

CUSTOMERS SERVICE AND BRAND PERFORMANCE OF MTN NIGERIA**OJONIMI-NOAH, Esther Ojonugwa****Department of Business Administration Faculty of Management Sciences, Prince
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Abubakar Audu University, Anyigba, Kogi State, Nigeria.****ABSTRACT**

In the current organizational environment, customers are crucial elements, due to the competitive environment and place at the central of all marketing actions. The main objective of the study was to examine the relationship between customer service and brand performance of MTN Nigeria. The study adopted descriptive cross-sectional survey design. The population of the study therefore is 68.5 million Nigeria Communication Commission (NCC) and International Centre for Investigative Reporting (ICIR), (2022). The study adopted Simple random sampling was employed and Krejcie and Morgan table for sample size determination was used giving a sample size of 384. The method of data analysis was Pearson's correlation with the aid of Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS) version 26. The study concluded that there is a positive and significant relationship between customer service and brand loyalty with correlation coefficient of $r = 0.685$ and p value of 0.000, it was also concluded that customer service has a positive and significant relationship with brand familiarity with correlation coefficient of $r = 0.635$ and p value of 0.000 and that customer service has a positive and significant relationship with brand extension with correlation coefficient of $r = 0.626$ and p value of 0.000. It was recommended among others that automation of services should be encouraged since it maintains service standards. Moreover, having structures in place to handle service issues is the surest means of giving customers value for their money.

Keywords: Brand Familiarity, Brand Loyalty, Brand Performance, Customer Service, and MTN Nigeria

1.0 INTRODUCTION

In the current organizational environment, customers are crucial elements, due to the competitive environment and place at the central of all marketing actions. Recently, consumers' needs and expectations have changed. To notice to various customers and their needs, organizations want to apply differentiation and customer-oriented marketing strategies for achieving competitive advantage. Customer service, customer satisfaction and customer Relationship Management are marketing strategies that are used to create and manage relationships between organizations and customers more effectively (Kesmodel, 2018). According to Kotler (2016) organizations are increasingly being customer centric and are embracing customer-driven initiatives that seek to understand, attract, retain, and build intimate long-term relationship with profitable customers. Customer care is a phrase that is used to describe the process of taking care of our customers in a positive manner. The term is used in place of complaint handling due to its positive focus and is a reminder that customer satisfaction is a priority.

Customer service is the set of behaviors that a business undertakes during its interaction with its customers. It can also refer to a specific person or desk which is set up to provide general assistance to customers. Global consumer study reveals that customer service remains critical to profitability. A recent worldwide survey revealed that customer service is a critical driver of profitability and satisfaction, with more than 75 per cent of consumers saying they would give more business to a company based on a great contact center experience. Customer service is a series of activities designed to enhance the level of customer satisfaction that is, the feeling that a product or service has met the customer expectation (Danny, 2019).

Performance is the accomplishment of a given task measured against preset known standards of accuracy, completeness, cost, and speed. In a contract, performance is deemed to be the fulfillment of an obligation, in a manner that releases the performer from all liabilities under the contract. Frempong (2002) said that poor performance of firms will lead to the deregulation of many of the telecom industries in many countries, of which Ghana is no exception. Thus, it is the responsibility of management to ensure that much attention is given to customers in service so that the firms continue to thrive on the market in the face of the strong competition. This is because it is more expensive to gain a new customer than to retain an existing one. Thus, understanding the needs of your customers and providing them with the best customer service will ensure the sustenance of the business so that in the long run the performance of the firm will be affected.

Again, in the telecommunication market, competition is very high and the products and offerings are more and more comparable. This leads to reduced customer loyalty. Losing an existing high-volume customer means losing lots of revenue. Thus, understanding the needs of your customers and providing them with the best customer service will ensure the sustenance of the business so that in the long run the performance of the firm will be enhanced, (Abdulkadir, 2016).

MTN Nigeria is part of the MTN Group, Africa's leading cellular telecommunications company. On May 16, 2001, MTN became the first GSM network to make a call following

the globally lauded Nigerian GSM auction conducted by the Nigerian Communications Commission earlier in the year. Thereafter the company launched full commercial operations beginning with Lagos, Abuja, and Port Harcourt. MTN paid \$285m for one of four GSM licenses in Nigeria in January 2001. To date, more than US\$1.8 billion has been invested building mobile telecommunications infrastructure in Nigeria. Since launch in August 2001, MTN has steadily deployed its services across Nigeria. It now provides services in 223 cities and towns, more than 10,000 villages and communities and a growing number of highways across the country, spanning the 36 states of the Nigeria and the Federal Capital Territory, Abuja. Many of these villages and communities are being connected to the world of telecommunications for the first time ever.

