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EFFECT OF COMMUNICATION ON CUSTOMER LOYALTY IN NIGERIAN: A CASE OF TELECOMMUNICATION INDUSTRY

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Abstract

Business environment today is characterized by fierce competition, high global consumer behavior, rapidly changing innovations and customer expectations that have turned customer loyalty into a management battle. Marketers in the telecommunications industry are faced with the challenge of finding a profitable path in this strongly changed competitive landscape. Hence, this study is being conducted to examine the effect of communication on customer loyalty in the Nigerian telecommunications industry, using participants from Nasarawa state as the study area. To achieve this goal, both quantitative and qualitative data collection, interpretation and analysis methods have been used. The study uses multiple regression and descriptive statistics to interpret and analyze the collected data. The result of the research work showed significant and positive relationships between communication and customer loyalty, which indicates a good connection between the activities of an organization (communication channel and quality of communication) and the consumer responses through their decision as subscribers to patronize a particular network service provider in Nigeria. Based on these results, the study came to the conclusion that communication is a strategic tool for targeting subscribers to patronize a firm's products or services and to retain them with a mobile telecom service provider for a long time. The study therefore recommends that managers of telecommunications companies in Nigeria should develop a strong ability to establish effective communication programs for their organization in order to benefit from the direct and indirect influences of communication on the company's products and services as well as the company's overall performance to justify the company's existence.

Key Words: Communication, Customer loyalty, and Telecommunication Industry

Introduction

The income of a trading firm is usually tied to two customer groups: new and existing customers. Studies have shown that retaining existing customers is far more profitable than attracting new ones. While existing customers have known and outstanding needs that were previously met by the company's services or products, a difficult task for new and potential customers is determining their expectations and behaviors that also require additional costs (Agudze-Tordze, Buame and Narteh, 2014).

Loyalty is characterized as a deeply ingrained commitment to repurchase a preferred product or service in the future without considering the cumbersome implications and marketing efforts that can trigger change behavior (Reinartz & Kumar, 2003). It is the customer's preference for one product or service over another. Loyalty is a critical factor in explaining customer retention and relates to the likelihood of repeat sales, generating business referrals, positive word of mouth, and providing referrals and advertising (Limo, Shankar, Erramilli, and Murthy 2014).

Effective communication is about building strong emotional connections with customers that can lead to progressive deals, positive word of mouth, and customer intelligence that generate leads, and ultimately, customer loyalty. To get results in a marketing program, it is necessary to encourage timely feedback with customers and effectively manage customer complaints (Kotler & Keller, 2016). Communication is essential to healthy relationships; Open and free dialogue requires a communication channel through which a company is made aware of problems before they get out of hand. The consistent, dynamic and open mutual dialogue that promotes customer feedback serves to build general trust in a company (Gunawan & Huarng, 2015).

In the 21st century, the business environment is characterized by fierce competition, high global consumer behavior, rapidly changing innovations and customer expectations that have turned customer loyalty into a management battle. The telecommunications industry is no exception in its efforts to overcome these obstacles; the industry situation is exacerbated by radical changes in consumer tastes and preferences. Therefore, marketers in this industry are faced with the challenge of finding a profitable path in this strongly changed competitive landscape.

As a result of the competition to attract and retain more subscribers from service providers, a Subscriber Identification Module (SIM) card is sold at a very low price of just N100 and is sometimes offered for free (Adeleke & Aminu, 2012). . Therefore, the very low cost of purchasing a SIM card can make it very easy for subscribers to switch service providers. However, Lovelock and Wirtz (2007) argued that a loyal customer can find it very difficult to switch to other competitors, even when with various reasons to do so. Competition is further intensified by the invention of Mobile Number Portability (MNP), a service that enables a subscriber to keep their cell phone number even when switching from one cellular provider to another without having to bother to make friends, family, colleagues and other contacts because their number stays the same (ncc.gov.ng). This invention made it easy to switch customers and to further intensify the battle of service providers to attract and retain customers.

