



**ST. MARY'S UNIVERSITY
SCHOOL OF GRADUATE STUDIES**

**CUSTOMERS' COMPLAINT HANDLING PRACTICES OF ETHIO
TELECOM: THE CASE OF TWO ZONES AND A SERVICE CENTER**

**BY
YIRGA ALEBACHEW
(ID No. SGS1/0089/2004)**

**OCTOBER 2013
ADDIS ABABA, ETHIOPIA**

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**A THESIS SUBMITTED TO ST. MARY'S UNIVERSITY, SCHOOL OF
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ABSTRACT

Complaint handling embodies an important opportunity for firms to rebuild and improve their relationships with their customers when things gone wrong. Nowadays, it is very common to hear ethio telecom customers are complaining about the services they are getting from ethio telecom. The purpose of this study is to assess how ethio telecom is handling customers' compliant and to see how are the reactions of customers about the complaint handling practices of ethio telecom by collecting data through questionnaire from 120 customers of two zones of Addis Ababa and one corporate service center and by interviewing eight ethio telecom employees who are working directly with customers. The findings indicated that ethio telecom was not responding timely for their compliant, and the accessibility of call center is still not good. The result further indicated that quality of network is the most prevailing problem, and there are problems in relation to the process of compliant handling by ethio telecom. Customers also felt that the company does not communicate very well about its complaints handling procedure as most of them knew it through their acquaintances. Thus, the company should communicate customers how they can file their complaints, improve the accessibility of call center, train employees on complaint handling and the company should also give timely response for customers' complaints.

CHAPTER I: INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the Study

Ethio telecom is the sole telecommunications service provider in Ethiopia. The company's total subscribers in all telecom services, according to the company's press release in its website (September 2012), reached 18.28 million as of June 2012, of which 17.26 million mobile, 805 thousand fixed line, 221 thousand internet and data and 2.44 million GPRS. Furthermore, due to the fact that the Ethiopian Government has decided to transform the telecommunications infrastructure and services to world class standard, it has been planned to expand the telecom network to increase the number of mobile phone users to 40 million by mid-2015.

Having more than eighteen million customers, the company encounters with customer complainants. Though ethio telecom acknowledges the existence of service disruption in different times it always promises to improve the service.

Handling customer complaints is one of the essential bases not only for customer retention but also for the continuous improvement of services. That is, customer complaints should be considered as input for an organization complaint management process (Vos, Huitema and de Lange-Ros, 2008).

Nowadays, companies are giving much emphasis for customer services; there is no excuse for businesses to offer anything less. And there is so much information about the benefits of ensuring good customer service, as well as help to train employees how to do it right. Thus, the companies are usually observed taking corrective actions when customers express their complaint without compromising but without customer complaints, managements often take for granted that everything is going well.

To achieve a long term improvement of the services to customers, organizations are expected not only to respond effectively to customer complaints but also seek solutions actively (Stauss and Seidel, 2005). This is due to the fact that improving service is not a onetime activity that they accomplish and leave it rather it should be a continuous improvement. Therefore, organizations that are truly committed to delivering superior customer performance work hard at providing their customers opportunity to complain.

It is essential for ethio telecom to recognize that the way they handle customer complaints in every activity as important as trying to provide great service. Customers are constantly judging ethio telecom for service disruption (Mengistu, E., 2012). First they judge the company on how it handles the problem, then on its readiness to make sure similar problems don't take place in the future. If the problem takes place in other times customers are far less forgiving. Fixing the service back to normal has huge impact on customer satisfaction, repeat business, and in the end profits and growth.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

Customer dissatisfactions, which can be reflected in the form of complaints, have paramount influences on an organization's reputation because it is through these feedbacks that the organization can improve its services and becomes efficient. Thus, complaints provide important information to tackle a customer's dissatisfaction and will also prevent the same problems that led to the complaint from happening again (Cook and Macaulay, 1997).

These complaints should be handled properly if an organization wants to improve its services. This is because complaints can be the useful way of measuring performance and allocating resources appropriately (Zairi, 2000).

Ethio telecom acknowledges that in the previous years, though the focus had been given to the service coverage and service quality issues, a better result was achieved in service coverage and penetration. Despite the huge network expansion made, it is common to hear customers complaining about the quality of service. Customers wait their turn in a long queue to settle their bills. Being a monopoly company where customers do not have a choice to withdraw from the relationship, the only option is to file a complaint but their complaint might not be handled properly.

As a result of the existence of such prevalent customer complaint on the company's service, the researcher initiated to conduct a study to identify the most common complaints and assess its handling procedures.

Thus, this study tries to assess the complaints handling techniques of ethio telecom and customers' perception towards service provisions.

1.3 Research Questions

This research tries to give answers to the following research questions.

- ✓ What are the major types of complaints?
- ✓ How are the manners of staffs handling complaints?
- ✓ How important is customers' complaint for ethio telecom?

1.4 Research Objective

The main objective of this study is to assess how ethio telecom is handling customers' complaint.

The specific objectives of the study are:

- ✓ To see how important is handling properly customers' complaint,
- ✓ To assess the customers' perceptions towards compliant handling practices of ethio telecom,
- ✓ To assess the existing process and procedures, if any, that ethio telecom follows to address the customers' complaints,
- ✓ To forward possible suggestions and strategies to solve the problems.

1.5 Significance of the Study

The findings of this study are expected to be significant for the following reasons. The company under study, ethio telecom, may use the findings of the study as additional information to address the problems uncovered and take corrective actions. It adds literature on the subject. Besides, interested bodies may use the study as a stepping-stone for further study in the area at an advanced level.

1.6 Scope and Limitation of the Study

This study is delimited to only two zones and one corporate customer's service center. That is, customers who are getting service from Central Addis Ababa and South Addis Ababa zones and Corporate Customers' Service Center, which is found around Churchill Avenue. The main limitations of the study are time and cost constraints. Due to time and cost constraint the researcher focused only in two zones and one service center for the study.

1.7 Organization of the Paper

The paper is organized in five chapters. The first chapter deals with background of the study, research questions, research objectives, scope and limitations of the study, significance of the study and organization of the research report. The second chapter is entirely devoted to the review of related literature. Chapter three deals with research design and methodology part. The fourth chapter deals with data analysis and presentation of the findings of the study. The last chapter, chapter five, presents summary, conclusions drawn from the findings, the recommendations made to address the problems uncovered, and the implications of the findings for future research, practitioners, government and other support agencies.

CHAPTER II: LITERATURE REVIEW

In this chapter the literatures on the subject study will be presented under different categories. It will start by defining what is complaint and complaint handling.

2.1. Theoretical Literature

2.1.1. Definitions of Complaint and Complaint Handling

Different scholars have defined complaint based on their points of views. Dingemans (1996:23), for instance, defines complaint as “any time we fail to meet a customer’s expectation, he has cause for complaint.” The writer, of course, suggests that such way of definition creates problems because the customer will be affected a lot as a result of our delay till complaints are arisen. Instead, organizations need to set mechanisms in which the complaint can be used as co-operation in achieving its goals.

Similarly, scholars have defined complaint handling differently. For instance, Hart, Heskett, and Sasser (1990), have given definition for complaint handling relating with its purpose to the organizations. That is, complaint handling refers to the strategies firms use to resolve and learn from service failures in order to re-establish the organization's reliability in the eyes of the customer.

Stauss and Seidel (2005), on the other hand, have defined complaint handling as a way of helping consumers: “Complaint handling stands for operational activities directly aimed at helping customers resolve their complaints.”

2.1.2. Today’s Customer

In this digital era customers are not satisfied and do not wait the company to inform them about the product or service. Consumers are more connected each other. They review products or services and recommend to their friends (Fiorletta, A., 2013). They are becoming more knowledgeable sometimes even overfed with the information that they are getting with the media and know their right regarding the product or service. Consumers are also increasingly connected with brands and want to play a more participative role in their relationship with companies, stimulating companies to reconsider how to connect with consumers so that if companies want to succeed, they should consider their customer as a partner (Wuyts, Dekimpe & Pieters, 2010).

If the company wants to be efficient in its service, it should work hard to satisfy customers practically. In support of this idea, Roberts-Phelps (2001) noted that “company’s greatest asset isn’t on the balance sheet. It’s the number of satisfied customers it has.” This notion reveals the focus of the accepted way of winning the attention of customers in the current business world in which the competition is high.

However, customers may not get good quality service consistently though they obviously require products and services quicker than they can be delivered. Hence, the company should try to fix problems, and effective systems should be designed to help customers get products and services from the company.

Customers nowadays are more demanding than ever. (Ball, B. & Permenter M.K, 2013). Due to the presence of competitive market place and service provider’s, customers are becoming more aware of the level of service or product that they are expecting from them. As a result, customers are becoming more intolerant of those service providers who did not provide quality service at a faster rate. Generally, in response of the behaviors of today’s customers, companies are required to satisfy such varied and delicate needs of customers.

2.1.3. Importance of Complaint

Due to the fact that it is a natural consequence of any service activity to experience complaints because “mistakes are an unavoidable feature of all human endeavor and thus also of service delivery” (Boshoff, 1997), companies need to use such complaints as indicators of weaknesses or failures so that these can be solved rapidly.

In addition, Vos, Huitema and de Lange-Ros, (2008) argued that customer complaints phenomenon can be considered as a fact of life with which organizations have to carry out in one way or another. However, from the customer point view it can be contended that complaint behavior should be facilitated, taken seriously, and finally motivate organizations to come to a solution. In short, customer complaint can benefit both organizations and customers as long as it is filed appropriately and addressed by the companies properly. Complaints can be an important means of retaining organizations’ goodwill when they are handled well, and since complaints are inevitable, companies need to devise a strategy that enables them to recover customer loyalty when things go wrong. Thus, companies need to be aware of the importance of effective

complaint handling in retaining their customers. Proper complaint handling procedure is also very important in keeping the brand image (Barlow and Moller, 1996).

