# The Effects of Switching Barrier on Customer Loyalty in Telecommunication Services in Kingdom of Bahrain

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**Article History**: Received: 11 January 2021; Revised: 12 February 2021; Accepted: 27 March 2021; Published online: 20 April 2021

**Abstract:** This research focuses on the effects of switching barriers and satisfaction of customer on customer loyalty in Kingdom of Bahrain's telecommunication subscribers. For this study, a number of evidences processing techniques and instruments were used and carried out by performing a customer loyalty inquiry, a subscriber activity for the three telecommunications services companies in the Kingdom of Bahrain. The research aimed at estimating the effect of cost required to enter, interpersonal relationship, loss cost and competitiveness of substitutes such as changing barriers as well as consumer satisfaction on the retention of customers in the telecommunications services of the Kingdom of Bahrain. A study performed the efficacy of removing barriers and consumer satisfaction on customer engagement, by means of the questionnaire as the records collection mechanism. The applicants of the research study are subscribers of Batelco, Stc and Zain telecom companies in the Kingdom of Bahrain. The statistical instruments used for the study are multiple regression analysis and the Likert scale used for quantitative research to get first hand data. The study reveals that changing barriers such as cost of moving in and cost of interpersonal relationships influence customer loyalty, while attractiveness of alternative and risk of losses does not influence customer loyalty either. The study finds customer-satisfaction affects customer loyalty at the other hand. The report presents the researcher's guidelines for evaluating certain issues around the impact of switching barriers in the telecommunications sector in the Kingdom of Bahrain. This is also proposed that in the future the relationship between breaking barriers and consumer loyalty is to be carried out in all kinds of loyalty classes. Adding more variables in this research, the researchers can make deep study in the same area.

**Keywords:** Switching Barrier, Customer Loyalty, Customer Satisfaction, Attractiveness of Alternatives, Interpersonal Relationship

## 1. Introduction

Nowadays with the huge advancements in IT domains, the probability of switching through one leading company to the next one is the most common risk that challenges all IT creators and sellers equally. This challenge also applies to the communication market where rival services are all attractive and gradually similar. Hence, identifying the customers intention to remain with the same service supplier has convert frustrating yet important feature in the competitive race between these companies. Researches on service sectors demonstrated that retaining consumer is too challenging and acute in these firms (Abbas and Hamdy, 2015).

In the Kingdom of Bahrain there are three mobile-service providers, Batelco as the national company, STC from Saudi Arabia and Zain from Kuwait. (Abbas, Ashiq, & Abrar ul haq, 2018). In fact, each telecommunication provider got different market shares and all telecommunication providers have a significant market effect when it relates to maintaining their current customers and winning new ones. Since the cost of attract new customers is high for service providers that have already entered a settled point, barriers to switching, customer-satisfaction and customer loyalty are important requirements for telecommunications stakeholders (CHO, 2016).

There are many different factors that cause the barrier of switching as documented by academics in different areas. A study implemented on university students in Bahrain concluded whereby customer-satisfaction has a favorable impact on customer loyalty, while high changing costs result in more loyal and satisfied customer (George, and Upadhyaya, 2015). In essence, this research will emphasis mainly on assessing the customer loyalty and influence of loss costs as a switching barrier and move in cost requirements, within the organisational relationship and attractiveness of choices as switching barriers (Ullah, Abrar ul haq & Ali, 2016). Although some researchers identified the constructive effects of loyalty and profitable switching barriers to customer loyalty structure, other researches that evaluate the experiences of these findings showed mixed results (Ali, Abrar ul Haq, & Ullah, 2015). Previous researches did not recognize, as a background to barriers to change, any practices or social bonds resulting from mutual family or community service use (CHO 2016).