Customer service is a kind of business strategy that helps organizations to identify the most profitability customers and prospects and allocate attention to expand relationships with customers by making customized services that delivered to customers through the various organization channels. Since the main goal of an organization is to satisfy the needs of customers which will lead to increased profit. This indicates that without the existence of customers business activities will be unsuccessful. Business owners often concentrate on the improvement of their products; this is one of the basic features of the production concept. Often, they ignore their customer care and relationship; as a result, many of their customers move their purchasing interests to organizations who can serve them better. The problem here is that they fail to understand that customers' value, care and organizations tend to try their best as much as possible to retain, satisfy their customers and even attract more (Yarimoglu, 2014).

Customer demands for quality service in the telecommunication industry have become more and more apparent to professionals. Also, customer relationships are a strategic asset of the organization and customer satisfaction is the ultimate point to define business objectives. Customer service strategy plays an important role in organization's ability to generate income and revenue. Customer dissatisfaction can lead the organization to fail to reach its objectives. Lack of proper customer's relationship management will affect the brand performance and lack of quality service will affect the brand performance. An important question in the implementation of customer service is what it is effect on organizational performance (Essien 2016). So, there is a strong tendency for research to measure the relationship between customer service and different measurement of performance.

In Nigeria of today, quality customer service relations have become very paramount, but as important as this seems, we still see organizations around performing in this area below the expectation despite the keen competition prevailing around. Many factors are responsible for the poor customer service relations which may include nonchalant attitude of employees of the organization because of the bad recruitment process used in recruiting into the organization, poor remuneration, inadequate training for the staff of the organization and many more. Some of these factors responsible for the poor customer service relations are what this research work will want to evaluate and bring into the open their consequential effect on the brand performance.

Therefore, the major problems of these telecommunication companies are customer satisfaction, service quality and customer relationship management, which could affect brand loyalty, customer relationship management and brand extension, hence it is therefore, imperative to examine the effect of customer service on brand performance of MTN Nigeria.

In achieving the objectives of this study, the following questions are formulated to be answered.

- i. What is the nature of the relationship between customer service and brand loyalty of MTN Nigeria?
- ii. What is the nature of the relationship between customer service and brand familiarity of MTN Nigeria?
- iii. What is the nature of the relationship between customer service and brand extension of MTN Nigeria?

The study aimed to investigate the nature of relationship between customer service and brand performance of MTN Nigeria. The Specific objectives are to:

- i. Determine the extent of relationship between customer service and brand loyalty of MTN Nigeria.
- ii. Ascertain the extent of relationship between customer service and brand familiarity of MTN Nigeria.
- iii. Examine the nature of relationship between customer service and brand extension of MTN Nigeria

To address the research question designed for this proposal, the following hypotheses was postulated and tested in null form

H₀₁:there is no significant relationship between customer service and brand loyalty of MTN Nigeria.

H₀₂:there is no significant relationship between customer service and brand familiarity of MTN Nigeria.

H₀₃:there is no significant relationship between customer service and brand extension of MTN Nigeria.

2.0 LITERATURE REVIEW

Customer Service

The average service provider in business is often unaware of what customer service means. In a broad sense, customer service is anything a company does for customers that enhances the experience of customers. Customer service can be defined as the totality of what an organization does to add value to its products and services from the perspective of customers (Machando and Diggins, 2013).

Customers have wide-ranging ideas of what they expect from customer interactions with service providers and service providers must get to know its customers and strive for customer service excellence. As the goal of any business is customer satisfaction and loyalty, it is essential for a business to live up to its customers' perceptions and expectations of customer service (Machando and Diggins, 2013).

Customer service is the provision of services to customers before, during and after a purchase. Essentially, customer service is any back-up service that a company provides to customers to maintain their loyalty and to secure sales. It must be kept in mind that it is not the actual service that is of importance, but rather the perception that a customer has of the service (Brink and Berndt, 2008). The role of customer service is to provide 'time and place utility' in the transfer of goods and services between buyer and seller. It follows that making the product or service 'available' is what, in essence, a company's distribution function business entails. 'Availability' is a complex concept impacted upon by a galaxy of factors, which together constitute customer service (Christopher, 2005).

