



**EFFECTS OF SERVICE QUALITY ON CONSUMER PATRONAGE OF
GSM SERVICE PROVIDERS IN KANO METROPOLIS**

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ABSTRACT

This study attempts to determine the effects that customer perception of service quality have on their patronage of GSM service provider. A survey questionnaire was used to gather data from 395 consumers of GSM services in Kano metropolis. Pearson's Product-Moment Correlation Coefficient test was conducted. Weighted average was also used to analyse the relative influence of each dimension of service quality on consumer patronage. It was found that service quality has a positive and significant influence on consumer patronage. Of the five main dimensions of service quality analysed, reliability of service stood out as the most emphasised by consumers. On the basis of these findings, measures needed to shore up service quality and secure customer loyalty and patronage were offered to the operators.

Key Words: profile, directive, supportive, achievement-oriented and participative leadership behavior.

INTRODUCTION

The telecommunication industry of Nigeria has come a long way. Prior to 1999, the industry contributed virtually zero to the GDP of the country. However, according to various reports from the National Bureau of Statistics, the telecommunication industry has witnessed a tremendous improvement in the last 14 years, contributing an average of 8.1% to the GDP over the last six years. From a paltry 400,000 connected lines and a tele-density of 0.04% prior to 1999 to over 139.1 million active lines and a tele-density of 99.93% by December 2014 (NCC, 2015), the

industry has certainly recorded a significant growth. The industry is primarily driven by mobile (GSM) sector whose share of the market is put at 98.30% and almost exclusively service the entire 76,494,696 total active internet subscription recorded by the industry as at December 2014 (NCC, 2016).

Although it is generally recognized that there has been increased penetration of telecoms service that is better, more efficient, well-connected with wider coverage across the country, many analysts and particularly the industry's key regulatory authority – Nigerian Communication Commission (NCC, 2016) laments that poor quality of services provided by operators remains a big challenge. As part of the measures to deepen competition in the industry and get the operators to provide better service in order to enhance the development of the sector, the regulatory body introduced the Mobile Number Portability (MNP) policy which gives customers the opportunity to change their service providers while maintaining the same mobile number. This singular policy has, true to its intension, increased competitive intensity within the industry with total number of subscribers switching providers (ported lines) across the four GSM operators within less than two years of introducing the policy standing at 452,107 lines (NCC, 2016). Analysis of this number indicates that Etisalat (also known as Emerging Market Telecommunication Services - EMTS) is the biggest gainer as only 28,164 subscribers ported out of the network compared to a total of 92,946 subscribers that ported in from other networks, cumulating into a net gains of 64,782 subscribers for this network. The second biggest gainer is Airtel with a net gain of 34,827 lines (85,918 ported in while 51,091 ported out). For MTN and Globacom (see table I), the number of customers abandoning them for other networks far outweigh those that are coming in. They both recorded net loss of 80,062 and 3,935 lines respectively. Analysis shows that while 16,434 and 38,156 subscribers ported out of other networks and joined MTN and Globacom, a comparatively high number of subscribers - 96,496 and 42,091 respectively, switched from both networks as at December 2014 (NCC, 2016). What makes this data troubling for these two networks is that they have hitherto held the largest shares of the market – MTN 44%, Globacom 21%, Airtel 20% and Etisalat 15%. For the latest entrant and a network that has hitherto been at the bottom of the market to attract away a large number of customers of the so-called market leaders signals that a big competitive war is in the offing.