Since the advent of MNP in 2013, many subscribers have used the portability system and switch between mobile service providers frequently (NCC, 2019). To be more precise, between January 2019 and December 2019; a total of 51,947 subscribers transferred from Airtel Nigeria to patronize other service providers and 31,963 subscribers transferred to the network with the loss of 19,984 subscribers leaving the service provider. In the same line, 20,144 subscribers transferred from 9mobile and 81,008 subscribers transferred to the network with the gain of 59,864 subscribers. Similarly, a total of 34,033 subscribers moved from Globacom to patronize another service provider, and only 7,291 subscribers transferred to the network with the loss of 26,742 subscribers who patronize other service providers. Finally, 21,056 subscribers transferred from MTN to patronize other service providers and 25,026 transferred to the network, recording the gain of 3,970 subscribers. In short, within this period, the total numbers of 127,180 subscribers transferred from their service providers to other service providers and a total of 145,288 subscribers transferred to other service providers. These figures show that subscribers are constantly using the MNP scheme, making it more difficult for service providers to keep their customers.

Hence, it is clear that subscribers frequently switch between service providers. This recurring change by subscribers is related to customer loyalty. This implies that subscribers are loyal to some service providers to other service providers. The bottom line is that subscribers rate some service providers over others, possibly because of the benefits they get from their relationship with their valued service providers. Therefore, the biggest challenge for any wireless operator is identifying and executing various marketing initiatives that not only attract new customers, but also retain existing customers who will later become loyal customers.

While research has been conducted on general aspects of customer loyalty, there does not appear to be a meaningful study of how telecommunications company communications can promote customer loyalty in the Nigerian wireless industry. Therefore, the study is initiated to assess the effect of communications on customer loyalty in the Nigerian telecommunications industry, using the state of Nasarawa as the study area.

As earlier stated, the main objective of the study is to examine the effect of communication on customer loyalty in the Nigerian Telecommunication industry while the specific objectives are: to evaluate the effect of communication channel effectiveness on customer loyalty in the Nigeria telecommunication industry; and to assess the positive and significant effect of communication quality on customer loyalty of network service provider in Nigeria.

Literature Review

Conceptual Framework

The Concept Communication

Communication encompasses the accuracy, timeliness, appropriateness, and credibility of the information exchanged between an organization and its customers (MacNeil, 1980). A higher-level connection through the provider organization could build trust between the exchange partners. Depending on the frequency, quality, timeliness and reliability of the information exchange with the stakeholders, communication can be useful. This is an important factor in building trust in buyer-seller relationships. Efficient communication can improve synchronization, satisfaction, engagement, and performance among channel members (Goodman & Dion, 2001).

Van-Staden, Singh and Sabol (2002) define communication as a two-way process in which information (the message) is sent from one person (the sender) through a channel to another person (the recipient) who replies to their request and provides feedback. According to Rouse and Rouse (2002), effective communication means that information is received in terms of content and meaning exactly as the sender expects. According to Duncan (2002), marketing communication is a customer relationship management process that promotes brand equity. It is believed that communication has a direct impact on building long-term relationships with an organization's stakeholders. Hence, it is necessary to recognize the role of communication in establishing relationships between the various activities of the organization and between the organization and its stakeholders (Rensburg & Cant, 2003). Schultz et al. (1995) I think it's the relationship, empathy, dialogue, relationship, and communication that the marketer establishes with the perspective that makes the difference.

Kuriya and Ondigi (2012) examined the effects of communication in three- and five-star hotels in the city of Nairobi, Kenya. A sample of 133 randomly selected customers. The results showed that communication in marketing relationships is essential and "plays an important role in understanding the intentions and skills of the exchange partner" and thus forms the basis for building trust between exchange partners (Kuriya & Ondigi, 2012). The need for modern communication cannot be stressed enough as it addresses the timeliness of the information in terms of a few days / weeks since the last conversation, while the frequency of the information relates to the number of contacts received during a period.