Switching barrier is one of the most debated contemporary marketing concerns with a view to describing customer behavior and the influences of buyers' loyalty in the telecommunication sector (Karunarathne and Zhang, 2017). Logical competition intensifies the existing 3 competitive telecommunication providers to inspire, to bring in innovative ideas and distinguish their services and products with a view to winning mobile users for the first time,

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to pull in clients aside from their competitors, and to keep their existing customers. As a result, clients' loyalty is considered an important factor in retention.
This work aims to explore the impact of the switching barrier, consumer loyalty and consumer bond relationships in the Kingdom of Bahrain with the communications sector. Also, the effect of customer-satisfaction as a control variable is measured. In view of the obstacle declaration, the main question of the investigation is: Will the customer loyalty be affected by switching barriers in the telecommunication sector?
Based on the research question, this study considered the following objectives:

- To find the effect of loss costs on customer loyalty as a switching barrier.
- To find the effect of move-in cost on customer loyalty as a switching barrier.
- To find the effect of interpersonal relationships on customer loyalty as a switching barrier.
- To find the effect of attractiveness of alternatives as a switching barrier on customer loyalty.
- To find the impact on consumer loyalty of customer service.

## 2. Conceptual Framework

As shown in Figure 1, the independent variables are customer-satisfaction and barriers to switching, and dependent variable is customer loyalty. With regard to loyalty and switching barrier, loyalty indicators should include referring not only to the attraction of a customer of a trademark or firm even to the sensitivity of the customer to switch. There are relationships in their theory of catastrophe between satisfaction, loyalty, and switching; they indicated that satisfaction in a nonlinear approach that impacts loyalty. In other words, a convoluted relationship will be more by customer-satisfaction emerging starting the ability of loyalty to continue face of opportunities to move (Almossawi, 2012).

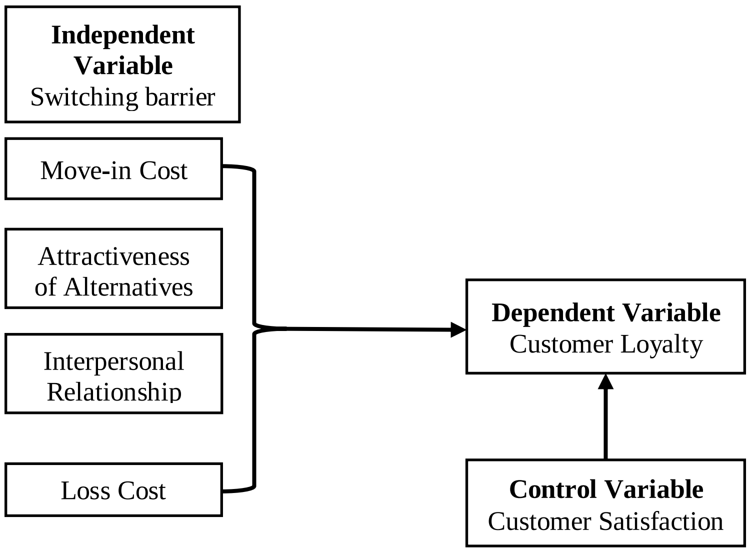


**Figure1: Conceptual framework**

## 3. Research Hypothesis

- HA1: There is a significant effect of move-in cost as a switching barrier on customer loyalty.
- HA2: There is a significant effect of attractiveness of alternatives as a switching barrier on customer loyalty.
- HA3: There is a significant effect of interpersonal relationships as a switching barrier on customer loyalty.
- HA4: There is a significant effect of loss cost as a switching barrier on customer loyalty.
- HA5: There is a significant effect of customer loyalty as a control variable on customer loyalty.

## 4. Literature Review

It is realized worldwide that loyalty of customer is a strategic factor of service providers' continuing achievement and capability and profits of keeping devoted consumer are usually familiar and obvious at all facility productions. However, some circumstances in which service suppliers have a habit of more emphasis on making new consumers before recalling the current customers (Rizomyliotis, et al. 2018). Moreover, service providers usually use consumer records and rewarding plans to strengthen the consumer relation and they regularly pursue to path their consumers purchasing favorites.
In the telecommunication sector, service providers always compete to offer new services for their customers. Each offer focuses on different market segments and new services include more features and functions than the earlier ones (Shah, Shahzad, & Haq 2015). As the available offers by the service providers increase, and as better services

are offered by competitors, the attractiveness of competitors increases (Asad, Professor, Rizwan, Shah, & Munir, 2018). This in turns decreases customers' loyalty toward their current service providers. In contrast, if other service providers are incapable to offer better or different amenties, then customers may continue with their present service providers (Kim et al., 2016; Shah, Haq, & Farooq, 2015). Therefore, higher levels of attractiveness of alternatives results in lower level of customer loyalty.