Table 1: Overview of GSM Sector of Nigeria

Indicators	Airtel	Etisalat	Globacom	MTN	Total
Market Shares	27,556,544	21,103,749	28,219,089	59,893,093	136,772,475
Installed Capacity	51,012,688	40,000,000	38,631,800	80,000,000	209,644,488
Base Stations	6,186	4,756	6,677	12,557	30,176
<i>Ported In</i>	85,918	92,946	38,156	16,434	233,454
<i>Ported Out</i>	51,091	28,164	42,091	96,496	218,653
Net Gains (Loss)	34,827	64,782	(3,935)	(80,062)	

Source: Extract from NCC (2016)'s Reports

Instructively, apart from the enabling support of MNP policy, the common practice in Nigeria is that subscribers patronise the services of two or more operators at the same time. With this, consumers increase or decrease their patronage and usage of services of a particular provider based on the performance of such provider on key services of interest. Therefore, it has become clear that no single operator is immune from consumers' vengeance and tendency to punish service providers that do not invest in knowing customer needs and are not measuring up to their expectations. With more operators expected to join the GSM sector of the country in the not too distant future and CDMA operators strategizing to increase their shares of the telecommunication market (NCC, 2016), customer retention has become an important competitive imperative in the subsector. This is more so given that it is not only very expensive to attract new customers (Kotler and Keller, 2016), it takes a much longer time to establish a profitable business relationship with them (Das, 2009).

Ogwo and Igwe (2012) attempted to identify the key factors influencing customers' attitude to patronage of GSM services. The study which was conducted among lecturers of a university in the South-South part of Nigeria identified customer value, brand image and service quality as factors affecting intention to use. While the efforts of Ogwo and Igwe is commended being the only known study conducted on patronage of GSM service in Nigeria thus far, there are many drawbacks and limitations in their research. First, the study's coverage and representativeness of consumers of GSM services in Nigeria is questionable as it was conducted within a single university campus in a relatively homogeneous culture and among a single group of consumers – lecturers. It is believed that the reliability of any research findings depends on the extent of representativeness of the study sample (Sekaran and Bougie, 2013). The present study attempts to address this weakness as it was conducted within the culturally diverse, commercially sophisticated and metropolitan city of Kano in the Northern part of Nigeria. Secondly, although service quality has been identified by many scholars (e.g. Guantam, 2015; Byarugaba and Osarenkhe, 2012; Chen and Cheng, 2012; Santouridis and Trivellas, 2010; Johnson and Sirikit, 2002; Ogwo and Igwe, 2012; Yap and Kew, 2012) as being a critical success factor in a company's efforts to differentiate itself and compete effectively, very few studies have attempted to investigate and present an in-depth analysis of the key measures of service quality that are peculiar to GSM services and are likely to individually and collectively influence consumer patronage in the sector. Similarly, this current study addresses the observed weakness by analysing the relative influence of elements of quality in GSM service. Moreover, since consumers' culture has been found to have impact on their perception of quality (Kueh and Voon, 2007), it would be interesting to empirically investigate and understand the service quality perception of consumers of GSM services in the Northern part of Nigeria. Hence, the key question for this study is 'to what extent does service quality affect consumer patronage of GSM service companies in Kano-Nigeria?'. Consequently, the main objective of this study is to determine the perceived effects of service quality on consumer patronage of GSM service

providers. It is also intended that the study will also explore the relative importance of specific dimensions of quality in telecommunication services as they affect consumer patronage.

Literature Review

The Concept of Service, Quality and Service Quality.

Service is defined as an act or a collection of acts that are usually intangible in nature and produced normally in interaction with customers (Gronroos, 2007). They are deeds, processes and performances (Zeithaml, Berry, & Parasuraman, 1996) that are offered to satisfy consumer needs or wants (Kotler and Keller, 2016). The most common type of service include telecommunication, banking service, haircut, transportation, education, legal services, healthcare services, repairs and other professional services.