Looking at the above definitions of customer service from various authors, customer service involves meeting and exceeding the expectations of customers. To achieve this, a company must determine what customers' expectations are. Providing excellent customer service is not something that can be done in an ad-hoc manner or be seen as a passing phase. It would be inefficient for a company just to focus on customer service for a short time and then consider it done. Providing excellent customer service needs to be a focal point for any company and must form an integral part of a company's total product offering, behaviour and business culture. Achieving excellent customer service is a continuous process that never stops. Any company that has any business sense will continuously re-design, tweak and improve its customer service. In a similar way, a company's customers' expectations will also develop and evolve over time, making it essential that service delivery coincides with those expectations. Companies must continuously try to also make sure that a company asks customers about their expectations and needs to ensure that they use this information as guidelines to improve and modify their business or service model accordingly.

Brand Performance

The brand concept is seen as a semantic continuum, from which a brand holds a logo, an identity, a symbol, or a name through which brands contain both intangible and tangible characteristics of a business (Prasad & Dev, 2000). Kotler and Keller (2013) posit that brand is a name, term, sign, symbol, or design, or a combination of them, intended to identify the goods or services of one seller or group of sellers and to differentiate them from those of competitors. Shafqat and Yasir (2016) posit that brand as a name symbolizes a long-term engagement and commitment to a unique set of values, embedded into products and services, which make the organization, person or product stand apart. Brand is a name with the power to influence the market and its power increases when more people know it, trust it, convinced by it and become its advocates. Brand is a shared desirable and exclusive idea embodied in products and services (Shafqat & Yasir, 2016) and that brand has more power when this idea is shared by many people (Kapferer, 2012).

In the words of Davenport and Harris (2007), the level of the overall organizational performance shall be determined by the level of performance which includes optimizing supply chain, establishing correct price, fast-tracking product improvement, determining profitable clienteles, and finding accurate financial performance drivers. Aghaei (2013) contended that the strategic accomplishment of a brand is enhanced through the brand performance in the market. They further reiterated that brand performance contributes to brand quality position in an effective market emphasizing on the strategic goal measurement

of a brand leading to unsuitable economic measurement of the structure. They looked at brand stability, credit, and knowledge as central to performance of a brand.

Brand Awareness

To build a strong brand, brand awareness is necessary for such strength (Buil et al., 2013). Brand awareness differentiates the brand from competitors and leads to brand choice (Valavi, 2014). Balaji (2011) mentioned that brand awareness influences the strength of brand relationships in the customer's mind. Aaker (1991) considered that brand awareness provides a customer adequate reason to consider the brand in his consideration set. Brand awareness has been examined in customer' behavior studies (Hsu et al., 2011; Huang & Cai, 2015; Bianchi & Pike, 2010). Most models of customer' behavior argued that awareness is a first and necessary step for choosing the brand. Precisely, brand awareness considered a central element of brand equity (Azad et al., 2013). Brand awareness is a successful factor for competition that improves competition among brands (Jakeli & Tchumburidze, 2012).

Brand awareness comprises of two components: recognition, and recall (Keller, 1993). Hence, the operational definition of brand awareness is the ability of customers to recall or recognize that a brand is a member of certain product's category under different conditions. Mishra and Mishra (2014) noted that brand awareness refers to the strength of a brand's presence in the customer's mind. The brand awareness affects in the customers' attitudes toward brand loyalty. Additionally, the breadth of brand awareness expresses the range of purchase motives in which the brand name may come to mind (Keller, 1998). Usually, brand awareness indicates the ability of customers to recall the brand without any signal (Aaker, 1996). Thus, brand awareness is a vital component for developing the image of a brand (Aaker, 1991).

Brand Loyalty

The American Marketing Association (2017), defines brand loyalty as "the situation in which a consumer generally buys the same manufacturer-originated product or service repeatedly over time rather than buying from multiple suppliers within the category" or "the degree to which a consumer consistently purchases the same brand within a product class". Brand loyalty also refers the extent of the faithfulness of consumers to a particular brand, expressed through their repeat purchases, irrespective of the marketing pressure generated by the competing brands. When consumers become committed to brand they make repeated purchases over time. Brand loyalty is a result of consumer behaviour and is affected by a person's preferences.