Several studies have been carried out on the various past history of loyalty, such as consumer satisfaction, switching-costs, switching barriers, service-quality , brand identity, pricing structure, engagement, corporate image, marketing relationships, perceived interest, confidence , social pressure, quality of the relationship, call rate quality , brand credibility, customer support, quality of the network, trustworthiness and equity (Rehman, Imdad Ullah, & Abrar-ul-haq, 2015). Such studies of different researchers showed the analysis of the precedents and this large number of precedents showed the absence of consent (Yaqub, 2017; Asad, Salman Shabbir, Salman, Hussain Haider, & Ahmad, 2018)

Switching barrier describes a moving challenge from a consumer that is unhappy with the current service to another provider otherwise political, public and psychosomatic issue a consumer faces while changing to another provider. High switching barrier occurs when consumers are expected to stay in the current provider (Raza, Minai, Abrar ul Haq, Iy, & Zain, 2018). The switching barrier consists, as per previous studies, of move-in cost, loss cost, charisma of choices and inter-personal relationships (Kim et al. 2016; Chia-Hua and Tho, 2017).

Switching barriers refer to the difficulty a dissatisfied customer face while switching to another provider, or to the communal, economical and emotional burdens accepted by a customer after switching to another provider (Karunarathne, and Zhang, 2017). Thus, advanced switching barrier might force the customer to continue with his/her current carrier. Moreover, the switching barrier consists of switching-costs, attractiveness of alternatives, and interpersonal relationships. Price conversion is a mixture of quest costs, processing costs, learning costs, loyal client discounts, consumer preferences, emotional costs and cognitive effort (Qasim, Abrar ul Haq, Hussain, & Roshan, 2018; Zhang and Zhang, 2017). In mobile services, switching cost includes monetary cost of purchasing new number, learning cost, time and effort of informing all relative people. It is apparent that higher switching-costs result in difficulty in transmitting from the present service provider to another one (Qamri, Haq, & Akram, 2015). Therefore, switching cost is a significant strategy that service providers can advocate to increase customers' loyalty on account of discouraging customer switching.

According to Kim, et al. (2016) transmitting cost is the price experienced when changing from one service to another. It also comprises emotional, economical and time expenses that are a consequence of switching. In smartphone manufacturing industry, when a customer switch from one producer to another; some customers might learn new systems and others might learn things that are unfamiliar (Bumjaid & Malik, 2019). More difficulties customers might face while using new smartphones result in higher possibility to remark the switching cost (Murtaza Abrar ul haq & Ali, 2015). Moreover, as customers change one producer to another, monetary cost will take in charge when buying new devices (Malik, Abid, Mahmood, Wahiddin & Malik, 2019). More luxurious new handsets result in higher perceived switching cost. Whenever transmitting expenses are high, customers will not switch and stay loyal and continue with the existing company (Lin et al., 2015; Jung and Kwon, 2015). Therefore, higher switching cost means higher customer loyalty.

Loss cost is one factor that controls the attractiveness of telecommunication sector, since high loss cost disappoint changing from an existing provider, this will result in less encouragement for firms to compete. On the other hand, low loss cost makes it easy to change the current provider (Malik, Abid, Kalaicelvi & Bhatti, 2018). On the other side, move-in expenses is the economic costs that are related with swapping to a new service, as purchasing a new system and the subscription fee (Ashraf, Abrar ul Haq & Ashraf, 2017). Move-in cost is another factor that effect switching barrier, as high move-in cost discourages changing from the current provider, and low move-in cost makes it easy to change the current provider (Hathurusinghe and Kumara, 2017).