Communication Quality

Marketing Communication is essentially a form of communication initiated by the manufacturer or service provider, which however, in order to achieve positive effects, corresponds to the customer's expectations regarding the interaction that takes place in the relationship. In this study, the service provider's success in meeting customer expectations is understood as the quality of communication. The drivers of communication quality vary from study to study. Quality communication is relevant, timely, and reliable (Mohr and Spekman, 1994; Morgan and Hunt, 1994). The quality of communication is a combination of the quality of the information and the preference of the source (Harcourt et al., 1991) or the provision of adequate, timely, accurate, complete, and credible communication (Mohr & Sohi, 1995). Ball, Simões, Coelho, and Machás. (2004) define good communication as “providing information in such a way that the client benefits personally from it with the minimum effort required to decipher the communication and determine its usefulness”. The buyer's willingness to develop a mutual relationship with the supplier influences the buyer's preferences in terms of interacting with a supplier (Palmatiere, Simões, Coelho & Machás, 2008), suggesting that good communication criteria may vary between customers.

Business communication is basically a type of communication initiated by the supplier at the same time in order to achieve constructive results; you must agree with the customer's assumptions about the communication taking place in the relationship. In this study, the performance of the provider in fulfilling customer requirements is understood as the quality of communication. Communication quality drivers change between studies. Good quality communication is applicable, timely, and robust (Mohr and Spekman, 1994; Morgan and Hunt, 1994). The quality of communication is a combination of the quality of the data and the inclination of the source (Harcourt et al., 1991) or the delivery of a satisfactory, convenient, precise, complete, and solid communication (Mohr and Sohi, 1995). Ball et al. (2004) characterize great communication as giving "data so that the customer can gradually benefit from at least one important attempt to interpret the communication and decide its usefulness". The buyer's ability to participate in a mutual relationship with the supplier influences the buyer's propensity to work with a supplier (Palmatier et al., 2008), which shows that the rules of good communication between customers can change. On the basis of the existing literature, high-quality communication is characterized by the fact that it is sent sufficiently frequently, meaningfully in terms of content, via suitable channels and perceived as efficient.

Channel Effectiveness

Channel effectiveness can be defined as the perceived correspondence of the channel used and the preferences of the customer with regard to interaction modes (Mohr et al., 1996). Although the most widely used tools in corporate-to-customer marketing communications are still in-person sales (the most important), customer relationship marketing, trade shows, and public relations (De Pelsmacker, Geuens & Van den Bergh 2007), communication habits have changed dramatically, affecting the way it is how people communicate with each other and how people acquire, collect and share information about products and offers (Hennig-Thurau, Malthouse, Friege, Gensler, Lobschat, Rangaswamy & Skiera, 2010). Empirical studies show the importance of other sources of information for industrial buyers: third party information, email, websites, phone calls, and trade shows (Adamson et al., 2012) and social media (Järvinen, Töllinen, Karjaluoto, & Jayawardhena, 2012).

Social media tools such as blogs, wikis, discussion forums and social networking sites have recently become of interest for industrial marketing communication (Järvinen et al., 2012; Taiminen & Karjaluoto, 2015). At the same time, the potential of social media remains untapped by business marketers (Jussila et al., 2014). The gap between the perceived benefits and the actual implementation of social media may be due to the fact that digital tools such as industrial websites and email do not replace offline tools, but rather represent an additional resource to achieve marketing and communication goals (Cawsey and Rowley, 2016; Karjaluoto et al., 2015). In other words, the mere use of social media does not directly affect the outcome of the relationship, but only after developing customer-centric communication skills with the help of social media can customer satisfaction and loyalty increase (Trainor, Andzulis, Rapp & Agnihotri, 2014).

Concept of Customer Loyalty

Loyalty is defined as building and sustaining a trusted relationship with customers that leads to the customers' repeated purchases of products or services over a given period of time (Lam, Shankar, Erramilli, and Murthy, 2004). Customer loyalty, in general, increases profit and growth to the extent that increasing the percentage of loyal customers by as little as 5% can increase profitability by as much as 30% to 85%, depending upon the industry involved (Gefen, 2009). Loyal customers are typically willing to pay a higher price and more understand when something goes wrong. It has also been found that loyal customers are less price sensitive and lower costs are incurred by providers as the expense of pursuing new customers is reduced (Rowley and Dawes, 2000).

