

# Integrated Marketing Communication and Customers Retention Strategies for Major Mobile Tele-Communication Companies in Nigeria

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**Abstract:** *This study was conducted to explain how integrated marketing communication is used to communicate customer's retention strategies in Nigeria telecommunications industry. The major players in Nigeria mobile telecommunication industry are: MTN, GLO MOBILE, Airtel, Etisalat and Visafone. Explorative method was used as relevant academic materials; journals and online publications relating to the subject matter were consulted for the study. The study came out with the following findings; poor network issues often result in "dual loyalty" as customer tend to defect to other networks in resolving the problem of network failures especially in critical moments. Subscribers are price sensitive which can lead to brand switching. The implication of these is that, when network providers are not reliable in billings and network, the defection rate becomes high with the attendant repercussion of loss of revenue loss of revenue, patronages or market shares. It was discovered that instability of network affects the company's market coverage. The study recommended that mobile telecommunication companies should strengthen the bond between them and their subscribers' through effective integrated marketing communication approach. They should incorporate the feelings of their respective subscribers in advertising campaigns rather than the usual manner of playing the role of saints as against their competitive ralvaries. The study cited the cybernetic theory of message transmission by Norbert Wiener and elaboration likelihood model.*

**Keywords:** *Integrated Marketing Communication, Customer Retention, Customer Loyalty*

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## 1.0 INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY

Business organizations in this contemporary age operate in competitive manner. The competition arises as a result of controllable and uncontrollable environmental factors. The telecommunication industry is not left out or this stiff syndrome. The major players in the industry have all struggled to sustain their business positions with its attendant scramble to increase their market shares.

Telecommunication companies have flooded the minds of potential and actual users of their services with antics in a bid to retaining them or preventing them from defecting to competitors. Management thinkers like Zineldin (2000) has written on the importance of customers to an organization and how companies should strategically retain them. Theories on communication and that of customers retention have been developed to explain how integrated marketing communication approach has reduced the rate of defection among customers. Customer retention theories equally explain the condition under which customers may become loyal for a company's offering be it industrial or consumers goods. The main reason for a business according to Drucker (1973) was "to create a customer". The retention of these customers varying economic and psychological considerations remains paramount. Reichheld, (1990) affirms that customer retention, increases customer net present value by over 25%, integrated marketing communication tools are used to communicate to customers (actual and potential) about a firm offerings through several strategic media platform to acquire, grow and retain them in value over time. Mobile telephone network companies in Nigeria design offers and promote various types of services and incentives to different market segments. This has triggered the rate of customer switching action. Customers' defection is a clear manifestation of mobile telephone subscribers in Nigeria. (Aminu and Iartini 2008), customers retention has become successful to a large extent due to the application of integrated marketing communication programs in Nigeria.

## **1.2 STATEMENT OF PROBLEM**

In recent times, the rate out which mobile telecommunication subscribers defect from one network to another is alarming. According to Reichheld (1990) brand defection account for over 25 percent of a net-present value to the receiving companies and 85 percentage loss of revenue to relieving companies. One major reason for this customer disloyalty is poor service quality coupled with inconsistencies in application of integrated marketing communication tools to communicate product offerings to their customers.

Evident of this is the manifestation of dual loyalty that is, where one individual maintain two or more telecommunication lines. The reasons for this are challenges encountered by individual users from various communication companies with respect to service availability, reliability, coverage and incentives.

## **1.3 AIM AND OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY**

The aim and objectives of this study is to examine the role of integrated marketing communication in sustaining customers' retention for mobile telecommunication companies in Nigeria.

- How does advertising messages communicate service quality?
- How does direct marketing communicate customers' satisfaction/loyalty?
- How is sales promotion use to display the corporate image?
- How publicity/public elation use to communicate incentives to customers.