Personal and social connections respond to emotional - cultural relationships which prove themselves as caring, respect, intimacy and social interaction. Created through repeated interactions between a provider and a user, the interpersonal relationship will sustain the connection between them and eventually will result in a long-term connection. Several customers want to possess such a relationship with their service providers and these relationships would improve switching barriers in the mobile telecommunication industry (Yaqub, et al. 2019; Malik, Abid, Gilal, & Raja 2017). Studies showed that when the subscribers are attached with a mobile services for a long period, this would increase the user's attachment which in turns will result in high levels of switching in terms of switching-costs, interpersonal relationship, and attractiveness of alternatives with the service provider (Mahtab, Abrar ul Haq & Ullah (2015). Attractiveness of alternatives is considered as the level at which competitors attract their existing customers. The attractiveness of alternatives of any service provider is related to the market differentiation and business organization (Akram, Abrar ul haq & Umrani, 2019). When companies provide services that are unique and competitive, this would challenge the competitors to rival or to provide alternatives. Also, when there are few competitors available in the marketplace, customers generally remains with their current mobile operator (Kim et al., 2016).

Pleasant appearance of substitutes is measured as regard of the perception of customers' satisfactions with their current provider and in terms of price and quality of the company by the competitors (Khan, Rehman & Abrar ul Haq, 2015). There are many rivals in a highly competitive environment, such as mobile operators, which offer cheaper rates, broader product options and better service-quality (Khan, Mahtab & Abrar ul haq, 2012). Many scholars studied the relationship between charisma of substitutes and loyalty to customer. Some of them found that the relationship between the two is negative (Howshigan and Ragel, 2018), while others found that there are some interactions between them (Kim, et al., 2016). In 2016 a research study was conducted in the Egyptian telecommunication sector to observe the relationship between service-quality, switching-costs, customer-satisfaction and loyalty with the mediating role of switching barriers (Shafei and Tabaa, 2016). The results showed that service-quality significantly affect customer-satisfaction then switching cost. Also, as a result; customer-satisfaction affects customer loyalty while switching barriers has a significant mediating role (Akram, Abrar ul haq, & Raza, 2018).

## 5. Methodology of the Study

This study applied the quantitative approach as it is suitable because the study needs to answer questions regarding the effect of measured variables on the dependent variable. Also, statistical overviews may be relevant to the problem, and probabilities or hypothesis tests are supposed to be useful. To study the effect of switching-barriers and customer-satisfaction on customer loyalty in the Kingdom of Bahrain; a questionnaire was used as a tool for survey. The respondents of the study were the telecom subscribers of Batelco, Stc and Zain in the Kingdom of Bahrain. There are many rivals in a highly competitive environment, such as mobile operator. The convenience sampling method used in computed this study with a sample size of is 385.ators, which offer cheaper rates, broader product options and better service-quality. In the research, the non probability technique was used, to study the effect of switching barrier on customer loyalty in the telecoms sector at the Kingdom of Bahrain. These questionnaires were circulated via electronic mail as well as through social media.

## 6. Research Instruments

To collect the data, close ended questionnaire was created. The questionnaire assesses the barrier to switching from the current provider to another and the customer loyalty and satisfaction. Table 1 depicts some statements that measure the move-in cost, attractiveness of alternatives, interpersonal relationships and loss costs which are factors of switching barriers. Agreement level of 5-Point Scale was used, where 5-Stands for strongly agree, 4-agree, 3-neutral, 2-disagree and 1-strongly disagree (See also: (Abrar ul Haq, Akram, & Imdad Ullah, 2015; Abrar ul Haq, Jali, & Islam, 2015; Abrar ul haq, Jali, & Islam, 2017).

**Table 1: Statements that measure study variables**

| Variable | Statement | Reference |
|---|---|---|
| **Move-in Cost** | 1. It is difficult for me to use other company's services<br>2. I feel locked into this service provider<br>3. All service providers are the same<br>4. Public image of my service provider is also a factor for me not switch to another service operator.<br>5. If I were to choose another service operator, I don't know what I will get. | *Kannan, S. (2017)* |
| **Attractiveness of Alternatives** | 1. Difficulties in changing to new from old systems<br>2. Price calls to other providers<br>3. Call rates within network<br>4. Price of services<br>5. I consider the company has best offers | *CHO, I. Y. (2016) & Jemal, A. (2017).* |
| **Interpersonal Relationship** | 1. Carrier's care for customer<br>2. I feel a part of belonging to this service operator<br>3. Familiarity with customer service process or personnel<br>4. Switching to other provider will bring psychological burden<br>5. I feel it makes connectivity this subscribers | *Kannan, S. (2017)* |
| **Lose Cost** | 1. Loss of extra benefits such as charge discount and mileage program.<br>2. Loss of performance advantages.<br>3. Difficulty in changing the number.<br>4. Loss the quality of mobile data service.<br>5. It will be a financial loss if I Switch.<br>6. The process requires lots of time and efforts to change the service provider. | *CHO, I. Y. (2016) & Kannan, S. (2017)* |
| **Customer Loyalty** | 1. I am sure the programs will still be reliable<br>2. I trust the services of this company | *Kannan, S. (2017)* |