This complaint handling strategy is important for better service delivery and performance. Hence, complaint data are the key in quality management efforts because they can be used to correct problems with service design and delivery, which makes it more likely that performance, will be done right the first time (Lovelock, 1994).

Proper handling of consumer complaints can also create positive organization-consumer relationships. As Mitchell & Critchlow (1993) points out, handling consumer complaints reactively facilitates the provision of effective solutions to consumer problems. It can also help in providing opportunities for product or service improvement, defending the company's market share and increasing consumer loyalty.

Besides, complaints or customers' behaviors that have positive outcomes will influence them positively and make them loyal to the organization. Thus, studies have shown that when examining customers' experiences, it is characterized by exceptional level of satisfactions or dissatisfactions. They are more responsive for extreme outcomes rather than just the average outcomes. This is due to the fact that extreme positive outcomes last long in their memory and it will influence their purchasing behavior and becomes loyal to the company (Taylorm, 1997). The reverse is true if the outcome is negative, that is, they may switch to other products or services and they may also spread negative word of mouth about the company if they are disappointed with the product or service.

Therefore, if the complaints cannot be addressed through well-established complaint handling strategies, further resolving mechanisms will be sought. That is, if the response the customers get is not acceptable to them, they may further encourage certain customer segments to initiate legal redress processes (Singh, 1988). This is the other importance of complaint that benefits the customers directly the organizations indirectly.

In addition, some strategies can be employed to help the companies provide fruitful service in time of interruptions. Thus, though a service disruption has the potential to damage customers' loyalty, the defection of customers may be prevented through the successful implementation of service recovery strategies (Lewis and Spyrapoulos, 2001).

In addition, according to Mudie, P. and Pirrie, A. (2006) companies that devote their resources in handling customers' complaints effectively will benefit in various ways:

- ✓ Customers gave them one more chance to renew their relationship so that they might become lifelong customer
- ✓ Negative word of mouth will be avoided
- ✓ They will get valuable ideas for new products and services
- ✓ It enables companies to know the root cause of the problem and uncover the problem that they didn't know existed
- ✓ Motivates employees to provide better quality service

Faulkner, M. (2003) strengthens the above ideas saying that the information given by means of complaint is more important than expensive market research. That is, customer complaint is a quick means of getting feedback regarding the services and products of an organization.

Complaining is not only important for the companies but also to the customers. Zemke and Bell (1990) point out "complaining gives the customer an opportunity to:

- ✓ receive an apology for the inconvenience,
- ✓ be offered a fair solution of the problem,
- ✓ be treated in a manner where the service company appreciates the customer's problem (including fixing it), and
- ✓ be offered some value-added compensation for the inconvenience.

2.1.4. Complaint Behavior

Different scholars define customers' complaint behavior in different ways. For example, Landon (1980) defines customer complaint behavior as "an expression of dissatisfaction by individual consumers to a responsible party in either the distribution channel or a complaint handling agency". Oliver (1980) notes that complaint behavior is dissatisfaction which is caused by negative disconfirmation of purchase expectations. Day (1980) extended this definition to exclude false claims by including only those claims that are honest and reasonable. On the other hand Jacoby and Jarrard (1981) defined complaining as "action taken by an individual which involves communicating something negative regarding a product or service, either the firm manufacturing or marketing that product or service, or to some third-party organizational entity".

Stephens (2000) also stated that “complaining is a post purchase process that may or may not occur when customers are disappointed”.

Generally, consumer complaint behavior is described as the set of all behavioral and non-behavioral responses depicted by consumers. When consumers are dissatisfied with a purchase or some aspect of it they may take no action, quit the product or service, tell friends and others about their problems, complain to the retailer or the manufacturer, complain to consumer protection groups or take legal action (Rogers and Williams, 1990). The two negative reactions of the customers are presented as follows:

2.1.4.1. Taking No Action

As a result of organization’s failure to provide appropriate services or products, the consumers stay passive hoping that problems will be solved as time goes on. Hence, when service failure occurs, customers often keep silent (Zeelenberg and Pieters, 2004). This may be due to, according to Day (1984), their perception that the cost of complaining surpasses the potential benefit. Hirschman (1970) strengthens this idea saying that preferring to remain with a service provider, some customers react passively to the service failure hoping that the likelihood of an improvement outweighs the cost of searching for another supplier.

The other reason why customers keep silent is due to their loyalty with the service provider. Colgate and Lang, (2001) suggest that there are some other reasons why customers keep silent despite they encounter service or product failure. These are lack of perceived differentiation of alternatives, location constraints on choice, time or money constraints, habit or inertia. Customers’ reaction varies according to their personality, that is, some people are impatient to complain and return a failing product while others delay to return a malfunctioned product or just hate the idea of complaining (Chebat et al., 2005).

When customers walk away simply without telling anything about their dissatisfaction, they did not give the company the opportunity to fix the problem. Those customers who are complaining about the company are still talking with them and they will probably come to purchase again (Barlow and Muller, 1996). Keng et al. (1995) concluded that those customers who complain are more social responsible and taking the risks of embarrassment when they are complaining. Tax and

Brown (1998) also indicate that dissatisfied customers should be bucked up to complain because if a customer is unhappy but does not complain, the provider risks losing the customer.

2.1.4.2. Negative Word of Mouth

Disappointed customers not only remain silent until the failing products or services are improved but also respond verbally in various ways. Negative word of mouth, which has a greater consequence on customers' brand evaluations, is the most common way of communicating dissatisfactions. As Hart et al., (1990) demonstrated that those consumers who are dissatisfied with the service of the organizations can disseminate negative word of mouth more than satisfied consumers tell others about positive experiences. This indicates that the bad news or failure of the organizations can be disseminated faster than that of its good news or effectiveness. A single negative word of mouth message can reach and potentially influence many receivers or service users.

Many authors postulate that complaining behavior should be encouraged by the firms when, for example, negative word of mouth is more prevalent than direct actions toward the firm. In addition, customers get a relief when they directly tell to the firm about the fault (Oliver, 1987).

Paradoxically, researchers have observed that when a firm uses an effective strategy to settle complaints, the consumer may actually rank the overall encounter more favorably than a situation in which the transaction had been correctly performed in the first place (Etzel and Silverman, 1981, McCollough and Bharadwaj, 1992).

2.1.5. Why do Customers Complain

The customer is the one that influence overall activities, including success and failure, of one organization. That is, it is the customer who determines what a business is, as Drucker (1977) pointed out. Again it is the customer alone whose willingness to pay for a good or for a service converts economic resources into wealth, things into goods. "What the business thinks it produces is not of first importance especially not to the future of the business and to its success" (Drucker, 1977:90). In short, the customer is the foundation of a business and keeps it in existence. As Drucker (1977) further called attention, the sole purpose of a business is to create a customer. Therefore, keeping the customer has become equally, if not more, important.

Customers' complaints are obviously seen critically since they determine most of the organization's business. Dawkins and Reichheld (1990) thus reported that a five percent increase in customer retention generated an increase in customer net present value of between 25 percent and 95 percent across a wide range of business environments.

Due to the fact that customers are such influential ones, knowing why people complain can help the company to know the way they have to respond. According to Boden (2001), the following are the causes of complaints.

1. Quality of Product

The main cause of customers' complaint is a sub-standard product that doesn't meet customers' expectation. The product might have a short lifespan, a faulty design, inferior material to what was expected, if it is poorly finished off and has limited potential. Customers feel angry if they believe they have been misinformed and they may want to take further action.

2. Quality of Service

Since customers nowadays have good understanding about what the service should be, they might complain due to their lack of manners – downright rudeness, if they believe that company has given more concern with profit than people, if the response is slow, due to indifferent attitudes, if the staff has poor product knowledge and lack of communication skills.

3. Customers Awareness of their Rights

Customers are aware of the fact that it is their right to complain if they encounter any problem regarding the product or service they have purchased, that is, if it didn't meet their expectations. Internet and consumers' watchdog programs are the main drivers for this. By doing so, they might think they will get a replacement or compensation.

4. Being Inherent Complainers

Naturally some people are complainers. They tend to complain a lot, they are only thinking of themselves.

5. Professional complainers

According to Boden (2001), it is estimated that two percent of the people who complain do it for living. They are very well informed through the media, they have good communication skills and

they know their rights. They usually focus on new businesses. In this case, the company should assign an experienced staff to handle these manipulators.

6. To be Helpful

Some customers are helpful in suggesting great ideas for improvement for the product or service. There are some loyal customers who do not want to break their relationship. As a result, they will complain hoping that the service will be back to normal. As Keng et al. (1995) concluded those customers who complain are more social responsible.

Despite this fact, Boden (2001) remarks that companies should be cautious while receiving the complaints since there may be a hidden agenda behind their good intentions.

Research has demonstrated that market structure affects complaining (Hirschman, 1970). Most studies of complainer characteristics have been undertaken in competitive markets. As a result, there has been little research into the characteristics of complainers in monopolistic governmental services – in which consumers have little or no opportunity to withdraw from the relationship. In these circumstances, complaining is the only means whereby consumers can express their opinion of the monopolistic service provider (Tronvoll, 2007).

