only significant predictor, and it significantly increased the likelihood of choosing monthly bundles rather than daily bundles. No variable significantly predicted weekly bundle choice relative to daily bundles. Findings supported Consumer Choice Theory, showing that consumers with greater financial ability selected bundle types that maximized long-term utility (monthly bundles). The results were also consistent with existing findings *(Pandey et al.)*

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This chapter presents the final part of the research by summarizing the major findings, drawing conclusions, and providing recommendations to improve Airtel Malawi's mobile internet bundle services in Area 25. The chapter also outlines areas for further study. The aim of the research was to assess the factors influencing customers' choice of Airtel mobile internet bundles and to identify the challenges faced by users in Area 25. The findings from both quantitative and qualitative data provide a comprehensive understanding of customer behavior, preferences, and the obstacles they encounter while using Airtel data services.

Summary of Research Findings

The study revealed that weekly bundles are the most commonly used Airtel mobile internet bundles among customers in Area 25. Half of the respondents indicated that they mostly purchase weekly bundles, suggesting that users prefer a balance between affordability, convenience, and a reasonable amount of data. Monthly bundles were also widely used, representing over a third of respondents, while daily bundles were the least preferred. This distribution shows that customers prioritize bundles that provide stability and longer validity, rather than short-term options.

The findings further showed that income level was the only significant predictor influencing the choice of bundles. Higher-income customers were more likely to purchase monthly bundles instead of daily options, indicating that financial capacity plays a critical role in the selection of data packages. Other demographic factors such as gender, age, marital status, education level, and occupation did not significantly influence bundle choice. These findings align with the Consumer Choice Theory, which states that consumers make decisions based on maximizing satisfaction within their financial limits. Qualitative evidence supported these insights, showing that customers primarily consider price, data volume, and promotional offers when selecting bundles. Many respondents reported that their data usage focuses heavily on social media platforms, news streaming, and entertainment, which further shapes their preference for larger and longer-lasting bundles.

The study also identified several challenges faced by Airtel customers in Area 25. Internet speed was a major concern, with many respondents reporting slow connectivity at certain times. Other customers felt that bundles run out quickly, raising questions about data efficiency and transparency. Although bundle pricing was not overwhelmingly perceived as too high, a significant number of respondents expressed uncertainty or dissatisfaction with cost relative to data volume. Network coverage was not widely reported as a major challenge, but opinions were varied, suggesting inconsistency in user experiences across different locations. Customer support, however, emerged as one of the weakest areas, with many users stating that Airtel's customer care services are unresponsive and ineffective when resolving issues. The qualitative findings reinforced these concerns, as customers described experiences related to slow speeds, unclear bundle descriptions, and difficulties accessing timely support.

CONCLUSION OF THE STUDY

The study concludes that customer choice of Airtel mobile internet bundles in Area 25 is strongly influenced by economic factors, particularly income level. Customers with greater financial flexibility prefer monthly bundles because they offer better value and convenience, while those with more limited budgets rely on shorter-term bundles. The prevalence of weekly bundles demonstrates that customers seek a middle ground between affordability and utility. Demographic factors do not significantly affect bundle choices, indicating that data usage behavior is relatively similar across different social categories.

The study also concludes that several service-related challenges hinder customer satisfaction. Slow internet speeds, rapid data depletion, lack of clear information on bundles, and poor customer support reduce the quality of user experience. Despite these concerns, customers continue to rely heavily on mobile internet for social media, entertainment, and communication, underscoring the importance of improving service delivery. The findings ultimately demonstrate that customer decisions are guided by perceived value, convenience, and affordability, in accordance with the assumptions of Consumer Choice Theory.

RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE STUDY

Based on the findings, the study recommends that Airtel Malawi invest in improving network quality and internet speed in Area 25. Enhancements in infrastructure would directly address customer complaints related to slow connectivity and improve overall satisfaction. It is also essential for Airtel to review its pricing structure to ensure that bundles remain affordable, especially for low-income users who are most likely to depend on daily or weekly packages. Introducing micro-bundles or budget-friendly data options could help accommodate customers with limited purchasing power.

Clear communication is another critical area requiring improvement. Airtel should ensure that bundle descriptions are straightforward and easy for customers to understand. Providing real-time usage notifications would help users manage their data more efficiently and reduce perceptions of rapid depletion. Customer support services also require significant strengthening. Airtel should train its customer care agents to provide more responsive and friendly assistance, and the company should ensure that support is available at all times.

The study further recommends that Airtel expand its promotional offers and loyalty rewards. Many customers are influenced by bonuses and special promotions, and enhancing such incentives could help improve both customer retention and satisfaction. Simplifying the range of available bundles and reducing the overlap between similar packages would also minimize confusion among users.

AREA FOR FURTHER STUDY

Future research could compare Airtel Malawi and TNM to determine differences in customer satisfaction, bundle preferences, and network performance. A study focusing on technical factors such as device type and background applications could help explain perceptions of fast data depletion. Long-term research examining changes in customer behavior over time would also provide deeper insights into bundle preferences as technology and income levels evolve. Another useful area of study would involve assessing the effects of introducing new network technologies, such as 5G, on customer experiences. Additionally, a qualitative study exploring customer perceptions of network quality across various sections of Lilongwe could further improve understanding of geographical differences in service delivery.

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