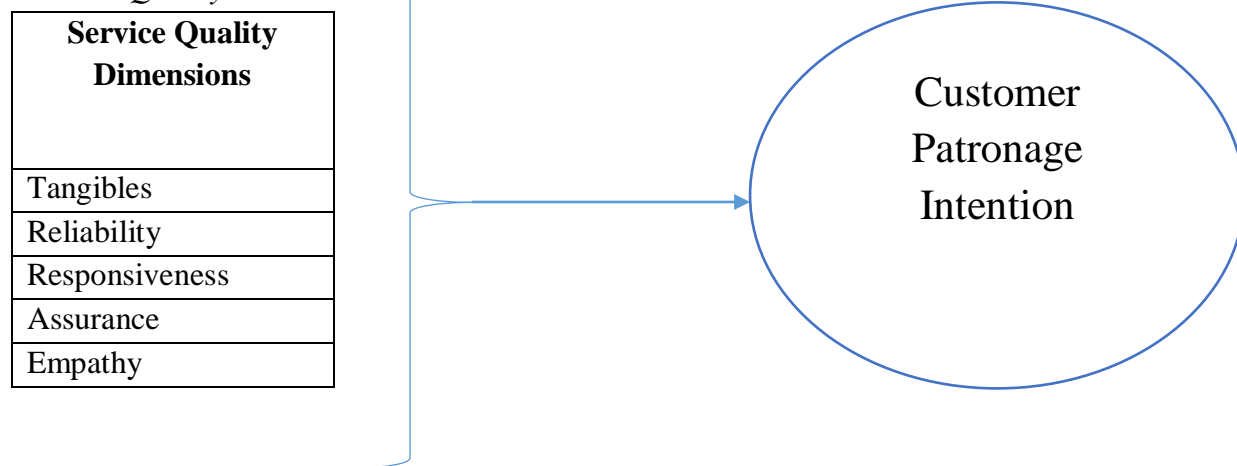
Quality is said to derive from the Latin word '*qualis*' which means 'distinctive characteristic' (Ehlers, 2007:96). This means that quality is something pleasing, nice and desired.

Service quality is thus defined as an evaluation of the extent to which service delivered matches customer expectation (Gaglik, Gulluce, Kaya and Ozhan, 2014). It is the overall impression of customers about the extent of performance (or non-performance) of the offering of a particular service provider (Park, Robertson and Wu, 2004). Service quality is the cognitive assessment of the difference between customer service experience and prior expectation (Deng, Yeh, and Sung, 2013). Since scholars generally believed that service quality is difficult to measure (Collier & Bienstock, 2006; Deng, Lu, Wei, & Zhang, 2010), the discussion of service quality in the marketing literature is often done on the bases of customer perception rather than a precise measure (Parasuraman, Zeithaml & Berry, 1988). Thus the two key issues that emerged from the various definition of service quality so far given are: customer expectation and perception of actual service experience. Whenever actual service experience is higher than expectation, customers are satisfied and there is perception of higher service quality. On the other hand, customers are disappointed when the actual performance or outcome falls below expectation, customers are disappointed. Clearly both cases have clear implication for customer post purchase behaviour. The likelihood that customers will abandon a particular service provider for others increase when they are disappointed with service quality (Johnson and Sikirit, 2002). Conversely, customers will most likely increase their patronage and recommend others to the firm if they are delighted with their service experience (Ogwo and Igwe, 2012).

Moreover, service quality has long been recognised as a key determinant of customer satisfaction (Chumpitaz & Paparoidamis, 2007), customer loyalty and retention (Jahn & Kunz, 2012), higher perception of value (Deng, Lu, Wei, & Zhang, 2010), positive word of mouth (Kumar, Tat Kee & Charles, 2010) and customers willingness to recommend a service firm or refer other to it (Sheng & Liu, 2010). When implemented as a business philosophy and allowed to guide the inbound activities of a firm, scholars have argued that the perception of high quality service can lead to reduced cost of operation and increased productivity; enhanced corporate image and higher profitability (Ogwo & Igwe, 2012), as well as business survival (Gaglik et al, 2014).

Service quality is often seen as a multidimensional construct consisting of tangibles, responsiveness, reliability, assurance and empathy (Parasuraman, Zeithaml, Berry, 1988). The most notable work on how to measure customer perception of service quality is SERVQUAL Model developed by Parasuraman, Zeithaml, Berry (1988). This work is a 22 item scale that measured perceived service quality along five dimensions, namely; reliability, responsiveness, assurance, empathy and tangibles. Reliability encompasses the dependability and accuracy of the service. Responsiveness connotes promptness and the willingness of staff to assist customers. Assurance is about attributes (such as knowledge and courtesy) of staff that conveyed trust and confidence to service users. Empathy signifies the level of caring and personalized attention provided to the customers and lastly, tangibles represent the concrete or physical aspects of the service that conveys quality and reduces customers' anxiety about the unknowns (Parasuraman, Zeithaml, Berry, 1988). The model is illustrated in figure 1.