Li and Green (2011) stated that in case of a strong competition, loyalty to specific brand is significant for the success of the organizations. In particular, loyalty to a brand produces some practical advantages through saving marketing cost by means of spreading word-of-mouth (Keller, 1993). Saili et al., (2012) noted that loyalty have two wings (behavioral and attitudinal). The attitudinal loyalty is the tendency to be loyal to a focal brand as demonstrated by the intention to buy it as a primary choice (Oliver, 1997). On the other hand, according to Rundle-Thiele and Mackay (2001), behavioral loyalty includes procurement procedure, and continues in this behavior. Fournier (1998) noted that loyalty towards a specific brand is the outcome of a range of powerful emotions (psychological attachment)

between both the customer and the brand. As stated by Nam et al. (2011) brand loyalty is behavioral construction relating to intentions towards repeat purchase; hence the loyalty is one of the consequences of brand equity rather than its component. Consequently, in this research, brand loyalty is combined of two dimensions: to repeat purchase for the same brand, and recommend others (Zeithaml et al., 1996; Chaudhuri & Holbrook, 2001).

Brand Familiarity

Brand familiarity describes how well your customers know your brand and what you stand for. Familiarity is defined by Saini (2015) as the number of product-related experiences that have been accumulated by the consumer. Usually, a well-known brand is a source of competitive advantage as familiar brands are highly salient in the minds of consumers, and the brand can differentiate itself in the clutter of competition (Lee et al, 2012). When consumers decide to buy products, they tend to be affected by brand familiarity (Chen et al., 2015). According to Mikhailitchenko, et al (2009), brand familiarity reflects the 'share of mind' of a given consumer attracted to the brand and the extent of a consumer's direct and indirect experience with a brand. Nguyen and Gizaw (2014) pointed out that brand familiarity is extent of information available about the brand that makes a consumer confident to buy the product. Furthermore Huang (2016) maintained that brand familiarity deals with a consumer's prior knowledge about the brand. According to Yang et al (2015) brand familiarity is the degree of understanding about the brand accumulated in the consumers' memory after contacting and experience the brand. That is, the more contact with brand, the higher the brand familiarity (Buil et al, 2013).

Brand Extension

Various experts have defined brand extensions differently though, these definitions look quite similar. For instance, Tarun (2012) sees brand extension as a marketing strategy in which new products are introduced in relation to a successful brand. Kotler and Armstrong (2002) defined brand extension as using a successful brand name to launch new or modified products in a new category. Verma (2002) also defined brand extension as using an existing brand name to launch a product in a different category. Brand extensions are the new products introduced under an existing brand name or a new entrant in a different category from the parent brand (Aaker & Keller, 1990 in Shafqat & Yasir, 2016). Leveraging the values of the brand to take the brand into new markets/sectors is brand extension.

Brand extension can reduce the beliefs associated with the flagship product but this Brand extension has been discussed from various perspectives in the literature. There are mainly two different types of brand extension (Shafqat & Yasir, 2016) and they include: horizontal and vertical brand extension. In horizontal brand extension, core brand name is used on new entrant product (Chen & Liu 2004). There are two additional types of horizontal brand extension: line extension and franchise extension (Shafqat & Yasir, 2016). In line extension, parent brand name is used to enter into new market segment with same product class and minor changes. Franchise extension use parent brand name to enter into new market with different product category (Pitta & Prevel Katsanis, 1995 cited in Shafqat & Yasir, 2016).

MTN Nigeria

Within the last 20 years, MTN has contributed significantly to government coffers in different ways. Aside from paying \$285 million in 2001 to get the DML license, the firm recently renewed that. It paid N71.6 billion for the spectrum license and N374.6million for the UAS license for another 10 years, precisely from September 1, 2021, to August 31, 2031.” Under the UAS, licensees shall be free to offer voice, data or multimedia services as they deem fit (Adeyemi, 2021).