The presence of a loyal customer base provides the firm with valuable time to respond to competitive actions

(Rowley and Dawes, 2000). According to Frederick Reichheld, creating a loyalty base requires a radical departure from the traditional business thinking. It puts creating customer value rather than maximizing profits and shareholder value at the centre of business strategy and demands significant changes in business practice (Harvard business review). Customers demonstrate their loyalty in several ways. They may choose to stay with a provider, whether this continuance is defined as a relationship or not, or they may increase the number of, or the frequency of, their purchases (Rowley &Dawes, 2000).

Communication and Customer Loyalty

The study by Seines (1998), postulates that communication is a fundamental element that influence trust between buyer and seller. In the same context, Sin et al. (2002) argued that communication, especially timely communication, promotes trust by helping to resolve disputes and reconciling perceptions and expectations. Communication also provides insight and information to dissatisfied customers (Patrick, Chenuos, Koskei, Kenyoru & Tuwey, 2014). It keeps them informed of what the organization is doing to address the root causes of the discontent. Effective communication between your customers leads to a better relationship, which translates into greater customer loyalty and loyalty (Patrick, 2014).

To attract and retain customers, word of mouth is undoubtedly an important factor. What customers talk about a company determines the customer's attitude towards an organization and its services, which manifests itself in evaluation and recommendation intentions and behavior. While word of mouth can be defined as an oral or written recommendation from a satisfied customer to prospective customers for a good or service, customer loyalty is the likelihood that previous customers will continue to buy from a particular company. Customer loyalty is an attitude towards an organization and its services that are manifested through preferred intentions and behaviors and repeated purchases (Oliver, 1999).

Empirical Review

Anne, Muchai, Samuel, and Beatrice (2019) determined the effects of communication and complaints-handling strategies on customer loyalty at Almasi Beverages Limited (ABL) in Kenya. A survey research design was employed and the target population was the Coca-Cola retailers who sold through the company-owned Cold Drink Equipment (CDEs) for over a period of three years. The study sample size was 369 respondents. Data was collected through the use of structured questionnaires and content validity of the instruments was achieved by incorporating the views and recommendations of marketing experts who assessed the research instruments. Data collected was analyzed through quantitative statistics and presented in charts, graphs and frequency tables while chi-square was adopted to test the hypotheses formulated. The study findings found that effective communication and satisfactory complaint-handling strategies are vital in developing and nurturing healthy business relationships that subsequently lead to loyalty. The study concludes that when an effective communication and complaints-handling oriented program is implemented correctly, an organization begins to focus more on managing its customers rather than its products. Therefore, the study recommended that companies should focus on effective communication and proper complaints handling in order to keep their customers delighted.

Richard Allen, Sun Xixiang, Nasero and Charles (2017) examined the effect of marketing communication based on customer satisfaction, customer loyalty, price fairness and customer services in the mobile telecom sector in Tanzania. Today’s successful companies servicing in telecommunication sector of Tanzania have highly customer centered and deeply concerned to marketing communication. Through service fairness and price fairness inspire everyone in the firm to facilitate in building long lasting customer relationships. The successful in marketing communication, organizations must look into the needs and wants of their customers, that’s why many researchers and academicians have continuously emphasized on the importance of customer satisfaction, and loyalty that has a positive effect on an organization’s profitability. Therefore, the results demonstrate that the marketing communication plays a major role on managing customer relationship in Zantel.

Due to the consequences, conclusion and discussion of the study are also based on the analysis.

Muhammed and Peter (2019) investigated the relationship between relationship marketing and customer loyalty, and the mediating role of word of mouth communication. A sample of 384 was determined from a population of the mobile telecommunication users based on Krejcie and Morgan sampling framework. The study utilized 384 questionnaires. The authors conducted confirmatory factor analysis, correlation analysis, regression, mediation and SEM for analysis, interpretation and results. While trust, relationship satisfaction and reciprocity components of relationship marketing have been found to be significant predictors of customer loyalty in other studies, the study revealed a contrasting result. However, in line with earlier studies, the study findings indicated a positive significant relationship between relationship marketing components of communication, commitment and customer loyalty. The study also found a significant positive relationship between the relationship marketing components of communication and commitment and word of mouth and a significant positive relationship between word of mouth communication and customer loyalty. It was recommended that companies should pay attention to relationship encounters that build commitment, should develop targeted communication channels which build positive word of mouth communication.