2.1.6. What Do Customers Want When They Complain

The reason why customers complain is that they only want what they were denied. The ultimate goal is that they want the service to be recovered and expects a continuous improvement. Once they file a complaint, customers want to be treated attentively. Gruber, Szmigin, and Voss. (2009) mentioned the attributes that the employees should have while dealing with the customers' complaint are they have to listen to what customers are saying and ask questions, have sufficient service / product knowledge and the authority to handle customer problems adequately, genuinely care about the customers, they should be willing to take the customer's perspective and to understand the customer's annoyance, they should also apologize for the service/product failure, get in contact with the complainant again to find out whether the problem had been solved accurately and satisfactorily, smile and give positive nonverbal cues, be sincere and willing to try hard and to spare no effort, give the impression of being unbiased and characterized by a matter-of-fact orientation, handle the problem quickly and take sufficient time to handle the complaint.

2.1.7. How Companies See Complaint

Many organizations consider examining customer complaints not only an unpleasant fact of business life but also a waste of time and money. In most cases, customers who decide to complain are faced with problem of refraining from discharging their responsibilities through providing timely feedbacks. Moreover, many frontline employees subtly imply to customers that complaining may not be appropriate in the circumstances. As a result, according to Tax and Brown (1998), perhaps only ten percent of the customers who are dissatisfied actually lodge a formal complaint and the majorities here are dissatisfied with the way companies resolve their complaints.

Most organizations consider consumer complaints as a back bone for their service and product improvements. In this case, no matter how varied the feelings of the customers are, they need to be entertained. According to Gruberfirst (2004) cited in Atalik (2007:409), for instance, many consumers “have more negative feelings about an organization after they go through the service recovery process.” In addition, in the quest for progress and advancement, according to Zairi (2000), progressive service organizations worldwide place their customers first.

No matter how consumer complaints are important for organizations’ success, the perceptions of employees towards consumers’ satisfaction are not researched well. Hence, despite the large and still growing literature on complaint handling, much remains unclear. First, although lately there has been growing interest in studying the affective nature of satisfaction (Dube and Menon, 2000), still little research has dealt with recovery related emotions (Casado-Diaz et al., 2007), and (Schoefer, 2008; Schoefer and Ennew, 2005) analyzed their effects on satisfaction in service failure and recovery situations. This lack of attention is somewhat surprising, especially in financial services where the possibilities of engendering emotions are high, due to their intangible nature and their intensity in personnel (Bitner, 1992).

Second, although perceived justice is recognized as a fundamental cognitive antecedent when trying to explain customer satisfaction in the service failure and recovery context, disconfirmation of expectations is the dominant theory when studying customer satisfaction. However, studies investigating the cognitive and affective antecedents of satisfaction with complaint handling focus on perceived justice as the only cognitive antecedent on this variable (Schoefer, 2008; Schoefer and Ennew, 2005.)

2.1.8. Complaint Management

Complaint management covers in indirect manners such as the planning and control of complaints handling, including a long-term analysis of complaints. It enables an organization to distinguish and review possible weaknesses within its internal and external processes, and it ascertains a long-term improvement of the services to the customers and builds a customer oriented organization (Van Ossel et al., 2003).

As consumer complaints are needed to be managed properly, such type of complaint management strategy plays various roles. For instance, Stauss and Seidel (2005) identified four distinct types of complaint management benefits as follow:

- (1) The information benefit which helps to improve products, enhance efficiency and reduce failure costs.
- (2) The attitude benefit which grasps the positive attitude changes of the customer due to achieved complaint satisfaction.
- (3) The repurchase benefit which arises when a complaining customer remains with a company than going to a competitor.
- (4) Communication benefit that is when complaints are solved and satisfied customers are engaging in acquisition new customers by recommending the company.

Since, the emphasis given to consumer complaints is growing time to time, complaints management is sought to be high accordingly. Regarding this idea, Chih W.H. and etal (2012) mentioned that the service industries, mostly in developing countries, have reached more than seventy percent of their country's gross domestic product. As each service bumps into increase, customer complaints and dissatisfaction with services is becoming the center of attention of managerial and scholarly inquiry.

However, despite calls for increasing investments in complaint handling, little is known about how customers evaluate a company's response to their complaints or how those efforts influence subsequent customer relationships with the firm (Goodwin and Ross, 1992). So, there has to be a positive relationship between the customers and the organization because good complaint handling by the company brings forth trust in consumers, provides a good company image and serves to minimize defect rates (Mitchell and Critchlow, 1993).

Therefore, many companies do not pay sufficient attention to handling complaints effectively (Bernd and Andreas, 2004). Naylor (2003), however, illustrates how few companies recognize the importance of customer complaining through the estimate that fewer than 50 percent of complainants receive a reply from the company and those that do often view the organization's response as unsatisfactory.

Most complaints come in one of four packages: letters, e-mail, face-to face contact, and phone calls. An effective complaint policy takes all complaints seriously and responds according to the gravity of the complaint instead of by the method it was received.

Letters - complaint letters are considered by customers to be an official record of their grievance. Complaint letters give the company the time and opportunity to reflect on the problem, take steps to resolve it, and get back to the customer with a resolution.

E-mail - e-mail has become one of the most commonly used methods for customer complaints. Customers usually use e-mail to voice their annoyance regarding smaller or less significant problems. The downside of e-mail complaints is that the customer expects quick response, usually within 24 to 48 hours.

Face to face contact - it is the most common form for customer complaints. These interactions are often the most challenging for front line staff since the customer's emotion is front and center. It may not reflect a particular circumstance, but instead a general dissatisfaction. So the front line staff should probe for more details and pass on what they're hearing to management, current problems can be corrected and future problems prevented.

Phone calls -similar to the face-to-face complaint, phone calls are an immediate expression of dissatisfaction on the customer's part. Usually complaints made by phone are less serious than those that require a letter, but they nonetheless impact the customer's experience of doing business with your company. Many customers prefer speaking to a real, live person about their problem, rather than sending an e-mail or letter. The downside to phone call complaints is that the company must either solve the problem on the spot or call the customer back which delays the resolution of the problem.

If organizations want to be successful, they need to set mechanisms of retaining customers through proper complaint management system. According to Bernd and Andreas (2004),

complaint handling has great impact on customer retention and the information gained from them is very useful for quality improvements. But most organizations have difficulty in understanding the value of complaint management. Due to this lack of understanding, complaint management is often not regarded as a profit centre but as a cost centre. As a result, organizations reduce this activity by cutting it back to 'save' cost.

In short, by maintaining a positive relationship with customers, organizations can be benefited. In relation to this notion, Reichheld and Sasser (1990:105) remarks that "as a customer's relationship with the company lengthens profits rise. And not just a little. Companies can boost profits by almost 100 percent by retaining just 5 percent more of their customers."

In the same vein, when customers attribute employees' behavior to the organization, interpersonal treatment will influence assessments of procedural justice (Tyler and Bies 1989). Because frontline employees are frequently the focus of service customers' interaction with the firm, it is likely that such attributions are prevalent. The positive impact of procedural justice on complaint handling satisfaction can be compromised when employees behave unfairly (Goodwin and Ross, 1992). In this case, employees are required to behave fairly if the company is expected to be efficient.

The existence of harmonious relationship between customers and the organization resulted in the consumer satisfaction, which in turn affect the success of an organization. Westbrook (1987: 28) observes that satisfaction "usually is regarded as the central mediator of post purchase behavior, linking pre choice product beliefs to post choice cognitive structure consumer communications, and repurchase behavior." Similarly, satisfaction with complaint handling could be the central mediator that links perceptions of the fairness dimensions to post complaint attitudes and behaviors.

In order to resolve a customer's complaint, the company needs to make sure it understands exactly what's contributing to the dissatisfaction. Some of the most common elements found in customer complaints according to Leland, K., & Bailey, K. (2011) are billing mistakes, complicated or confusing product or service instructions, delays in delivery of goods or services, failure to fulfill product or service warranties, failure to provide refunds and adjustments as promised, incompetent or discourteous employees, incorrect or misleading information, misleading advertising, misleading statements by sales staff, order filled incorrectly, poor quality

repair work, product or service not performing as promised, products are back-ordered or unavailable and unfriendly user interface.

2.1.9. Complaint Handling Processes

Many of the customers who are dissatisfied with company's services may not complain for different reasons such as feeling that the company does not care about them or lack of interest and knowledge of filing their complaints. To address these issues, companies can make their complaint handling process simple and easily accessible so that they can collect the complaints.

From a process perspective, complaint handling can be viewed as a sequence of events in which a procedure, beginning with communicating the complaint, generates a process of interaction through which a decision and outcome occurs. Justice literature suggests that each part of the sequence is subject to fairness considerations and that each aspect of a complaint resolution creates a justice episode (Bies, 1987).

Complaints are not always attached to disappointments; rather, complaints signal customers' commitment to the improvement of the company through positive feed backs. According to TARP (1979) those customers who are complaining show a strong brand loyalty. As a result, if the company wants to retain customers, it has to strengthen its complaint handling mechanism.

In the same manner, Sellers (1988) explains that "better complaint handling equals to higher customer satisfaction, equals higher brand loyalty, equals higher profitability." This indicates that complaint handling, brand loyalty and profitability have direct relationships in which absence of one can affect the other in an organization's activities.

A careful complaints handling process benefits both the customers and the organization. That is, a positive approach to deal with customer complaints helps to maintain customers and generate positive communication about the company (Boshoff and Allen, 2000). Importantly, repeat purchases by established customers usually require up to 90 percent less marketing expenditure than do purchases by first time buyers (Dhar and Glazer, 2003).