| Variable | Statement | Reference |
|---|---|---|
| | 3. I am profoundly attached to the network operator<br>4. While there are other alternative options, I still prefer the same network | |
| **Customer Satisfaction** | 1. Are you satisfied with the carrier<br>2. Based on your experience with carrier, would you recommend this to other firms or individuals<br>3. How you agree the value of your carrier compared with the price<br>4. Are you satisfied with the amount of contact between you and your carrier | *Khadka, K., & Maharjan, S. (2017).* |

## 7. Validity and Reliability

To evaluate the reliability of the questionnaire; Cronbach's alpha was used with a minimum value of 0.7 which is suitable for the research field. The reliability coefficient was examined using Pearson's Correlation between the scores. The value for the Pearson's coefficient can lift from 0.00 (no correlation) to 1.00 (perfect correlation). The instruments' reliability was tested using a pilot of 20 respondents and performed regarding the data gathering process. The pilot test is a survey questionnaire tool for identifying and removing possible issue on a small sample of respondents (Almossawi, 2012; Abrar ul Haq, Akram, Ashiq, Raza, 2019). Four hundred and twenty-six people participated and completed the survey, and none of the cases was excluded. The reliability factor was tested using Cronbach alpha and was more than 0.7 for all variables (Abrar ul Haq, Jali, 2016) and that made it statically acceptable, as shown in Table 2.

**Table 2: Reliability statistics**

| Variable | Cronbach's Alpha | Cronbach's Alpha Based on Standardized Items | N of Items |
|---|---|---|---|
| Customer Loyalty | 0.780 | 0.778 | 4 |
| Move-In Cost | 0.724 | 0.718 | 5 |
| Attractiveness of Alternatives | 0.752 | 0.758 | 5 |
| Interpersonal relationship | 0.777 | 0.776 | 5 |
| Loss Cost | 0.712 | 0.720 | 5 |
| Customer Satisfaction | 0.856 | 0.857 | 4 |

## 8. Data Processing and Statistical Treatment

The data was collected, analyzed and arranged, and statistical instruments such as mean, standard deviation and correlation were interpreted. Weighted mean results used on average by respondents.

## 9. Results And Discussion

The study questionnaire was designed using the Google Form tool and was distributed among telecom subscribers of Batelco, Stc and Zain in Kingdom of Bahrain via electronic mail as well as WhatsApp messages. A total of 426 questionnaires were used in this analysis to answer the questions of this research. Multiple linear regression was used to test the relation between a set of independent variables and the dependent variable, taking into account the effect of different set of independent variables on the dependent variable. Here, the independent variables are evaluated using the Enter method.

The purpose of the study is to obtain the best indicator of the impact of the predictor variables. The multiple regression analysis was also carry out to address the study questions and the hypothesis test. A multiple linear regression model was generated for the dependent variable (customer-loyalty), the independent variables (move-in cost, attractiveness of alternatives, interpersonal relationships and loss cost) and the control variable (customer satisfaction). From the model summary; the value of R=0.803 means that the independent variables and the control variable can predict the dependent variable with a good level of prediction and the independent variables explains about 64.40% of the variation in the model. In other words, the model could correctly predict customer loyalty to the service provider 64.40% of the time, see table 3.