Mohammed, Rushami, Abdullah and Ibrahim. (2015) examined the relationship between communications, customer knowledge and customer loyalty in insurance companies in Saudi Arabia. This study adopted Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLSSEM) to test the association between communication, customer knowledge and customer loyalty. The sample comprised of 399 from insurance companies in Saudi Arabia and data was obtained from questionnaires distributed to the sample. Moreover, the questionnaire was adopted from many authors as explained in methodology section. This article found a positive and significant relationship between communication and customer loyalty. In the same path, this study found that customer knowledge has a positive and significant effect on customer loyalty. Moreover, this study has significant contributions in the theoretical, practical and policy marker that may be integrated together in order to improve customer loyalty.

Abbass, Ali Mehdizadeh and Mani (2017) investigated the role of interpersonal communication on customers' loyalty in Asia insurance company. The study explored the effect of providers' interpersonal communication and services' receivers and the effect of receivers' interpersonal communication in Asia Insurance Company to clarify if interpersonal communications in Insurance companies' circuit affects customers' loyalty. The methodology employed is descriptive and included survey. The goal of the study is functional and data was from 400-questionnaire which was verified by experts and researchers. Then, data were analyzed by Lisrel software. It has been found that, if there is an ideal level of interpersonal communication, there will be the possibility of increasing satisfaction and loyalty by the customers.

Nora and Heikki, (2017) created a new understanding of industrial business-to-business (B2B) relationships by connecting the theoretical streams of marketing communications and relationship marketing. This study tests how various marketing communication channels and communication quality increase the transformation of customer-perceived value into customer loyalty. The theoretical framework consists of links between customer perceived value, marketing communication quality, channel effectiveness and customer loyalty. The age of the business relationship is also taken into consideration. Empirical testing is based on global survey data (N = 121) collected from customers of Finnish manufacturing companies operating in the paper, mineral and metal-processing industries. The study found the effects of customer-perceived value on customer loyalty are both direct and indirect, as marketing communications partially mediate this relationship. The customer-perceived effectiveness of various marketing communication channels adds more to loyalty formation than the perceived quality of marketing communications.

Theoretical Framework

The theoretical framework underlying this study is the stimulus-organism-response (S-O-R) theory (Mehrabian & Russell, 1974). The communication program is conceived as the stimulus, while the customer is the organism and customer loyalty is the response. The S-O-R theory indicates that organism can mediate the effect of stimulus on response (Wu & Li, 2016). The core proposition therefore is that the formation of customer loyalty begins with effective and efficient communication strategies, followed by accurate delivery to consumer (organism) and finally this will result in the output (customer loyalty) response.

Methodology

The research design for this study, with respect to the problem raised is purely a survey design, which took the form of a descriptive research and causal research design. Descriptive was used to describe the variables of the study in terms of their mean, median and standard deviation. The causal research design was used as a means of trying to evaluate the effect of communication in terms of channel effectiveness and communication quality on customer loyalty in term of repeat purchases, positive words of mouth, and referrals.

The target population for this study consists of the entire subscribers that patronize any of the mobile service providers in Nasarawa state. Based on the data available on the NCC website, the number of subscribers in Nasarawa state is 3,908,468 subscribers (NCC, 2019). This population is regarded as infinite population because such populations are finite but yet inconceivable. Our specific study area constitute of subscribers of the four major mobile service providers in the state that is, MTN, GLOBacom, AIRTEL, and 9mobile. This is because majority of customers in the telecommunication industry patronize these four mobile service providers according to Nigeria Communication Commission (NCC, 2019).