Figure 1
Service Quality Dimensions



Source: Parasuraman, Zeithaml and Berry (1988)

Consumer Patronage/Purchase Decision Process

Consumer purchase decision process is referred to as the actions a person takes in purchasing and using products and services, including the mental and social processes that precede and follow these actions (Kotler & Keller, 2016). This process consists of five stages namely: problem recognition, information search, evaluation of alternatives, purchase decision and post purchase behaviour (ibid). The respective stages in the consumer purchase decision process are explained hereunder.

Problem Recognition is the starting point of consumer buying process. At this stage, consumers become aware of and put a lot of interest into getting the problem solved (Kotler & Keller, 2016).

Information Search connotes movement into search mode once consumers recognized a problem to be solved. The level of the search could be *heightened attention*, at which stage a person simply becomes more receptive to information about a product (Kotler and Keller, 2016), or *active information search* where people engage in a planned efforts to search for information such as talking to friends or reading materials. From the available options gathered, consumers set to *evaluate* alternative that will best solve his/her problem by looking at the features, functions and attributes of interest (Kotler & Keller, 2016) against consumers' own internal and external factors such as his/her lifestyle, age, sex, social status, economic conditions, social-cultural forces and marketing mix forces (Schiffman & Kanuk, 2008; Kotler & Keller, 2016). By and large, the result of the evaluation thus helps consumers to make decision as to which provider to *purchase* from. Moreover, for most companies especially those in a highly competitive market who depends on consumer repeat purchase, the last stage of patronage process – *post-purchase behavior* - is very critical and needs to be carefully monitored. This is because it has been observed that satisfaction or dissatisfaction after purchase affects consumer value perception, consumer communication and the possibility of a repeat purchase (Lam, Shankar, Erramilli, & Murthy, 2004)). Thus in order to satisfy customers and assure that they continue to patronize a particular firm, experts have recommended that business firms must seek to measure such elements of consumer patronage intention as positive word-of-mouth, actual purchase intention, price sensitivity and customer complaining behaviour (Johnson and Sirikit, 2002).

Empirical Findings on Service Quality and Patronage Intention

A number of studies (e.g. Guantam, 2015; Byarugaba and Osarenkhe, 2012; Chen and Cheng, 2012; Santouridis and Trivellas, 2010; Ogwo and Igwe, 2012; Johnson and Sirikit, 2002) have been conducted in an attempt to understand the link between quality of telephone service and consumers' behavioural responses. For example, the work of Johnson and Sirikit (2002) stands out as an important study that laid the foundation for other investigations into service quality in telecommunication market. The authors (ibid) investigated the potential usefulness of service quality as a tool for sustainable competitive advantage in the Thai telecommunication industry. It was found that – to a significant extent, service quality is a critical requirement for the achievement of competitive advantage in the Thai telecommunication sector. Of the key dimensions of quality that potentially influence customers' purchase intention, effectiveness of the customer service staff of the telecommunication companies stand out as the most cherished (Johnson and Sirikit, 2002). Similarly, Chen and Cheng (2012)'s study involving a sample of Taiwanese mobile phone customers established that most critical requirement for assuring customer loyalty in the telecommunication market is perception of high service quality. Moreover, in the case of the mobile telecoms service customers in Indian, Gauntam (2015) found that high quality service is the single most important factor that influences their patronage of mobile phone companies. In the same vein, the studies of Ren and Lam (2014) in China, Byarugaba and Osarenkhe (2012) in Uganda as well as Santouridis and Trivellas (2010) in Greece

similarly found that telecommunication firms that are highly competitive and command higher market shares are those that are highly rated as providing better quality of service.