Besides, the telecoms operators have created 2.5 million jobs and contributed N2.3 trillion in taxes. Two years ago, the company had said it invested more than N2 trillion in the Nigerian economy and paid more than N1.7 trillion in taxes, levies and other regulatory fees. MTN supported the economy with over N22 billion in corporate social investments and N2.81 trillion in capital investment. The N22 billion, which came through MTN Foundation, had gone into 852 projects in 2,476 communities across Nigeria, which is benefitting 18.6 million people. Sectors impacted by this funding are Health N6.07 billion; Education N7.86 billion; Economic empowerment N5.37 billion and others N3.36 billion. Beside all these, vendors around MTN have earned over N1 trillion in service offerings, while airtime retails have earned over N200 billion. Content owners have equally made over N120 billion within these periods. The firm currently has over 200 sales partners; 2.5 million local suppliers and 2.4 million active retailers. MTN has enabled broader economic development by supporting over 50, 000 ATM and PoS for electronic payments; connecting over 100 universities and polytechnics with Internet facilities and enabled 4.3 billion rapid and expedient transactions via USSD.

Indeed, these contributions have contributed significantly to the country’s Gross Domestic Product (GDP). In fact, it has lifted the economy out of recession on several occasions.

Statistics from NCC showed that telecoms contribution to GDP in 2012 was 7.7 per cent, but the figure doubled to 14.3 per cent as at the second quarter in 2020. This represented an N2.3 trillion growth, whereas the total contribution of Information and Communications Technology (ICT) to GDP was put at 17. 5 per cent. According to the statistics, telecoms contribution to GDP had maintained a steady growth rate between 2012 and 2020, except for 2013, when there was a slight drop in the contribution, compared to the contribution in 2012 (Adeyemi, 2021).

In September 2018, the Attorney-General of the Federation, Abubakar Malami, also demanded that the telco pay \$2 billion in tax arrears. Last year, Malami dropped the multi-billion-dollar tax dispute. On different occasions, MTN denied wrongdoings and reiterated its commitment to comply with the Nigerian tax laws. In readiness and commitment to the future in Nigeria, MTN has revealed plans to latch onto the deployment of Fifth Generation (5G) technology to expand its services in Nigeria. Nigeria enters the history book as the first country in West Africa to trial 5G technology and applications. The trial, which is powered by MTN, is an immersive demo and experience which will travel across three Nigerian cities to showcase the capabilities of 5G and its potential to enable economic growth, and social inclusion.

Since launch in August 2001, MTN has steadily deployed its services across Nigeria. It now provides services in 223 cities and towns, more than 10,000 villages and communities and a

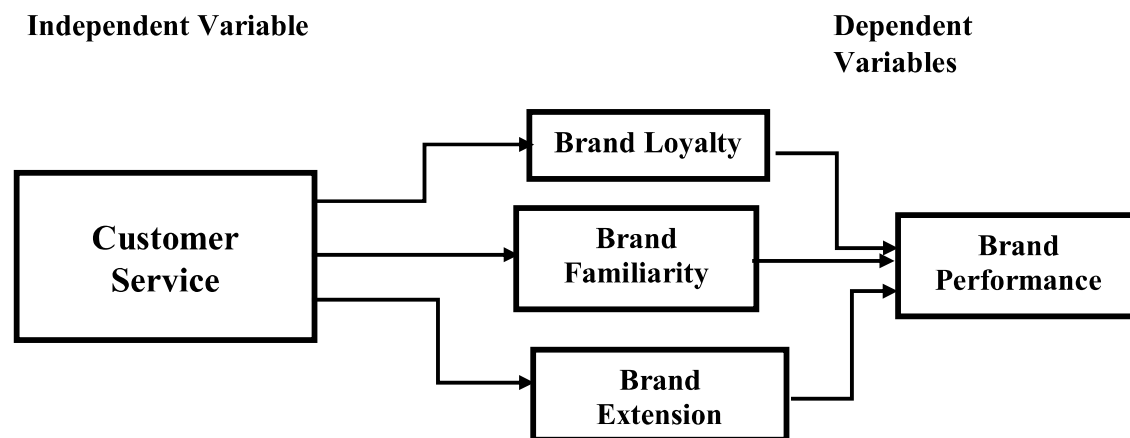
growing number of highways across the country, spanning the 36 states of the Nigeria and the Federal Capital Territory, Abuja. Many of these villages and communities are being connected to the world of telecommunications for the first time ever.

MTN Nigeria also recently expanded its network capacity to include a new numbering range with the prefix 0806, making MTN the first GSM network in Nigeria to have adopted an additional numbering system, having exhausted its initial subscriber numbering range - 0803. In its resolve to enhance quality customer service, MTN Nigeria has also introduced a self-help toll-free 181 customer-care line through which subscribers can resolve their frequently asked questions free of charge. MTN's overriding mission is to be a catalyst for Nigeria's economic growth and development, helping to unleash Nigeria's strong developmental potential not only through the provision of world class communications but also through innovative and sustainable corporate social responsibility initiatives.