Companies have to design and introduce the policy on how to complain to their customers. To minimize customers' frustration, according to Leland & Bailey (2011), should include the policy on how they can contact them when they have a complaint or problem, where in the organization

a customer can make specific complaints, who is responsible for dealing with different types of complaints.

Complaint handling process should aim to provide framework for the employees when handling complaints, improve the ability of the company to resolve issues in a systematic, consistent, and responsive manner, enable the organization to identify trends and eliminate causes of complaints and as a result improve the operations, assist the commitment of the company to the provision of high quality service, provide a basis for continual review and analysis of the complaint handling process, the resolution of complaints and process the improvements made.

According to Buttle F. (2009), the following are the complaint management process:

- ✓ Make your complaints-handling policy and processes accessible and visible to customers and employees
- ✓ Train employees how to respond to complaints
- ✓ Ask for specifics. Not ‘what do you think about your experience?’ Instead ask, ‘what one thing could we have done better?’
- ✓ Empower employees to resolve complaints
- ✓ Install a dedicated free-phone line
- ✓ Link complaints to your mission to become more customer-focused
- ✓ Designate a customer service executive to deal with written complaints
- ✓ Enable customers to complain at all touch-points
- ✓ Ensure all employees understand the complaints management process
- ✓ Reward customers who complain
- ✓ Collect complaints data and analyze root causes
- ✓ Implement technology to support complaints-handling and generate useful management reports.

2.1.10. Effective Complaint Handling

Effective complaint handling relies on vigorous processes to deliver a fair result for the customer. To do this, regulated organizations follow a complaint handling process, which includes thorough investigation, reporting, resolution and regular communication with the complainant.

In doing this they will learn more about their customers' needs and hence improve the customer service experience all round. Organizations in all sectors can adopt a number of principles that will allow them to profit from the opportunities that effective complaint handling can offer to optimize their service and improve customer loyalty. According to Esource magazine for an effective complaint handling companies should create the right culture for complaint handlers, make it easy to complain, treat customers fairly and with respect, prepare guidelines on how communications with complainants should be handled, know the root cause of the problem, set clear and appropriate time limits, where necessary, flexibility for dealing with complex complaints together with keeping the complainant informed and they should also learn from mistakes.

Generally, complaint handling embodies an important opportunity for firms to rebuild and improve their relationships with their customers when things gone wrong, and to use the information gathered to make changes that deliver fair outcomes for their wider customer base.

Customers whose complaints are handled well by a company become loyal customers and spread positive word-of-mouth. Nonetheless too many companies fail at complaint handling and then fail again in responding to these failures. Due to this lack of understanding, complaint management is often not regarded as a profit centre but as a cost centre. A positive approach to dealing with customer complaints should help to maintain customers and generate positive communication about the company. Thus, companies should give due consideration to the complaint handling.

2.2. Empirical Literature

Atalik, O. (2007) explored the common complaints made by Turkish frequent flyers related to their program membership. From the findings of the study he concluded that customers are the most important element in the business. The loyalty of the customers can only be won by solving their problems efficiently, although some organizations need to improve their performance in this area. However, if complaints are not handled efficiently, problems remain unsolved and worsen in the organization. He also revealed that the common complaints of members are related to the availability of free tickets and upgrades of the flight class, the behavior of personnel, card ownership issues, level and type of priority services offered within the program and the lack of alliances with other airlines.

Tax, S. & Brown, S. (1998) conducted a study on customer evaluations of service complaint experiences. They found that majority of complaining customers were dissatisfied with recent complaint handling experiences. They also revealed that customers evaluate complaint incidents in terms of the outcomes they receive, the procedures used to arrive at the outcomes, and the nature of the interpersonal treatment during the process. The results showed that satisfaction with complaint handling has a direct impact on trust and commitment customers on the company.

Ryngelblum et al (2013) examined the ways companies really answer consumer complaints. The results of the study showed that companies postpone the solution of complaints in order to discourage complainants, but once they plead to consumer protection agencies their demands are satisfied, even when companies do not fully agree with them.

Cook, S. and Macaulay, S. (1997) explored the practical steps to empowered complaint management. In the study it was found that the way customers are treated determine the relationship they have with the organization. Empowerment is an influential means of increasing customer satisfaction when resolving customer complaints. For empowerment to be applied effectively, it needs encouraging service providers to take proactive approach to complaints; developing service providers' competencies in handling complaints; being precise about the level of authority employees have in complaint management; providing encouragement and support to employees in taking responsibility and taking action to overcome the causes of complaints.

Johnston, R. and Mahra, S. (2002) conducted exploratory study on best practice complaint management on customer service managers in 40 United Kingdom service organizations. The study revealed the need for speed resolution, top management involvements, centralized and decentralized allocations of tasks, develop means of assessing the financial impact of complaints and the value of improvements. These organizations perceive complaint as part of the approach to good management.

CHAPTER III: RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

In this chapter the research methodology used in the study is described. The geographical area where the study was conducted, the study design and the population and sample are described. The instrument used to collect the data is described.

3.1. Research Design

This research used mixed approach research design. Mixed methods research is an approach to inquiry that combines both quantitative and qualitative forms. It involves the use of qualitative and quantitative approaches, and the mixing of both approaches in a study. Thus, it is more than simply collecting and analyzing both kinds of data; it also requires the use of both approaches one behind the other so that the overall strength of a study is greater than either qualitative or quantitative research (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2007).

Thus for the study, both qualitative and quantitative data were employed. And to achieve the objective of this study, the researcher has collected and reviewed relevant documents and information from both primary and secondary data sources.

3.2. Population and Sampling Techniques

Customers of ethio telecom who are found in Addis Ababa two zones, South and Central Addis Ababa, and enterprise customers were the target population for this study.

Due to the movability nature of customers and the unavailability of regional codes for mobile numbers the researcher did not get the exact number of ethio telecoms' customers who are found in Addis Ababa. Distributing questionnaires requires a big effort in many instances as there is a huge need of time and money if the sample is huge. Due to the above constraints, by using random sampling technique, 140 customers were taken as the sample of this study. Respondents are ideally selected by means of randomized sampling methods. Due to incompleteness of the responses for the questionnaires, 20 of them were not considered. To gather the relevant information, these customers were contacted while they were in ethio telecom's premises to get the service in three selected areas: Central Addis Ababa Zone which is found around Leghar, South Addis Ababa Zone which is found around Saris and Corporate Customer Service Center that is found around Tikur Anbessa High School, Cherchil Avenue. In addition, out of the

employees of customer service division the researcher interviewed five management members and three staffs, who are managing customers' complaint handling.

3.3. Types of Data and Tools

In order to get all the necessary information on the area under study, both secondary and primary sources of information were used. In this study the information was collected through self-administered questionnaires distributed personally to the subjects by the researcher. Therefore, the data collection methods that were used for the study were questionnaire, interview and document analysis. That is, the questionnaire and interview helped the researcher to collect the relevant information from the customers and employees of ethio telecom. The questionnaires were converted in to Amharic to enable those who did not understand English to complete them in Amharic. Materials which are related to the subject of the study that were prepared by the company, that is, manuals have been used to collect necessary information from secondary sources.

Questionnaire were designed, of course, by modifying the earlier instruments used by Meertens (2007). This questionnaire firstly has the objective of collecting certain demographic information, and, secondly measuring the view of customers on ethio telecom's complaint handling practices. In the questionnaire the main themes in the literature review chapter were captured. The questionnaire designed to have five open-ended and 27 close-ended questions focus on how customers' complaint is being handled by ethio telecom. The close-ended questions were designed in Likert Scale format (strongly agree, agree, neutral, disagree and strongly disagree).

The interviewees were chosen for their significance to the conceptual questions rather than their representativeness. The interviews were conducted in Amharic and for the purpose of this thesis were translated into English by the researcher himself. The interview used to collect data from employees of ethio telecom has 17 questions.

3.4. Procedures of Data Collection

Questionnaires were personally distributed by the researcher to ethio telecom customers to complete at ethio telecom shops. The researcher completed some questionnaires for those who

couldn't read and make clarifications for some questions the customers asking. The data was collected within one month, August 2013.

3.5. Method of Data Analysis

After the data was collected, it was organized and analyzed. The data collected from customers by using the questionnaire (close-ended questions) were analyzed quantitatively by employing Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS 16.0) software to compute descriptive statistics for the totals, means, frequencies as well as the relative percentages and graphs. In addition, the data collected from employees of ethio telecom by employing the interview and open-ended questions were analyzed qualitatively.

3.6. Validity Checking

Questions were based on information gathered during the literature review and adapted from Meertens (2007) to make sure that they were representative of what customers feel about complaint handling practices of ethio telecom. Content validity was further ensured by consistency in administering the questionnaires. All questionnaires were distributed to subjects by the researcher personally. The questions were formulated in local language, Amharic, for clarity and ease of understanding. Clear instructions were given to the subjects and the researcher completed the questionnaires for those subjects who could not read. All the subjects completed the questionnaires in the presence of the researcher. This was done to prevent subjects from giving questionnaires to other people to complete on their behalf.

CHAPTER IV: RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

In this chapter, the data that were collected through questionnaire and interview will be presented and analyzed.

4.1. Results

4.1.1. Demographic Information of the Respondents

The first part of the questionnaire consists of the demographic information of the participants. This part of the questionnaire requested a limited amount of information related to personal and professional demographic characteristics of the respondents. Accordingly, the following variables about the respondents were summarized and described in the subsequent tables. These variables include: age, sex, occupational status and educational qualifications of the respondents.