Given the above discourse, the investigation hypothesizes thus:

H1: Service quality has no significant effect on consumer patronage of GSM service provider in Kano Metropolis'.

Methodology

Gay, Mills & Airasian (2011) are of the view that a sample of 400 is enough for any population that is 5,000 or more. Although 500 copies of questionnaire were distributed, a total of 395 (representing 79%) valid responses were retrieved. As presented in table 2, the major group of consumers that participated in the study include students of tertiary educational institutions, employees of public and private organization as well as private businessmen and women. The respondents cut across the four major GSM service providers that have been operating in the metropolis. Namely: Airtel, Etisalat, Globacom, and MTN.

With the help of two research assistants, questionnaires were handed out to customers who visited the customer service centres of the four GSM service firms in Kano. Many of the respondents completed and returned the instrument on the same day while a few were retrieved about a week after. The whole exercise was conducted over a period of two weeks. Berg, Lune & Lune (2004) believe that delivery and collection method of this nature is an effective data collection strategy in an environment where research culture is yet to be sufficiently developed.

A 5-point Likert type rating scale was used to measure a set of attitudinal statements relating to the key variables of the study. Specifically, the respective variables were measured as explained below.

Consumer Patronage Intention. Johnson and Sirikit (2002)'s scale was used in measuring patronage intention. This scale was developed and confirmed valid in a study of service quality and consumer behavioural intention in Thailand Telecommunication industry (table 3). The 5-point Likert rating scale measures respondents' attitudinal behaviours such as positive word-of-mouth, purchase intention, price sensitivity and complaining behaviours which indicates predisposition to patronage intention.

Service Quality: Similarly, the scale validated by Johnson and Sirikit (2002) which itself is an adaptation of SERVQUAL was used to measure service quality (please see table 5). This scale was developed based on the 22-item SERVQUAL model of (Parasuraman et al, 1988). The key elements measured by this scale are such service quality dimensions as tangibles, reliability, assurance, responsiveness and empathy.

With regards to data analysis, abivariate analysis was conducted. Specifically, Pearson's Product-Moment Correlation Coefficient (PPMCC) was used to test the linear correlation between

consumer patronage intention and service quality. Weighted average was calculated to understand the relative influence of key dimensions of service quality on consumer patronage intention.

Results

The Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS 22.0), a computer program for Windows was utilized as the tool of analysis for the study. First, an attempt was made to ascertain the reliability of the data. The Cronbach's Alpha coefficients of the consumer patronage intention ranged from .73 to .86 while that of service quality ranged from .70 to .91 (please see table 5). All the coefficients were greater than .70, exceeding the recommended threshold of .7 (Nunnally, 1978; Tavakol&Dennick,2011). This indicates that both scales had highly satisfactory degree of reliability and internal consistency. The results regarding evidence of reliability were thus consistent with previous studies that used the adapted service quality scale (Johnson and Sirikit, 2002; Ogwo and Igwe, 2012) and patronage intention scale (Johnson and Sirikit, 2002).

Table 2: Biographic information of respondents.

S/N.	Particulars	Total Number	Percentage (%)
1.	<i>Respondents Primary GSM Service Provider</i>		
	i. Airtel	83	21%
	ii. Etisalat	67	17%
	iii. Globacom	85	22%
	iv. MTN	160	41%
	Total	395	100%
2.	<i>Gender of Respondents</i>		
	i. Male	233	59%
	ii. Female	162	41%
	Total	395	100%
3.	<i>Respondents Years of Experience Using GSM Services</i>		
	i. 10 –15	119	30%
	ii. 5 – 9	225	57%
	iii. 1 – 4	36	9%
	iv. Below 1 year	15	4%
	Total	395	100%
4.	<i>Occupation/Employment Status</i>		
	i. Students	92	23%

	ii. Public Sector Employee	19	5%
	iii. Private Sector Employee	284	72%
	Total	395	100%

Source: Research Survey, 2016

Level of Patronage Intention among Consumers of GSM Services

First, it is imperative to state that as table 3 shows, there is generally high patronage intention among consumers of GSM services in Nigeria. Arguably, the high patronage intention can be seen from the high values of weighted average for each dimension of patronage intention, with actual 'purchase intention' and 'positive word-of-mouth' coming first and second respectively.