Research Framework

The null hypotheses formulated for the purpose of this study are presented through a structured research framework. This is presented on the figure 1 below. The connections between the measured dimensions are labeled accordingly.

Figure 1: Structural research framework



Source: Researcher's Conceptualization, (2023).

Theoretical Review

Role Theory

Role theory sees the enactment of behaviors by individuals in a social encounter as a key determinant of both the boundaries of social exchange and its future possibilities. One of the assumptions made in the adoption of a role theoretical perspective for service encounters is that service provision success would be dependent on the mastery of such role behaviors. Actual mutual comprehension of role expectations at both the client interface and at the organizational level would be regarded as a prerequisite for good service experience.

According to Solomon et al., (1985) approaches to role theory and extending them in a services marketing context, some specific aspects of a role theoretical framework, as discussed above, from a research perspective, role theory contributes to relationship

marketing frameworks through both its contribution to our understanding of marketing exchange; and the framework it offers for analysis of degrees of interactivity in service performance. It accommodates four key features of relational marketing approaches; the strong emphasis on interactivity; the "continuous" nature of client management; the mutuality of a relationship perspective and the recognition of the evolving and uncertain nature of client interactions.

Commitment-Trust Theory

Morgan and Hunt (1994), in "The Commitment-Trust Theory of Relationship Marketing" (perhaps the most influential RM paper to date), posit that "presence of relationship commitment and trust is central to successful relationship marketing, not power." On the basis of research grounded in social exchange theory, marriage, and organizational behavior, they argue that relationship commitment, "an enduring desire to maintain a valued relationship" (Moorman et al.,1992), and trust, the "confidence in an exchange partner's reliability and integrity" (Morgan and Hunt 1994), represent the key elements that explain a relationship's impact on performance.

In service provider client relationships, a role theoretical approach can enhance these perspectives on interactive marketing exchanges. First, role theory draws on a behavioral perspective by focusing on explanations of social interaction as behaviors associated with specific social positions and Second, by identifying the dramaturgical aspects within social encounters, it offers an opportunity to examine how role behaviors and choices within the role script can encourage positive service encounter experience. The role theory due to its peculiarity was adopted for the study.

Empirical Review

Essien (2020) examined the impact of customer service on performance, with reference to MTN Nigeria Plc using MTN Nigeria Plc as a study. A descriptive survey research design was adopted. The sample for this study consists of 184 customers of MTN Nigeria Plc. The main research instrument used was questionnaire. Data collected were analyzed using descriptive statistic; Pearson product Moment correlation analysis was used to test the hypotheses. The findings from the hypotheses tested reveal that there is a significant relationship between customer service speed and customer retention; that there is a significant relationship between quality service and customer retention; that there is a significant relationship between effective communication and customer retention and that there is a significant relationship between commitment to service and customer retention. The study thus conclude that good customer service delivery is very important issue as far as customer retention in today's industry is concerned and that no business can exist without customers and a business that caters to their customers' needs will inevitably gain the loyalty of their customers, thus resulting in repeat business as well as potential referrals. In line with the the study therefore recommended that Management of MTN Nigeria Plc needs to design a successful customer service delivery process to develop a specific service strategy by identifying and understanding the specific needs of the customer.

Mohammad et al., (2018), investigated Customer service and performance of bank. The study employed a sample size of 417 people. Correlation and regression analysis were employed in the study. The finding revealed that Customers service has significant positive effect on brand

performance. it was recommended that banks should strive to improve their customer services in order to increase brand performance. Furthermore, banks should rethink their approaches to empathy, as it appears to have no bearing on client satisfaction.

Abdulkadir, (2016) examined the effects of customer care on Organizational Performance of Telecommunication Companies in Mogadisho-Somalia. The study adopted quantitative research with the specific research design being a descriptive design. The population of the study will be classified telecommunication companies located in Mogadishu; the sampling technique used will be purposive sampling. Primary data will be collected by use of questionnaires which were administered through drop and pick method. Data screening will be done to identify any missing data and will be further tested for reliability and normality. Data will be analyzed using SPSS version 22. The study found that service quality, customer satisfaction, customer relationship management, customer service delivery have significant and positive effects on organizational performance, Stepwise regressions revealed that customer care is determinants of organizational performance including service quality, customer satisfaction, customer relationship management, customer service delivery explained statistically significant portion of the variance associated with the extent of organizational performance of the telecommunication companies in Mogadishu-Somalia.