Table 1: Summary of the Number and Percentage of Respondent by Age and Sex

Age	Sex				Total
	Male		Female		
	Count	%	Count	%	
<25	13	11%	1	1%	14(12%)
25-34	29	24%	7	6%	36(30%)
35-44	48	40%	8	7%	56(47%)
45-54	6	5%	8	7%	14(12%)
Total	96	80%	24	20%	120 (100%)

Sources: questionnaire

As table 1 revealed, the percentage of respondents in relation to their age and sex, 80% of the respondents were male and 20% of them were female. Regarding the age of the participants, the largest group (47%) was in the 35-44 years of age group. As we can see in table 1, the second largest group (30%) was respondents' age which ranged 25-34 years, but 12% indicated that they are either 45-54 or less than 25 years of age.

Table 2: Summary of the Number and Percentage of Respondents by Occupational Status and Educational Qualification

Occupational Status	Educational qualification						Total
	Primary		Secondary		College/ University		
	N	%	N	%	N	%	
Business	0	0	0	0	15	13%	15 (13%)
Government/Social service	0	0	7	6%	42	35%	49 (41%)
Self employed	7	6%	14	12%	35	29%	56 (47%)
Total	7	6%	21	18%	92	77%	120 (100%)

Sources: questionnaire

As we can observe from table 2, the largest groups of respondents (47%) were self-employed; whereas 41% of them were employed in government institutions, and the rest 13% had their own business. On the basis of educational qualification, majority of the respondents (77%) have got college or university education, and 18% of the respondents have completed secondary education. The remaining 6% have got primary education.

4.1.2. The Customers' Perception Of Their Contact With the Ethio Telecom Staff

Based on the data gathered from the customers of ethio telecom, the researcher has tried to analyze the customers' perception of their contact with the ethio telecom staffs who are managing the complaint. The questionnaire was designed by using Likert Scale where almost all the statements are measured on a five point scale as strongly agree, agree, neutral, disagree and, strongly disagree. The information obtained from the questionnaire is summarized and discussed in table 3.

Table 3 Customers Perception on Staffs Managing the Complaint

S/N	Customers' contacts with the ethio telecom staff managing the complaint	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
1	The employee(s) seemed to be concerned about my problem.	29 (24.2%)	35 (29.2%)	7 (5.8%)	28 (23.3%)	21 (17.5%)
2	The employee treated me in a polite way.	28 (23.3%)	57 (47.5%)	7 (5.8%)	21 (17.5%)	7 (5.8%)
3	The employees did their best to solve my problem.	21 (17.5%)	21 (17.5%)	22 (18.3%)	35 (29.2%)	21 (17.5%)
4	The employees' behavior while handling my complaint was fair.	21 (17.5%)	64 (53.3%)	21 (17.5%)	7 (5.8%)	7 (5.8%)

Sources: questionnaire

As we can observe from Table 3, about 53% of the respondents agreed with the statement 'The employee(s) seemed to be concerned about my problem'. However, about 41% of the respondents disagreed, whereas 6% of the respondents became neutral in relation to the statement. Based on the responses, we can infer that more than half of the customers felt that the staffs gave due attention for their complaints.

On the other hand, the majority of the respondents (71%) agreed with the statement 'the employee treated me in a polite way'; while about 6% of them became neutral and 24% of the respondents disagreed with the statement. From these we can deduce that if the company wants to give an outstanding customer service, customers should be treated politely, respectfully and courtesy. In this regard majority of the respondents witnessed that employees are good at handling the customers while complaining in a polite way.

However, regarding the statement 'the employees did their best to solve my problem', 35% of the respondents agreed. In this statement the reactions of respondents were mixed. About 37% of the respondents argued that they disagree with the statement, whereas about 18% of them became neutral.

Moreover, 71% of the respondents agreed on the use of ‘the employees’ behavior while handling my complaint was fair’. Therefore, about 11% of the respondents argued against the statement, whereas about 18% of them had a neutral position.

Treating customers fairly is essential to all products and services that the company provides. That is, customers should be able to understand well, and they should have the confidence to know that they are treated fairly, equally and without prior judgment. Based on this result, it seems possible to infer that the customers are happy with the way how employees handle their complaint.

4.1.3. Ethio Telecom’s Process/ Procedures Used to Solve Customers’ Complaints

In order to understand the perceptions of the customers of ethio telecom towards the process or procedure that ethio telecom is practicing to solve their complaints on time, the opinion of the respondents were collected and presented in the following diagram, table 4.

Table 4 Ethio Telecom’s Process/ Procedures Used to Solve Customers’ Complaints

S/N	Ethio Telecom’s process/ procedures used to solve customers’ complaint	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
1	Ethio telecom responded to my complaint in a timely manner.	14 (11.7%)	21 (17.5%)	14 (11.7%)	21 (17.5%)	50 (41.7%)
2	Ethio telecom gave me the chance to tell my side of the story.	14 (11.7%)	35 (29.2%)	22 (18.3%)	21 (17.5%)	28 (23.3%)
3	It was hard to find someone in the company who would do something about my problem.	21 (17.5%)	21 (17.5%)	7 (5.8%)	49 (40.8%)	22 (18.3%)
4	The processes/ procedures ethio telecom used to handle my complaint were fair.	21 (17.5%)	42 (35%)	8 (6.7%)	35 (29.2%)	14 (11.7%)

Sources: questionnaire

Majority of the male respondents (65%) and 38% of female respondents disagreed with the statement ‘Ethio telecom responded to my complaint in a timely manner’, whereas 23% and 54% of male and female respondents respectively agreed with the timely response of the company. On

the contrary, 13% and 8% of male and female respondents respectively became neutral with the statement.

From this, it may be inferred that majority of the respondents do not feel that the company is responding timely for their complaint.

As can be seen from table 4, for the statement ‘Ethio telecom gave me the chance to tell my side of the story’ the response became 50:50. But with regard to educational level all of primary and secondary completed respondents told that they disagree with the statement, whereas out of the college/university educated respondents, 41% agreed that the company responded timely, but 18% of them disagreed with the statement. And 22% of the respondents replied in a neutral manner. The result of the data collected uncovers the existence of problem in listening to customers’ complaints.

With regard to finding someone who will sort out their problem, 59% of them believe that there is a solution at ethio telecom while 35% of them disagree. Regarding the fairness of the process 52.5% of them felt that the process that ethio telecom employed is good but about 41% disagree with the idea.

According to the result of interview, there are four processes regarding complaints. These are customer problem handling via call center, enterprise customer problem handling via call center, customer bill complaint handling and enterprise customer complaint handling via back office.

Customer problem handling via call center

A complaint is raised by the customer when a fault exists on the services which the company offers or when the company fails to meet the service level agreement of the products it provide to the customers. According to the process document, the objective of customer problem handling via call center process is to manage complaints raised by customers related with the organization’s product offerings and services solve those difficulties on time to bring customer satisfaction as well as to meet the company’s objective.

The process steps are as follows:

- Customer calls the contact center and makes a complaint or describes a problem he or she is facing.
- The front line first level (call center) will solve the problem if the problem can be solved at that level.
- If the complaint/problem cannot be solved by first level, the call will be forwarded to second level. If the complaint cannot be solved by second level, then a trouble ticket is created for further investigation and the customer is informed trouble ticket number assigned for the complaint. The trouble ticket will be dispatched to the concerned body for resolution.
- When trouble ticket is solved the advisors will close and put as archives.

Customer bill complaint handling

The objective of this process is to manage complaints raised by customers in relation to bill charges and solve those problems accordingly. The data is collected from point of sales, enterprise business center and contact center.

The processes are:

- Customer can lodge their complaint at point of sales (ethio shops), enterprise business center and contact center receives complaint from customer regarding bill amount.
- At contact center, point of sales or enterprise business center the complaint will be analyzed and if it can be solved and the customer will be informed the result. If not the complaint will be send to Customer Care and Billing.
- Customer Care and Billing receive complaint and investigate the complaint and check the validity of the claim and if found it to be true Customer Care and Billing will post debit/credit against customer account.
- Customer Care and Billing informs the result to the customer.

The other two processes, that is, enterprise customer problem handling via call center and enterprise customer complaint handling via back office are more or less the same as the above

processes. The main difference is the category of the customers. These processes have been assessed by the concerned body in the company and they are found to be fully implemented.

4.1.4. The Outcomes Ethio Telecom Provided to Compensate the Problem

In order to understand the perceptions of customers of ethio telecom towards the compensation that ethio telecom provided to respond to their complaint, the opinion of the respondents were collected and presented in table 5.

As one can observe from figure 5, when the respondents were asked to respond about their satisfaction level with ethio telecom in getting response for what they complained, majority of them (59%) disagreed, while 36% of them agreed on the fact that they received satisfactory responses from the organization. The remaining 6% of them, however, responded in neutral manner.

Therefore, when the responses are observed regarding their gender, the result indicated that 66% of male and 33% of female respondents disagreed for the statement ‘I received satisfactory response from ethio telecom’. However, 30% of male and 54% of female agreed on the statement. Of all the occupation groups, (13%) of them disagreed on the above statement.

The result indicated that ethio telecom could not provide satisfactory and timely solutions for its customers. However, the result could indicate differences when we see in terms of gender. That is, male respondents are more dissatisfied than that of females in relation with their complaints about the service provisions.

The other statement which asks respondents whether ethio telecom solved the problems of customers as they wanted. As shown in table 5, the result indicated that 28% of the respondents agreed on the statement, whereas 53% of them disagreed, and the rest 18% of them responded neutrally.

From this one can infer that majority of them are not happy with the way the company addressed their complaints. This information is depicted on the table 5 below.