Table 3: Measures of Consumer Patronage Intention

Consumer Patronage Intention	Weighted Average
<i>Word-of-Mouth</i>	<i>1,561</i>
I always say positive things about my GSM network to other people	1670
I often recommend my GSM network to people	1322
I always encourage friends and relatives to subscribe to the services of my GSM network	1691
<i>Purchase Intention</i>	<i>1,687</i>
My GSM network is always my first choice whenever I need telecom service	1713
I do not intent to reduce my patronage of my GSM network	1650
I do not intend to switch GSM service network now	1698
<i>Price Sensitivity</i>	<i>1,472</i>
I will immediately patronise any other network that offer better tariffs on certain services	1340
I will continue to patronise my GSM network even if it increases tariffs for services	1579
I will continue to patronize my network even if competitors' prices are lower	1498
<i>Complaining Behaviour</i>	<i>1,360</i>
I will immediately switch to other network if I experience a problem with my network	1220
I usually complain to people about problems I encountered with my network	1430
I would not mind to complain to regulatory authority e.g. NCC if I experience serious problem with my network	1368
I frequently complain to the customer service staff of my network whenever I have problem	1421

Source: Research Survey, 2016

Service Quality and Consumer Patronage of GSM Services

The fundamental objective of this study is to ascertain whether the perceived quality of service offered by the GSM Operators in Kano Metropolis affect customer patronage of their services. To this end, the Pearson's Product-Moment Correlation Coefficient (PPMCC) test was conducted (see table 4).

Table 4: Inter-correlations for service quality and consumer patronage intention ($N = 395$)

Predictor	Index	Consumer Patronage Intention
Service Quality	r	.39**
	p -value	.001
	Decision	Accept $H1$

**Significant at $<.05$

A one-tail test produces an R^2 (.39) and a p -value of .001. This indicates that there is a positive and highly significant relationship between service quality and consumer patronage intention. Hence, the earlier stated null hypothesis is rejected. This implies that consumers' decision to patronize one GSM service provider rather than the other is highly influenced by their perception of differences in quality of service offered by the providers.

This finding could be explained by the fact that unlike at the inception of GSM services in Nigeria when customers virtually did not have options but to accept telecommunication services at whatever level of quality, today's consumers of GSM services now see quality of service as a major standard upon which to evaluate and then make choice of one or more from among available GSM Operators. The results also affirm the position SERQUAL Model which generally submits that the most important consideration of customers in their decision to patronize service organization is their perception of service quality (Parasuraman, Zeithaml and Berry, 1988).

Relative Influence of Key Dimension of Service Quality on Consumer Patronage

A key objective of this investigation was also to appraise the relative influence of key dimension of service quality on consumer patronage intention of GSM service. Consequently, weighted score was calculated and the result (as shown in table 5) indicates that the dimension of 'reliability' is the most emphasised by subscribers. Reliability of GSM service connotes such issues as ease of dialling and reaching phones lines both within and outside a particular network; prospects of getting calls completed; efficiency in the delivery of text and multi-media messages as well as efficiency of internet services and availability of services in across many locations. Moreover, the dimensions of responsiveness, assurance and empathy also appear to be highly desired by consumers of GSM services.