Jeske et al., (2015) examined evaluation of customer service and the impact of efficiency on Namibia's logistical sector: a study involving selected courier companies. Simple random sampling was used to select customers from five selected courier companies. Quantitative data were gathered using a self-administered satisfaction level and expectation questionnaire. Purposively sampled managers from the same companies provided qualitative data through interviews involving service providers' perspectives of customer service. The study found that customer service has a myriad of meanings to customers. However, these are not always in congruence with those of service providers' results, yet it is a source of distinctive operational efficiency. Loyalty and repeat business can be enhanced through the relationship between service providers and customers.

Gap in Literature

From the facts observed from the review of related literature above, though studies establishing the relationship and the effect between customer service and business performance have been quite extensive, most of them did not capture clearly the variables such as customers satisfaction, brand loyalty, customer relationship management, brand familiarity, service quality and brand extension, and again, a good number of them were conducted in developed and other developing countries outside Nigeria. Even the few ones done in Nigeria did not focus much on telecommunication industry. Hence, this study took this research gap into consideration and empirically evaluated the effect of customer service on the brand performance of MTN Nigeria.

3.0 METHODOLOGY

The descriptive research design was adopted for this study. To effectively achieve this, the survey method was used to elicit data from the respondents. The study was carried out in Lagos states and MTN customers participated in the study. The sample size was 384 MTN users using Krejcie and Morgan table for sample size determination. The simple random sampling technique was used. The study used structured questionnaire. Respondents were

asked to indicate the extent to which they agree/disagree with each statement regarding customer services and brand performance. All items were measured on a five-point scale (SA = strongly agree, A = agree, UD = undecided/indifferent, D = disagree, SD = strongly disagree). Pearson Correlation techniques was applied to test hypothesized relationships and effect with the aid of SPSS 26.

4.0 DATA ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

Reliability Test

The criteria of Cronbach's alpha for establishing the internal consistency reliability is: Excellent ($\alpha > 0.9$), Good ($0.7 < \alpha < 0.9$), Acceptable ($0.6 < \alpha < 0.7$), Poor ($0.5 < \alpha < 0.6$), Unacceptable ($\alpha < 0.5$).

Table 4.1: Cronbach's Alpha

VARIABLES	NO. OF ITEMS	CRONBACH'S ALPHA VALUE
Overall	4	0.757
BL	3	0.678
BF	3	0.666
BE	3	0.689
CUS	3	0.886

Source: Field Survey, 2023.

Based on the above table, the overall Cronbach's alpha value is 0.757. This shows that the data have a good reliability in internal consistency. Customer Services (CUS) has the highest Cronbach's alpha value (0.886), this shows the highest reliability in internal consistency, followed by Brand Extension (BE) with the Cronbach's alpha value (0.689), this shows a high reliability in internal consistency, followed by brand Loyalty (BL) with the Cronbach's alpha value (0.678), and this shows a high reliability in internal consistency, followed by Brand familiarity (BF) with Cronbach's alpha value (0.666) which means that the data is highly reliable.

Testing of Hypotheses

Hypothesis were tested at 0.01 level of significant using Pearson Correlation techniques with the aid of Statistical Packages for Social Sciences (SPSS v26).

Table 4.2: Correlation Matrix

		Correlations			
		CUS	BL	BF	BE
CUS	Pearson Correlation	1			
	Sig. (2-tailed)				
	N	344			
BL	Pearson Correlation	.685**	1		
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000			
	N	342	342		
BF	Pearson Correlation	.635**	.713**	1	
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000		

	N	343	341	343	
BE	Pearson Correlation	.626**	.686**	.776**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000	
	N	343	341	342	343

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Source: Primary Data, 2023.

The results in Table 4.2 shows that the relationship between Customer Service (CUS) and Brand Loyalty (BL) was positive and statistically significant with correlation coefficient of $r = 0.685$ and p value of 0.000, this implies that a positive change in Customer Service (CUS) will lead to a positive change in Brand Loyalty (BL) and a negative change in Customer Service (CUS) will lead to a negative change in Brand Loyalty (BL).