Table 5 Ethio Telecom Complaint Handling and its Outcome

S/N	The outcomes ethio telecom provided to compensate the problem	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
1	I received satisfactory response from ethio telecom.	21 (17.5%)	21 (17.5%)	7 (5.8%)	42 (35%)	29 (24.2%)
2	Ethio telecom worked out my problem in exactly what I wanted.	14 (11.7%)	21 (17.5%)	21 (17.5%)	35 (29.2%)	29 (24.2%)
3	Their effort to solve the problem resulted in positive outcomes.	35 (29.2%)	14 (11.7%)	21 (17.5%)	28 (23.3%)	22 (18.3%)
4	The service I got after my complaint from ethio telecom was fair.	21 (17.5%)	21 (17.5%)	21 (17.5%)	35 (29.2%)	22 (18.3%)

Sources: questionnaire

The next question which asked the respondents regarding ethio telecom’s effort to solve the problem resulted in positive outcomes. Thus, when service recoveries outcome exceed a customer’s expected outcome, according to service recovery literature, positive disconfirmation is resulted. Accordingly, 42% of the respondents replied as they did not bring positive outcome, but 41% of them told that it has brought positive outcome, whereas 18% of the respondents replied in a neutral manner.

The other question that requested the respondents whether the service they got after a complaint from ethio telecom was fair or not. Accordingly, 47% of them told they disagree, whereas 35% of the respondents agreed on the statement. Therefore, the rest 18% of them were found to have neutral responses.

4.1.5. Complaint Handling Satisfaction

Under this section, the respondents were asked whether they were disappointed on the way ethio telecom handled their complaint or not. As can be seen in table 6, 41% of the respondents disagreed with the statement, whereas 35% of them agreed, and 24% of them became neutral.

On the basis of gender, about 36% of the male and 58% of the female respondents disagreed in relation to the statement, whereas 38% of the male respondents and 58% of the female respondents replied as they agreed with the statement.

The result of the study reveals that a great deal of respondents were disappointed on the way that ethio telecom was trying to handle their complaints.

In response to the next question that requests the respondents to rate their perceptions in relation to lodging their complaints to ethio telecom, they were found to have positive experiences. Accordingly, 58% of respondents replied in favor of the statement. On the other hand, 29% of the respondents were observed to disagree with the statement. And the rest 13% of them responded in a neutral manner, as it can be seen in the following table (Table 6).

As shown in table 6 again, the next statement requests respondents to give their replies in relation to whether they are very satisfied with the way ethio telecom was working out their complaints or not. And hence, 33% of them agreed with this statement, and 54% of them disagreed, but still about 13% of them had a neutral response. From this, it can be deduced that the perceptions of the customers are unfavorable in relation to the way their complaints are handled by ethio telecom.

Table 6 Lodging a Complaint and Satisfaction of Customers

S/N	Customers satisfaction with ethio telecom in general	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
1	The choice for the product / service from ethio telecom was a good decision.	0 (0%)	49 (40.8%)	14 (11.7%)	28 (23.3%)	29 (24.2%)
2	I am satisfied with the ethio telecom after my complaint.	14 (11.7%)	35 (29.2%)	28 (23.3%)	21 (17.5%)	22 (18.3%)
3	So far I have positive experiences with ethio telecom.	0 (0%)	35 (29.2%)	21 (17.5%)	14 (11.7%)	50 (41.7%)

Sources: questionnaire

4.1.6. Overall Satisfaction

The general satisfaction of customers on ethio telecom’s complaint handling is presented below in table 7.

Table 7 Ethio Telecom Customers’ Overall Satisfaction on the Company’s Complaint Handling

S/N	Customers satisfaction with ethio telecom in general	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
1	The choice for the product / service from ethio telecom was a good decision.	0 (0%)	49 (40.8%)	14 (11.7%)	28 (23.3%)	29 (24.2%)
2	I am satisfied with the ethio telecom after my complaint.	14 (11.7%)	35 (29.2%)	28 (23.3%)	21 (17.5%)	22 (18.3%)
3	So far I have positive experiences with ethio telecom.	0 (0%)	35 (29.2%)	21 (17.5%)	14 (11.7%)	50 (41.7%)

Sources: questionnaire

As we can see from table 7, about 48% of the respondents disagreed with the statement “The choice for the product / service from ethio telecom was a good decision”, whereas about 41% of them agreed with the statement. And the rest 11.7% of them were found to have neutral position.

Table 7 also shows that 35.8% of the respondents disagreed with the statement ‘I am satisfied with ethio telecom after my complaint.’ whereas about 40.9% of the respondents replied by agreeing with the idea, and the rest 23.3% of them responded neutrally.

In addition, about 53.4% of the respondents disagreed with the statement ‘So far I have positive experiences with ethio telecom’, but about 35% of them agreed with the statement. And the other 17.5% of the respondents were found to have a neutral position. Based on the result, it seems to infer that many of the customers do not have positive experiences with ethio telecom; however, no as such significant differences were observed regarding the satisfaction level of customers after complaints.

4.1.7. Intention to Share Experience

With regard to customers’ intention of sharing their experience, respondents have complaints at ethio telecom, and as we can see from table 8, about 53% of them responded that they do not tell positive things about ethio telecom to others, whereas only 24% of the them replied that they are likely to tell positive things about the company. And the rest 23% of them replied neutrally.

From this we can infer that the majority of respondents are not happy with the complaint handling practices of the company.

As can be seen from table 8, significant number of respondents (35%) became neutral for the statement they were asked whether they can recommend ethio telecom services to friends or not. 42% of them replied that they would not recommend, whereas only 23% of them agreed that they would tell to their friends about ethio telecom services. Based on the aforementioned responses, we can conclude that customers are not happy with the services provided by ethio telecom since many of them replied not to recommend ethio telecom to others.

Table 8 Customers Intention to Share their Experience with Others

S/N	Customers intention to share their experience with others	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
1	I am likely to tell positive things about ethio telecom to others.	7 (5.8%)	21 (17.5%)	28 (23.3%)	28 (23.3%)	36 (30%)
2	I would recommend to my friends to ethio telecom services.	7 (5.8%)	21 (17.5%)	42 (35%)	21 (17.5%)	29 (24.2%)
3	If my friends were planning to purchase a product or service ethio telecom offers, I would advise them to try.	7 (5.8%)	28 (23.3%)	35 (29.2%)	21 (17.5%)	29 (24.2%)
4	I would advise my friends not to deal with ethio telecom.	14 (11.7%)	15 (12.5%)	35 (29.2%)	35 (29.2%)	21 (17.5%)

Sources: questionnaire

For the next question that asked respondents whether they are interested to advise their friends to purchase goods or services from ethio telecom. Only 29% of them agreed with the statement, but 42% of them disagreed, and the remaining 29% of them were observed to have a neutral position.

Asked in another way as to whether the respondents advise friends not to deal with ethio telecom, majority of them (47%) of them disagreed with the statement, whereas 24% of them agreed with it, and in similar with the above statement, 29% of them indicated a neutral response. From this we can infer that significant number of customers do not advise their friends to purchase or not to purchase goods or services from ethio telecom as a result of the complaints.

4.1.8. Complaint Actions

In this section, the result that deals with customers who were asked what they do when they encounter service failure is presented. And many of them (53%) told that they keep silent. However, 35% of them responded that they will not keep silent, and about 12% of them were observed to have responded neutrally. In terms of gender, therefore, majority of male (56%) told that they do not take any action, and about 30% of them responded that they take actions when they encounter service failures. When we see female respondents, the result is different. That is, about 54% of the female respondents replied that they take actions; whereas 42% of customers responded that they will not take any actions.

If we see the responses in relation to education level, 53% of the respondents agreed, 36% disagree and about 12% had neutral position. Therefore, almost all those in primary education status responded that they will take actions, whereas about 62% of those completed college told that they will not take action, but about 35% of them responded that they will not keep silent when they have complaints on the company. This indicates that many of the respondents chose to be silent though a different result was observed when it was seen in relation to gender.

Again, customers were asked whether or not they bad mouth on ethio telecom negatively when they are dissatisfied with the services, and 48% of them were found to have agreed and 35% of them were disagreed on the statement.

In addition to this, as we can see on table 9, the customers found to be not happy to lodge their complaints to ethio telecom management. Thus, 64% of the respondents agreed, but 24% of them disagreed with the idea of submitting complaints to the management. On the other hand, out of the respondents, 68% of them agreed with the action of complaining to front line employees.

Sometimes customers may divert their complaints to media than directly telling the company about its service failure. Accordingly, out of the respondents 47% of them have interest to divert to media, whereas about 48% of them responded as they do not choose to complain to media.

From this we can infer that many of the customers of ethio telecom were in a position to lodge their complaints to the front line employees rather than diverting their complaints to the media.

Table 9 Ethio Telecom Customers' Complaint Action

S/N	Complaint actions taken when customers are dissatisfied with the service?	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
1	Take no action	29 (24.2%)	35 (29.2%)	14 (11.7%)	7 (5.8%)	35 (29.2%)
2	Bad mouth the company	15 (12.5%)	42 (35%)	21 (17.5%)	14 (11.7%)	28 (23.3%)
3	Complain to ethio telecom management	35 (29.2%)	42 (35%)	14 (11.7%)	7 (5.8%)	22 (18.3%)
4	Complain to front line employees	21 (17.5%)	49 (40.8%)	14 (11.7%)	7 (5.8%)	29 (24.2%)
5	Divert complaint to the media	21 (17.5%)	35 (29.2%)	7 (5.8%)	0 (0%)	57 (47.5%)

Sources: questionnaire

For the open ended questions, customers mentioned that the means to file complaint is not easy especially the call center though it has shown improvement but the agents' treatment found to be very good. They also mentioned that it took longer period of time to recover the service especially for the fixed line telephones.