**Table 3: Model Summary of the four switching barriers**

| Model | R | R Square | Adjusted R Square | Std. Error of the Estimate |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Switching Barriers** | 0.803[1] | 0.644 | 0.640 | 0.46505 |

[1] Predictors: (Constant), Customer Satisfaction, Loss Cost, Interpersonal Relationship, Attractiveness of Alternatives, Move-in Cost

The ANOVA test of the regression model tested whether the regression model of the effect of switching barriers on customer loyalty can be considered a good fit of the data. Table 4 shows that the independent variables (move-in cost, attractiveness of alternatives, interpersonal relationships and loss cost) significantly predict the dependent variable (customer loyalty), F=152.068, $p < 0.0005$ (this means that the generated regression model is a good fit).

**Table 4: ANOVA[1] test results of the four switching barriers**

| Model | Sum of Squares | df | Mean Square | F | Sig. |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Regression** | 164.438 | 5 | 32.88 | 152.068 | 0.000[2] |
| **Residual** | 90.833 | 420 | 0.216 | | |
| **Total** | 255.271 | 425 | | | |

[1] Dependent Variable: Customer Loyalty

[2] Predictors: (Constant), Customer Satisfaction, Loss Cost, Interpersonal Relationship, Attractiveness of Alternatives, Move-in Cost

According to the regression equation, the move-in cost and interpersonal relationships significantly affect customer loyalty while the attractiveness of alternatives (Sig. = 0.192) and the loss cost (Sig. = 0.368) do not affect customer loyalty, as shown in Table 17. Also, the control variable (customer satisfaction) significantly affect customer satisfaction. The regression equation is formulated as follows:

$$\boldsymbol{CL = 0.220 + 0.115\, MC - 0.055\, AA + 0.341\, IR + 0.034\, LC + 0.521\, CS}$$

Where:

**CL:** Customer Loyalty, **MC:** Move-In Cost, **AA:** Attractiveness of Alternatives, **IR:** Interpersonal Relationship, **LC:** Loss Cost, **CS:** Customer Satisfaction

From the regression equation, an increase of customer loyalty result in an increase in move-in cost by 0.115, the interpersonal relationship by 0.341, the loss cost by 0.034 and the customer-satisfaction by 0.521. on the other hand, an increase of customer loyalty result in a decrease in attractiveness of alternatives by 0.005.

**Table 5: Coefficients of the regression equation of the four switching barriers**

| Model | Unstandardized Coefficients | | Standardized Coefficients | t | Sig. |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | B | Std. Error | Beta | | |
| **(Constant)** | 0.220 | 0.165 | | 1.335 | 0.183 |
| **Move-In Cost** | 0.115 | 0.038 | 0.106 | 3.072 | 0.002 |
| **Attractiveness of Alternatives** | -0.055 | 0.042 | -0.048 | -1.306 | 0.192 |
| **Interpersonal Relationship** | 0.341 | 0.047 | 0.312 | 7.331 | 0.000 |
| **Loss Cost** | 0.034 | 0.038 | 0.030 | 0.901 | 0.368 |
| **Customer Satisfaction** | 0.521 | 0.041 | 0.522 | 12.782 | 0.000 |

The results showed where here is still a strong association between some barriers to switching, customer-satisfaction and customer loyalty. On the other hand, it was found that attractiveness of alternatives and loss cost do not predict loyalty, which means that top management should not assume that they can achieve loyalty through the provision of alternatives and reducing the loss cost. The results of this study are aligned with different studies and differ from the results of other studies. Studies found that there is a mediating role that is vital of switching barriers on customer loyalty (Shafei and Tabaa, 2016). The results of this study are supported by the results of (Willys, 2018; Akram, 2017) in which it was proved that there is a direct positive effect of switching-costs on customer loyalty. This means that when these costs are higher; customers will try to continue with their current service provider. The effect of switching cost was also studied by different researchers (Howshigan & Ragel, 2018) and it was found that a significant relationship between switching-costs and customer loyalty exists and that switching-costs strongly affect customer loyalty and that customer-satisfaction has the most significant effect on customer loyalty and it directs customers' loyalty.