The results in Table 4.2 shows that the relationship between Customer Service (CUS) and Brand Familiarity (BF) was positive and statistically significant with correlation coefficient of $r = 0.635$ and p value of 0.000, this implies that a positive change in Customer Service (CUS) will lead to a positive change in Brand Familiarity (BF) and a negative change in Customer Service (CUS) will lead to a negative change in Brand Familiarity (BF).

The results in Table 4.2 shows that the relationship between Customer Service (CUS) and Brand Extension (BE) was positive and statistically significant with correlation coefficient of $r = 0.626$ and p value of 0.000, this implies that a positive change in Customer Service (CUS) will lead to a positive change in Brand Extension (BE) and a negative change in Customer Service (CUS) will lead to a negative change in Brand Extension (BE).

Test of Hypothesis One

H01: there is no significant relationship between customer service and brand loyalty of MTN Nigeria.

Based on the above facts and figures that has been established in the correlation matrix in table 4.2 above, the findings reveal that Customer service has positive and significant relationship with brand loyalty. Therefore, the null hypothesis which that “there is no significant relationship between customer service and brand loyalty of MTN Nigeria.” is rejected and the alternative hypothesis which stated that “there is no significant relationship between customer service and brand loyalty of MTN Nigeria.” is accepted.

Test of Hypothesis Two

H02: there is no significant relationship between customer service and brand familiarity of MTN Nigeria.

Based on the above facts and figures that has been established in the correlation matrix in table 4.2 above, the findings reveal that Customer service has positive and significant relationship with brand familiarity of MTN Nigeria. Therefore, the null hypothesis which that “there is no significant relationship between customer service and brand familiarity of MTN Nigeria.” is rejected and the alternative hypothesis which stated that “there is significant relationship between customer service and brand familiarity of MTN Nigeria.” is accepted.

Discussion of Findings

The main objective of this study is to examine the effect of customer service on brand performance of MTN Nigeria. Brand performances were surrogate by brand loyalty (BL), brand familiarity (BF) and brand extension (BE). Data was analyzed to determine agreement or disagreement to the quoted literature and at the same time adding to the existing knowledge. From the analysis, most of the findings agreed with the existing knowledge quoted in the literature review.

The correlation analysis carried out revealed that The results in Table 4.6 shows that the relationship between Customer Service (CUS) and Brand Loyalty (BL) was positive and statistically significant with correlation coefficient of $r = 0.685$ and p value of 0.000, this implies that a positive change in Customer Service (CUS) will lead to a positive change in Brand Loyalty (BL) and a negative change in Customer Service (CUS) will lead to a negative change in Brand Loyalty (BL).

It was also revealed that the relationship between Customer Service (CUS) and Brand Familiarity (BF) was positive and statistically significant with correlation coefficient of $r = 0.635$ and p value of 0.000, this implies that a positive change in Customer Service (CUS) will lead to a positive change in Brand Familiarity (BF) and a negative change in Customer Service (CUS) will lead to a negative change in Brand Familiarity (BF).

5.0 CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings of this study, the study concluded that customer satisfaction has positive and significant relationship with brand loyalty and that customer satisfaction has significant effect on brand loyalty, that is the higher the rate of customer satisfaction the higher the rate of brand loyalty, and the lower the rate of customer satisfaction the lower the rate of brand loyalty; that customer relation management has positive and significant relationship with brand familiarity and that customer relation management has significant effect on brand familiarity, that is the higher the rate of customer relation management the higher the rate of brand familiarity, and the lower the rate of customer relation management the lower the rate of brand familiarity and that quality service has positive and significant relationship with brand extension and that quality service has significant effect on brand extension, that is the higher the rate of quality service the higher the rate of brand extension, and the lower the rate of quality service the lower the rate of brand extension.

Based on the findings and conclusion the study recommended that:

- i. They should also be customers “friends and family” as well as allowing the organization’s ideals and values to be tailored towards the needs and aspirations of the customers,
- ii. The management of different firms in telecommunication industry should consider frequent training of employees on customer services.
- iii. Companies should also employ effective employee etiquette as manifested by mutual respect among all stakeholders, Automation of services should be encouraged since it maintains service standards. Moreover, having structures in place to handle service issues is the surest means of giving customers value for their money.

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