Majority of respondents mentioned that poor quality of network for mobile and internet is being observed. They also pointed out that starting from recent times it is even worsening and this has become their major cause for complaints. In addition to the above reasons, some of the respondents mentioned that they complained for ethio telecom due to bill exaggerations.

Regarding the means to file their complaints, majority of the respondents told that they send their complaints through the call center (994), whereas, some of them replied that they prefer to go to shops to get fast responses since they can meet the management if it is not solved immediately.

When the respondents asked as to how they knew the means to complain, about 80% of them mentioned that it is through their friends and families, while 15% of them told through media (radios) and 5% don't remember how they knew it.

The respondents were also asked to reply about the causes of their complaints. And figuratively, 77% of them told that it is due to poor quality of service/goods and 8% of them responded as the cause is billing mistakes, and the rest 15% of the respondents replied that their reasons are other than these.

In order to support the data collected through the questionnaire, the interview that was conducted with the eight employees of the company will be presented in this section. Thus, interview questions were delivered to the selected eight employees of the company, ethio telecom, to get information about their perceptions and practices in relation to complaints and its managements as follow.

There is no recorded definition on what are complaints or not but the researcher has been told that staffs are well communicated on how to handle complaints.

Complaint handling, according to respondents, is important to provide quality of service. Without the feedback of customers, the company may not know how good the service is. It is also good to know if the company is addressing as per the needs of customers on time.

From the interview, it was also found out that complaints are recorded in the company for further action or analysis. Thus, the company records the call reasons and analyzes why customers are calling and suggests the concerned stakeholders to take actions.

Top managements give attention to the top customers' complaints. As a result there is uninterrupted weekly meeting to solve the issues raised. If they found it difficult to solve on time they escalate to the next higher management to take actions.

Recently customer service division organized get together event for staffs and discussion has been held with them on how to achieve customer satisfaction by providing better service. To motivate staffs best performers have been awarded in that occasion. Besides, due to the nature of the job staffs will be transferred to other divisions after some time so that they will not get bored.

Earlier, the performance level of the call center was not good, that is, it was easily accessible due to shortage of manpower and the lack of technology but recently it is becoming better and better and even the performance level has reached around 70%. Regarding the system friendliness about four languages (Amharic, English, Affan Oromo and Tigrigna) is being used. So, customers have the choice on what language they can ask information or file their complaint when they encounter service failure.

Before new products or services launched to the market, training will be given to contact center advisors so that customers can call and they can get the necessary information. This minimizes the complaint that comes due to lack of information.

With regard to the means to file complaints, customers can call freely 994 (residential customers), 980 (key account customers), 894 (distributors), or they can go to shops. Customers are encouraged to call to the call center that wasting their time by going to shops.

Staffs working at the call center will get the necessary training before they start their tasks. The training includes the vision, mission and values of ethio telecom and also on customer management. There is also on job training for the problems they encounter.

Survey is undertaken on the service provisioning and satisfaction of customers. Regarding the complaint management there is a trouble ticket survey to check if the case is closed or not. It is only ethio telecom internally who handles the complaints.

Regarding the problems they face in handling complaints, there are significant numbers of customers who make a call to the call center for the reasons which is not related to the company's operation. This has a great impact on the queuing of genuine calls and it has an impact on the satisfaction of customers. Internally, sometimes they face difficulty in understanding the sense of urgency of the problem when there is service disruption. As a result, they have a plan to sign an operational level agreement with stakeholders which is expected to solve the problem.

4.2. Discussion

Based on the result of the study, the responses will be discussed under this section. The customers were asked to give their own perceptions regarding their relationship with ethio telecom.

According to the customers' responses in relation to their perceptions towards ethio telecom staff, it can be inferred that many of the customers felt that the staffs gave due attention for their complaints. That is, the customers are almost comfortable with the way how employees treat them when they complain. This can be ensued from the company's provision of outstanding customer service through treating them politely and respectfully. This is in conformity with

Roberts-Phelps' (2001) study which advised the importance of customer satisfaction for the company's success.

Regarding customers' perceptions towards the procedures employed by ethio telecom to solve customers' complaints, majority of the respondents disagreed on the statement that asks the company's timely response for their complaints. Therefore, while handling complaints, customers should not only be treated fairly but also their complaints should be resolved timely and the company should set clear and appropriate time limits for resolving the complaints, and, where necessary, there should be flexibility for dealing with complex complaints together with keeping the complainant informed. Responding to the complaints timely allows the company to find out what the problems are with the business and helps them to solve the problem. By doing so the company can make customers loyal, happy, and as a result there will be repeated purchase.

In addition, respondents replied regarding the mechanism which was used by ethio telecom to compensate complaint problems. And as the result indicated, the respondents disagreed as to the satisfaction level with ethio telecom in getting response for what they complained. The result of this study is similar with Gruberfirst's (2004) cited in Atalik (2007), that asserts the consumers' more negative feelings about an organization after they go through the service recovery process. Therefore, the company had better ascertain the positive and effective service provision mechanisms. That is, it will be good if ethio telecom could control service recovery mechanism that involves those actions designed to resolve problems, change negative attitudes of consumers and to ultimately retain these customers.

The result also revealed the respondents' disappointment in relation to the way ethio telecom handled their complaint, and this would affect the company's success unless some mechanisms can be formulated. Complaint satisfaction can, of course, be achieved by the applications of professional complaint management which leads to customers' positive attitudes, repetitive purchase and avoidance of negative word of mouth.

In relation to customers' intentions of sharing the experience, many of them (64%) responded that they do not tell positive things about ethio telecom to others. However, telling other people about customers' experiences with a company of product is something that many people do. Obviously consumers engage in either positive or negative word of mouth more if they are extremely satisfied or dissatisfied because they will have a greater impact, hence more utility

when they engage in word of mouth in a more extreme situation. This is what was found from the result of this study.

With regard to customers' intention of sharing the experience, respondents had complaints at ethio telecom, and as the result indicated, many of them responded that they do not tell positive things about ethio telecom to others. Thus, majority of respondents were not happy with the complaint handling practices of the company.

In addition, in relation to complaint actions, the customers were also asked to respond as to how they could do when ethio telecom fail to discharge its responsibilities. And many of the customers replied that they keep silent when they encounter service failure though some of them prefer taking some sorts of actions. Besides, the customers responded that they bad mouth ethio telecom when they are dissatisfied with the services. In addition to this, many of the customers of ethio telecom were in a position to lodge their complaints to the front line employees rather than diverting their complaints to the media. The customers also mentioned that poor quality of service and bill exaggerations are the main reasons why they are complaining.

CHAPTER V: SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the results of the study obtained through the questionnaire distributed to 120 customers of ethio telecom and the interview conducted with the employees of ethio telecom, the following summary, conclusions and recommendations were made.

5.1. Summary

On the basis of the findings the summary is presented as follows. Thus, the demographic characteristics of the respondents revealed out that about 80% are male and the remaining 20% are female. The majority of the respondents were in the age category of thirty five up to forty four years being followed by twenty five and thirty four years age group. Moreover, based on occupational status, 47% of the respondents were self-employed and 41% of them were government employed. Education wise, the majority of the respondents attended college or university.

Then, the data analysis indicated the perceptions of these respondents towards the services given by ethio telecom. Thus, customers' perceptions regarding managing the complaints were found to be good as most of them replied that the employees were concerned about customers' problems and treated them politely and in good manners.

The study also indicated that ethio telecom do not respond timely for their compliant. Hence, majority (59%) of them did not agree that the company resolved their problem on time. Moreover, about half of the respondents did not feel that they are not well heard while they were complaining about the services rendered by ethio telecom. As the result further indicated problems in relation to the process of compliant handling by ethio telecom since almost half of the respondents were found to be uncomfortable with it.

In addition, as the analysis indicates, ethio telecom could not provide satisfactory and timely solutions for its customers. That is, based on the responses given, majority of them were not satisfied with the responses they get from ethio telecom for their compliant.

A great deal of respondents were also disappointed on the way that ethio telecom was trying to handle their complaints ,that is, more than half of the respondents told that they are not satisfied

with the complaint handling that the company employed. But, the other respondents believe that filing their complaint to ethio telecom has brought them a positive experience.

Moreover, no as such significant differences were observed regarding the satisfaction level of customers after they file their complaint to ethio telecom. On the other hand, many of the respondents do not have a positive experience on the company.

Furthermore, ethio telecom customers were not happy with the services provided by ethio telecom. As a result, many of them replied that they will not recommend ethio telecom to others. However, significant numbers of respondents do not have inclination to agreement or disagreement regarding the question if they advise friends to purchase goods or services from ethio telecom. From this we can infer that there is some level of dissatisfaction on the company.

The result also indicated respondents' replies regarding service failure. Thus, from the analysis it is possible to see that many of the respondents preferred to be silent although they encountered service failures. Therefore, significant number of respondents told that they bad mouth ethio telecom when they are dissatisfied with the services. Also, it has been observed that many of the customers were in a position to complain either to frontline employees or to the management than diverting to their complaint to the media.

Analysis of the open ended questions indicated that majority of them complained due to poor quality of service and bill exaggeration. Many of the customers know the means of complaining through their friends, and significant numbers of them prefer to file their complaints at the call center. From the interviews conducted with the employees of ethio telecom the following findings were observed. That is, almost all of interviewees replied that there is no written definition or meaning of complaints, but it is well understood. Complaint handling is thus important to provide good quality of service and for on time service provisioning. According to the interview result, complaints are well documented and achieved for further analysis.