The study used stratified random sampling technique to select the sample of 154 respondents. This sampling design was used because the population of study was not homogenous and was to be sub-divided into sub-units so that each member of the population should have a calculated probability of being selected into the sample size. The sample size considered for this research work consists of 154 respondents gotten from the application of Rose, Spinks, and Canhoto (2015) formula of determining sample size of an infinite population.

The study employed the communication method of collecting primary data and the medium used was majorly questionnaire. The data for the research was collected by administering of structured questionnaire in closed ended format. The constructs in the questionnaire presented information regarding communication channel effectiveness, communication quality and customer loyalty in term of repeat purchase, positive word of mouth and referral. All the items were measured by responses from respondents on a five-point likert scale in agreement of the statements, anchored by 1 = strongly disagree to 5 = strongly agree. The responses from respondents were taken directly by the researcher in person and research assistance. The respondents were advised to give their responses against various statements on the basis of their experience.

A pre-test of 5% of the population size was conducted to give a representation of the selected population thus the designed questionnaire was tested on 12 potential respondents. To test the internal consistency of the Likert scale used in this study, reliability analysis was done using Cronbach's Alpha as the measure. A reliability co-efficient of a > 0.7 was considered adequate. A co-efficient of 0.861 was registered indicating that the scale used had a high level of internal consistency. This indicated that the scale was reliable enough to test the impact of communication on customer loyalty in the Nigeria telecom market using Nasarawa state subscribers.

The study employed multiple regression analysis with the aid of statistical package for social sciences (SPSS) to determine and analyze the communication in term of channel effectiveness and communication quality on customer loyalty in the Nigeria Telecommunication industry. However, before the analysis, Descriptive Statistics is run for data interpretation and post residual diagnostic test such as test of Multicollinerity was run to ensure the validity of the statistical inferences.

Model Specifications

CL = $\alpha + \beta_1$CE $+\beta_2$CQ + μ…………………………..1

Where:

α = intercept (constant term) CL = Customer Loyalty, CEs = Channel Effectiveness, CQ = Communication Quality, μ = error term, β_1- β_4 = Beta coefficients

Data Presentation and Analysis

The data collected by means of questionnaires and the results of multiple regression analysis based on the 147 questionnaires returned. The data are coded, classified, analyzed with the aid of SPSS version 25 and interpreted to reflect the respondents' view on various questions, while some are expressed as statement of the fact as well as the testing of the research hypothesis stated. After the test of the hypothesis, a summary of the findings was discussed.

Table 1: Descriptive Statistics

	N	Mean	Std.
Channel Effectiveness	147	7.12	2.19
Communication Quality	147	8.11	2.26
Customer Loyalty	147	7.48	2.23

Source: Researcher Computation 2021

The descriptive statistic table above shows the mean of 7.12, 8.11, 7.48, and standard deviation of 2.19, 2.26, and 2.33 for Channel Effectiveness, Communication Quality, and Customer Loyalty respectively. From the result it has been observed that almost all the Mean are similar with high standard deviation implies that the data is widely spread. The respondents express their varying opinions and low standard indicate close expression of opinion.

Table 2: Multiple Regression Coefficients Results

Coefficients[a]								
		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients			Collinearity Statistics	
Model		B	Std. Error	Beta	T	Sig.	Tolerance	VIF
1	(Constant)	0.749	0.862		0.869	0.398		
	Effectiveness	0.113	0.197	0.762	0.576	0.572	0.609	1.642
	Quality	0.948	0.088	0.936	10.788	0.000	0.943	1.061
a. Depe a. Dependent Variable: Customer Loyalty, R Square = 0.677 F Statistic= 22.707 Adjusted R Square = 0.655, Sig F Square= 0.000, PV < 0.05								
b. Independent variables in the Model: (Constant), Channel Effectiveness and Communication Quality								

Source: SPSS OUTPUT Version 25 output

Table above shows the multiple regression analysis results between communication as independent variable and customer loyalty as a dependent variable. As shown in the table, the R-square 67.5% is adjusted for potential errors in row data to 65.5%. This means that the combination of these account for 65.5% of the variance in customer loyalty.