As for the attractiveness of alternative, studies also showed that it has a negative relationship with loyalty. Which means that when attractiveness of alternative increases customer loyalty decreases (Willys, 2018; Howshigan & Ragel, 2018). On the other hand, Kim, et. al. (2016) found that attractiveness of alternatives significantly affects customer loyalty. Regarding the interpersonal relationship, the consequences of this research differs from the outcome of the research study conducted by CHO, (2016) as the study revealed that interpersonal relationship do not affect customer loyalty. It was found that customer-satisfaction has a direct association with customer loyalty by different studies (CHO, 2016; Kim, et. al. 2016; Shafei and Tabaa, 2016; Willys, 2018; Kungumapriya & Malarmathi, 2018; Abrar ul haq, Nawaz, Mahtab, & Cheema, 2012; Howshigan & Ragel, 2018; Rizomyliotis, et. al., 2018). On the other hand, a poor connotation between satisfaction and loyalty was revealed by Almossawi (2012).

## 10. Conclusion And Recommendations

This study analyzed the relationships between switching barriers (four switching barriers were considered throughout the study), customer-satisfaction and customer loyalty in the telecommunication sector at Bahrain. Moreover, it investigated the influence of switching barriers and customer-satisfaction on customer loyalty. The results indicated that two Hypotheses were accepted (H01) and (Ho3). This means that both move-in cost and interpersonal relationships affect customer loyalty as switching barriers. But (H02) and (H04) were rejected and there was no statistical evidence that attractiveness of alternatives and loss cost affect customer loyalty, as shown in Table 18. Moreover, the hypothesis (H05) related to the effect of customer-satisfaction on customer loyalty was accepted, which means customer loyalty positively affect customer loyalty and service providers must consider the satisfaction of their customers while planning.

**Table 6: Hypotheses test results summary**

| No | Hypothesis | Result |
|---|---|---|
| **H01** | There is a significant effect of move-in cost as a switching barrier on customer loyalty. | Supported |
| **H02** | There is a significant effect of attractiveness of alternatives as a switching barrier on customer loyalty. | Rejected |
| **H03** | There is a significant effect of interpersonal relationships as a switching barrier on customer loyalty. | Supported |
| **H04** | There is a significant effect of loss cost as a switching barrier on customer loyalty. | Rejected |
| **H05** | There is a significant effect of customer-satisfaction on customer loyalty. | Supported |

The aim of any organization is to preserve a long-standing relationship with their customers. For the organizations to keep their current customers and attract new ones, they should carefully consider the demands and needs of their customers as being a loyal customer greatly affect the business operations. Hence, it is crucial that organizations recognize the needs of their customers and to figure out how to improve their customers' loyalty in order to succeed in their business as they play a vital role in the process of the market chain. This research study deeply studied the bond between customer loyalty and the switching barriers. It became obvious that customers play a vital role in customer loyalty and customer-satisfaction and they are the source of the business success. If the customers are pleased with the quality of the services provided by their service provider and if the tasks are performed according to their needs; the organization will possess satisfied and loyal customers. Accordingly, customer-satisfaction is considered a vital element of business profitability since once satisfaction is maintained, customers will continue using the service. Furthermore, customers will communicate their experience with others, which will make it possible to gain new customers. On the other hand, dissatisfied customers express their judgement about the service and about their unsuccessful experience which in turn would leads to a decreasing position of the number of customers.

The case study of this study was the telecommunication sector in Bahrain. The reason behind choosing studying the effect of switching barriers on customer loyalty in the telecommunication sector was because it is very important sector and the competition in it is great between the subscribers. The research carried out during this study assisted in analyzing customer loyalty and the factors that affecting it. The services provided in the telecommunication sector at Bahrain are high in quality as most of the participated customers do not switch easily. It seems that the providers succeeded to satisfy their customers and to improve their loyalty. Moreover, after analyzing the data, it is obvious that customer loyalty is affected by the switching barriers and customer satisfaction. If switching barriers are managed properly and customers are satisfied with their services, then they will be loyal too. Consequently, switching barriers and customer-satisfaction affect customer loyalty.

The researcher suggests that a research study of the association between switching barriers and customer loyalty can be applied to all loyalty groups. Hypothetically, switching barriers hardly affect loyalty. Though, there is a high possibility that switching barriers are too moderated to affect loyalty. To examine exactly the effect of the changes that may occur in the switching barriers on the affiliation amongst switching barriers and customer loyalty, a study is needed to be implemented to all loyalty groups.

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