Table 5: Measures of Service Quality

Service Quality Items	Weighted Average	Cronbach's Alpha
<i>Tangible</i>	<i>1,195</i>	
My network has modern equipment	1110	.724
My network's physical facilities are visually appealing	1021	.744
My network's customer service staff are well-dressed and neat	1211	.812
Materials associated with telecom service (such as handbills, SIMs, modems etc.) appear good	1437	.701
<i>Reliability</i>	<i>1,500</i>	
My network always provide service as promised	1487	.811
My network always provide service at the right time	1452	.700
My network always show sincere concern and interest in solving my problem	1511	.701
My network is dependable	1621	.714
My network keeps accurate records	1431	.832
<i>Responsiveness</i>	<i>1,316</i>	
My network tells me exactly when service will be performed	1440	.701
I receive prompt service from my network's customer service staff	1316	.904
The customer service staff of my network are always willing to help customers	1218	.874
The customer service staff of my network always respond to my request	1289	.716
<i>Assurance</i>	<i>1,261</i>	
I feel safe in transacting with my network	1210	.733
My network personnel have the tendency to instil confidence in customers	1115	.890
My network personnel are always polite to customers	1323	.711
The customer service staff of my network have adequate knowledge to answer my enquiries	1394	.891
<i>Empathy</i>	<i>1208</i>	
My network gives me individual attention	1299	.880
My network has customer interest at heart	1155	.718
The customer service desk of my network has convenient operating hours	1257	.771
The customer service staff of my network understand my specific needs	1109	.892

The customer service staff of my network deal with customers in a caring manner	1221	.911
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Source: Research Survey, 2016

Discussion

Service quality is the feeling by customers that they're getting better service than expected. Research evidence supporting the relevance of perceived quality of service in customer patronage of service providers is quite robust. Guantam (2015) submits that provision of a superior quality of service is a key differentiator of service providers. However, since culture influences consumer perception of telecommunication service quality (Kueh&HoVoon, 2007), there is a need to empirically investigate the extent to which perception of service quality influence consumers patronage of GSM services in Kano Metropolis. This study has revealed that service quality has a positive and highly significant impact on consumer patronage. This finding is consistent with those of other recent research efforts (Guantam, 2015; Byarugaba and Osarenkhe, 2012;Chen and Cheng, 2012; Santouridis and Trivellas, 2010). Moreover, the higher R² value (.39) in this findings provides evidence to disproveOgwo and Igwe, (2012)'s earlier position that service quality is only marginally significant and second in impact among other factors (brand image, customer value and service quality) that influence consumer's intention to patronise a particular service provider.

This study also highlights the fact that although a lot is still being desired by the consumers of telecommunication services in Nigeria, GSM service quality seems to be gradually improving in the country. Further, it appears that the MNP policy which has made possible for consumers to abandon (without changing their phone numbers) service providers that do not measure up in service quality. The policy has indeed deepens competition and hence, in order to survive and operate profitably in the market, the service providers have no choice but to ensure that they invest consistently in facilities that will guarantee superior quality of service to customers.

Conclusion and Recommendation

This research investigated the effect of service quality on consumer patronage of GSM Service providers in Kano Metropolis – a commercial city with a population of more than 6 million inhabitants in the North Western part of Nigeria. Using a structured questionnaire as data collection instrument and Pearson's Product-Moment Correlation Coefficient (PPMCC) to test the formulated hypothesis, it was found that perceived quality of service has a significant influence on consumer patronage of GSM service providers. This goes to confirm the growing concerns of consumers as well as the regulatory authority (NCC, 2016) for an appreciable improvement in the quality of service provision by telecommunication companies in Nigeria.

As possible measures for shoring up quality of service by the providers, there is a need for the mobile phone companies to invest in upgrade of facilities, quality control technologies and strategic development and implementation of plan for delivery of high quality services. Specifically, GSM service providers should among other things, ensure; ease in dialling and

reaching telephone lines within and outside their networks, ease of recharging phone account, accuracy in billing customers for services, completion of calls without interruption, efficiency in the delivery of such services as text messages, multi-media messages and other on-line services, best in class customer relationship, timeliness in responding to and redressing customer complaints. All these measures would most likely help to assure improvement in service quality and thus guarantee greater customer satisfaction and an enhanced bottom line for the operators.

In effect, to be a top service company, there is a need for the GSM service providers to have what Kotler and Keller (2016) called 'a strategic service concept' which will entail top management commitment to quality, setting high quality standards, adoption of self-service technologies, establishment of a credible system for monitoring service performance and customers' complaints and paying sufficient attention to employees satisfaction.

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