The result of the analysis show that channel effectiveness and customer loyalty are positively related based on the value of its beta coefficient (β= 0.762, $p<0.05$). This implies that given the p value of less than 0.05 shows that if one unit increases in channel effectiveness then there will be 76% increase in customer loyalty in the study area. Therefore, this suggests that channel of communication of telecom firms constitute one of the reasons that reduce customer switching and thereby lead to increase in customer loyalty to the firm. Equally the beta value of Communication Quality ($\beta = 0.934$, $p<0.05$) show a positive relationship between communication quality and customer loyalty. It then indicates that communication quality in term of timeliness and reliability serve as a factor that can lead to higher customer loyalty to the firm vis –a – vis increase firm market share.

Furthermore the value of F-Statistic (22.707, sig = 0.000) shows that all aspects of communication: channel effectiveness and communication quality are statistically significant predictors of variation of customer loyalty to firm. Also, the value of VIF for all the independent variable are less than 5 which imply that the variables are not interrelated and equally tolerance in determining customer loyalty.

Discussion of Findings

The study showed significant positive relationships between communication in terms of channel effectiveness, communication quality, and customer loyalty. This suggests a strong correlation between the variables, suggesting a good link between an organization's activities (communication channel and communication quality) and the reactions of consumers to their decision as a subscriber to sponsor a service provider. Communication is therefore an essential component for companies to interact with their customers by integrating various advertising media in order to be successful in the market and to outperform their competitors providing similar telecommunication services (voice, text and Internet.). The effect of communication quality on loyalty ($\beta = 0.934$, $p <0.05$) was somewhat stronger than the effect of channel effectiveness ($\beta = 0.762$, $p <0.05$).

The results of the study also show that the communication tools used by the service providers have effectively contributed to customer loyalty. The most common method of communication was SMS, followed by mail, email and face-to-face contact. When asked about their preferred communication method, most customers said SMS, followed by mail, face-to-face contact and email.

The study results also show that the majority of cell phone users were satisfied with the communication efforts of their service provider. The majority of respondents stated that their service provider's advertising materials are attractive and that their service provider communicates with them regularly.

Furthermore, the study showed that existing customers are definitely becoming advocates of their service provider. This can be seen as the majorities were satisfied with the choice of service provider. In addition, the majority also stated that they would renew their contract with the same service provider. Ultimately, because the majority of customers were satisfied with their service experience, they said they would recommend your service provider to their friends, family, and relatives.

Conclusion and Recommendations

The study sought to investigate the effect of communication on customer loyalty in the Nigeria telecommunication using Nasarawa state as the study area. Relevant and related literatures on communication and its effects on customer loyalty have been reviewed. From the reviewed of existing related literature, the constructs associated with communication are: channel effectiveness and communication quality. While aspects of customer loyalty include: positive word of mouth, repeat purchase and referral. The results from the multiple regression analysis shows that the variables are strongly associated, suggesting a good connection between an organization activities (channel of communication and quality of communication) and consumer responses through their decision as subscribers towards patronizing a particular network service provider in Nigeria.

The importance of communication in the telecommunications industry cannot be overestimated, as it has been the main influence of customer loyalty to mobile operator. This is evident in conclusion based on the variation in customer loyalty accounted for by communication activities of a firm. Thus, communication is a strategic tool for targeting subscribers to patronize and retain them with a mobile telecom service provider for a long time. Customer loyalty is a shift from market share to customer share. While this study concludes that service providers' communication efforts result in satisfied customers, they should strive to cement relationships by using appropriate communication to transform indifferent customers into loyal business advocates.

Managers of telecommunication firms in Nigeria should build distinctive capability in establishing effective communication programs for their organization in order to benefit from the direct and indirect influences of communication on customer loyalty to the firm's product and services as well overall performance of the firm in justifying corporate existence.

Based on the findings of the study it was recommended that telecommunications firms should invest appropriately on the communication with high beta values, as they indicate positive predictive ability to enhance customer loyalty to the firm, thereby helping telecoms firms in actualizing both short and long-term benefits of high customer share and profitability.

Lastly, Service providers need to improve their communication process and practice; they need to communicate with their customers on an on-going basis about information, policies and updates on technology and service.

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