The interview result also revealed that existence of about four processes for complaint handling. These are customer problem handling via call center, enterprise customer problem handling via call center, customer bill complaint handling and enterprise customer complaint handling via back office. These processes are fully functional. Top management gives attention especially when they are escalated for further action, that is, if the problems are not resolved timely.

Employees are aware of the importance of handling customers' complaints, and the division has awarded one best coach and one best advisor last year. Recently the call center efficiency has reached about 70% from around 50% about a year ago and it is showing good progress, according to the interview result.

With regard to the system friendliness four languages are currently being used by the agents for the customers, and based on the volume of the transaction additional languages will be applied in the future. Customers were, therefore, encouraged to make a call to the call center than they go to shops. Training will be given to employees including on job training. Complaint is being handled internally only, that is, dealers and distributors do not address the complaint if there is any.

5.2. Conclusion

Based on the findings presented in the previous section, the following conclusions are drawn.

It is important in the customer service industry to maintain their response times as quick as possible. With this regard majority of respondents told that the company is not responding to their complaint on time. Thus, we can infer that when the company is seen in the eyes of customers'; it is not satisfactory in providing timely response. The process the company employed to collect complaints were found to be not comfortable as most of the respondents witnessed.

If customers are satisfied with the service they are getting, they will probably tell or recommend to friends about the positive experience they have with the company. To this end, from the responses of ethio telecom customers we have seen that majority of them are not satisfied with services provided by the company. Thus, from this finding we can conclude that the company did not do much on the quality of service.

Service failures are inevitable in every organization. Customers often remain silent when service failures occur as Day et al (1981) mentioned. When ethio telecom customers encounter service failure majority of them replied that they will not keep silent rather they will complain. Also significant number of them told that they will bad mouth the company if they are dissatisfied with ethio telecom. Based on this fact it can be concluded that the company might be badmouth if it does not provide good quality of service.

When looking to the main causes of complaint, the poor quality of network and bill exaggeration are the areas which majority of customers are complaining for. Thus, we can infer that due to the poor quality of network customers are very much dissatisfied with the company as the problem is not yet solved despite repeated complain.

The company implemented four processes to deal with customers' complaints. From the results of the interview we can understand that the company gives value for its customers' complaints and it follows attentively.

5.3. Recommendations

On the basis of the findings, the following recommendations were forwarded in order to indicate ways of improving the complaint handling practices of ethio telecom.

- In order to serve customers more the company should communicate customers on how they can ask information or file a complaint at ethio telecom. Majority of respondents revealed they knew the means to file complaint through friends and families. There are individuals who don't want to complain for different reasons. These may be due to dissatisfaction with the company, not knowing how to complain or any other reason. These kinds of customers may badmouth the company. The input gained through customers is very helpful to ethio telecom to provide an excellent customer services.
- The accessibility of call center is not easy as most of the responders replied to the questionnaires. In this case, the company should think of other means like designing and using self-service website which can enable significant number of individuals to check the website for the problems they encounter. It can also design a means to file their complaint online so that they should not wait long queue to get register their complaints. There are also customers who are making a call to the contact center for the reason which is not related to the company. This may be due to lack of knowledge and understanding what they are doing. So, the company should communicate to the general public what they are doing with the call center.
- Many of ethio telecom subscribers complained on the quality of the various services that the company is rendering. Quality has always been a hotly debated and challenging issue

between customers and the company. More than ever, regular network disruptions and poor connection among mobile and internet subscribers remains the major reason for complaint as it is the key challenge. Ethio telecom, in addition to introducing and expanding new services, should monitor and evaluate its services, persevere for sustainable remedies, take action to customers' complains without delay and strive hard to gain reliance and confidence from its customers.

- Due to the ever changing nature of technology and customers' behavior employees working at the contact center should get continuous and timely training on complaint handling so that they can get empowered in dealing with complaints. By doing so, the customers may feel that their problems are handled with care.
- Regarding the process that ethio telecom is following, it should be revisited again especially when the customers' problems are not being resolved at the first level since customers are obviously transferred to another advisors to get register their complaint. This has its own discomfort to the customers. A better complaint process needs to be devised to increase customer confidence in the company, especially when problems cannot be tackled. So, the company should think of minimizing the holding time at the call center when the problems cannot be solved at the first level.
- For service industry it is prevalent to have a continuous improvement in all areas. That is, it is an ongoing effort to improve products, services or processes. Besides, it increases success and reduces failure. So, the company should not be satisfied with its current services. It should assess the services, products and processes the company is providing and take the appropriate action.
- Ethio telecom should assess the root causes of the problem and try to solve them so that customers' complaints would be minimized.

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APPENDIX

St. Mary's University School of Graduate Studies MBA program

Dear respondent,

This questionnaire is prepared to ethio telecom customers. The objective of the questionnaire is to collect information about how ethio telecom customers' complaints are handled by the company. The information you provide will be valuable for the successes of the research project. Please be honest and objective while filling the questionnaire. I am hoping that you could spare me some of your precious time to complete this survey form. Be assured that all information appearing herein will be kept strictly confidential and be used for academic purpose only.

Thank you, for your cooperation and timely response in advance.

Questionnaire to be filled by ethio telecom customers

Part I: Personal Information

1. Gender

Male Female

2. Age

Below 25 25 – 34 35 – 44 45 – 54 more than 55

3. Educational level

Below primary Primary Secondary College/University

4. Occupation

Education Business Government/Community Service
 Self-Employed Other (please specify) _____

Part II: Questions on Customers handling practices

1. Briefly describe the problem you had with ethio telecom?

.....

2. How did you contact the company? (By letter, telephone, etc)

.....

3. How did you know how to reach ethio telecom for your complaint?

.....

4. What kind of product or service does ethio telecom you complained to provide?

.....

5. What was the cause of your complaint? (For example: a product defect, a billing mistake, a delay or inappropriate behavior of an employee).

.....

For the following questions, please put tick mark (√) in the box that corresponds to your opinion.

No	Questions	Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
	Your contacts with the ethio telecom staff managing your complaint					
1	The employee(s) seemed to be concerned about my problem.					
2	The employee treated me in a polite way.					
3	The employees did their best to solve my problem.					
4	The employees' behavior while handling my complaint was fair.					
	Ethio telecom's process/ procedures used to solve					

	your complaint					
5	Ethio telecom responded to my complaint in a timely manner.					
6	Ethio telecom gave me the chance to tell my side of the story.					
7	It was hard to find someone in the company who would do something about my problem.					
8	The processes/ procedures ethio telecom used to handle my complaint were fair.					
	The outcomes ethio telecom provided to compensate the problem					
9	I received satisfactory response from ethio telecom.					
10	Ethio telecom worked out my problem in exactly what I wanted.					
11	Their effort to solve the problem resulted in positive outcomes.					
12	The service I got after my complaint from ethio telecom was fair.					
	How satisfied you were with the complaint handling					
13	I was disappointed about the way the ethio telecom handled my complaint.					
14	Lodging my complaint to ethio telecom was a positive experience.					
15	I am very satisfied with the way the ethio telecom worked out my problem.					
	Your satisfaction with ethio telecom in general					
16	The choice for the product / service from ethio telecom was a good decision.					
17	I am satisfied with the ethio telecom after my complaint.					
18	So far I have positive experiences with ethio telecom.					

	Your intention to share your experience with others					
19	I am likely to tell positive things about ethio telecom to others.					
20	I would recommend to my friends to ethio telecom services.					
21	If my friends were planning to purchase a product or service ethio telecom offers, I would advise them to try.					
22	I would advise my friends not to deal with ethio telecom.					
	Which of the following complaint actions would you take when you feel dissatisfied with the service?					
23	Take no action					
24	Bad mouth the company					
25	Complain to ethio telecom management					
26	Complain to front line employees					
27	Divert complaint to the media					

Interview questions for ethio telecom employees

1. How is complaint and complaint handling defined in your company? Is there a written document identifying those that will be treated as complaint and those that are not?
2. How complaint handling is important to the company?
3. Do you have log records for the complaints?
4. Is there a process for complaint handling management system? Is it communicated to staffs properly?
5. Are the management follow up closely the complaint handling management system? Do you submit reports to top management from complaint records with suggestions for action to prevent recurring problems?
6. Does the company motivate staffs to work on to increase consumer satisfaction?
7. Is the system user friendly and easily accessible to customers?
8. Do you provide customers with all the necessary information relating to your product or service? Do you acknowledge complaints immediately?
9. What are the means customers lodge complaints?
10. Do you encourage the complaint handling system to customers? How? Do you encourage customers to give you feedback about your service?
11. Do front office employees have clear responsibilities for resolving complaints directly?
12. Do you give adequate training for the employees about complaint handling before they start the operation? Do you give on job training?
13. Do you survey your customers' satisfaction level with your complaint-handling management system?
14. Do you review your complaint-management system? If yes how many times? Did you make improvements?
15. Are the complaint management system applied internally only or in other distribution channels as well?
16. How do you evaluate the existing complaint handling system?
17. What are the major problems you encountered in the complaint handling system?

DECLARATION

I, the undersigned, declare that this thesis is my original work, prepared under the guidance of _____ . All sources of materials used for the thesis have been duly acknowledged. I further confirm that the thesis has not been submitted either in part or in full to any other higher learning institution for the purpose of earning any degree.

Name

Signature & Date

ENDORSEMENT

This thesis has been submitted to St. Mary's University, School of Graduate Studies for examination with my approval as a university advisor.

Advisor

Signature & Date