#### 1.4 IMPLICATIONS OF THE STUDY

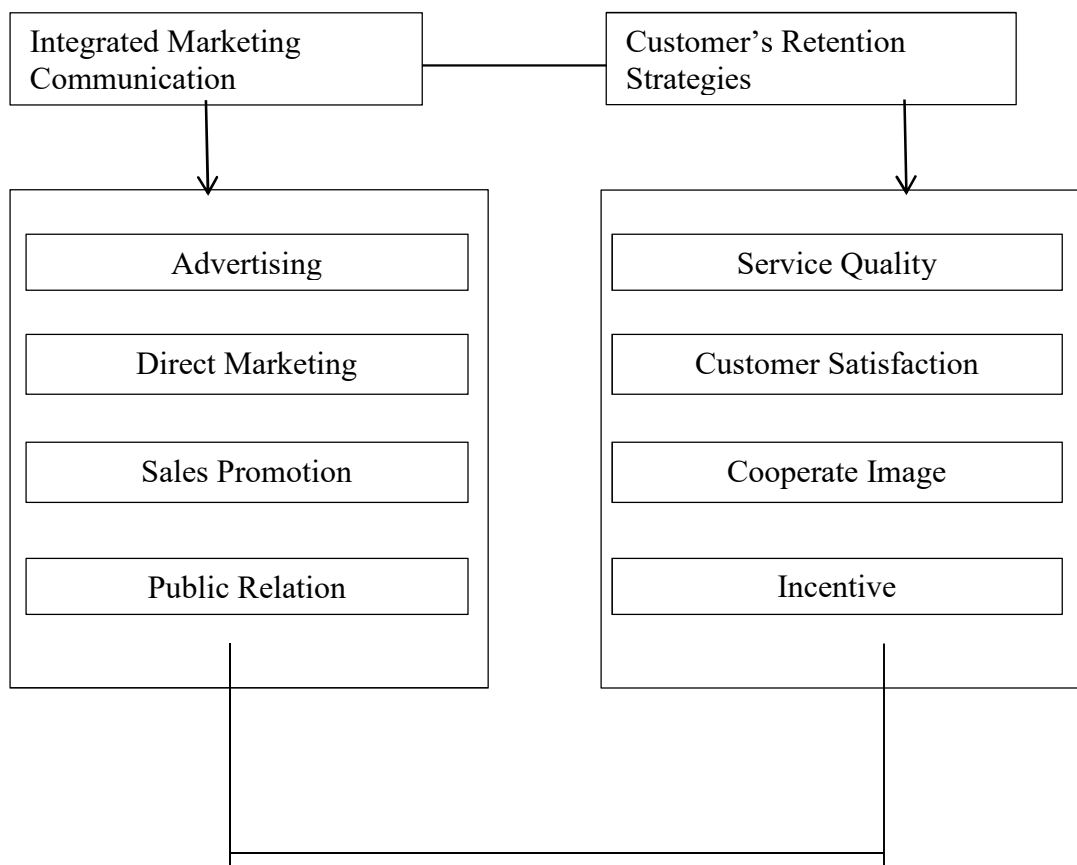
The findings of this study, will give stakeholders in telecommunication industry a platform to re-enforce their integrated marketing communication tools in sustaining their various customer retention strategic options

It will also add to the body of marketing literature especially strategic marketing. Also, those wishing to carryout empirical or explorative research in respect to variables will be equipped to greater extent, when relying on this material.

Finally, the outcome of the study can be used as a basis to replicate the study in other sectors of the Nigeria economy.

#### 1.5 CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK ON

##### **INTEGRATED MARKETING COMMUNICATION AND CUSTOMERS RETENTION STRATEGIES FOR MOBILE TELECOMMUNICATION COMPANY IN NIGERIA**



**Source:** Reichheld (1993) and Beatty (2002)

## **2.0 REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE**

### **2.1 CONCEPTUAL REVIEW**

The various understanding about integrated marketing communication (IMC) as a new concept has created difficulty in its definition in the body of marketing literature. It is my belief that IMC is still going through surgical-intellectual evaluation in the marketing space.

Arens and Weigold (2013) believed that marketing scholars view IMC as “one voice” which signifies that all communication tools will leverage upon to have a single meaning; while others view it from its integrated nature where advertising should achieve action and awareness goal. Caywood, Schultz and Wang (1991) “defined IMC as a marketing communication concept that recognizes the added value of a total plan to evaluate the role of variety of communication disciplines for example, advertising, direct marketing, sales promotion, public relation etc and combined them to provide clarity, consistency and positive impact” American marketing association (AMA) defines IMC as “A planning process designed to guarantee that all brand contacts received by customers or prospect for a product, service, or organization are relevant to that person and consistent over time” the unification of different marketing communication tools helps to reduce promotional costs although, each tool has its peculiar strengths and short comings (Belch-and Belch, 2011)

IMC; is a strategic marketing action plan that helps all messaging and communication tools to be unified across all media platform, directed to audience customer (Kehinde, (2009), lerindha (2014) integrated marketing communication gives a lot of cooperate and competitive advantages such as cost minimization, increase in patronage, sales and as well as reducing stress. Vantamay (2011) suggested five factors for measuring the effectiveness of IMC programme: customer responses, market performance, brand exposures, communication effect and distribution channel support. IMC sends messages using various marketing communication tools, creating more platforms for customers to be informed, aroused and effect positive action. Kotler and Weller (2012) posit that IMC is a strategic planning process which evaluates the strategic roles of various communication tools and combines them to provide clarity, consistency and maximum impact through messages integrated seamlessly.

The promotional mix will have to be uniquely planned to incorporate all the elements to achieve harmony (Jobber and Lancaster (2009) Crowens and Piercy (2013) posited that apart from integrating promotional mix, companies should also select specific strategy for each of the components of marketing communication. They believe that each promotional component has its own specific objectives, with variation in measurement of their effectiveness for each tool.

IMC is therefore a marketing strategic action designed to ensure that all promotional tools work in harmony even if they are isolated in practice but passing across the same message to their audience customer. It combines an individual customers own perspective into all customer facing functions at a company, including marketing, sales, and service. The Wikipedia dictionary see's IMC as the application of consistent brand messaging across both traditional and non-traditional marketing channels and using different promotional methods to reinforce each other.

Professor Michael Savod of Golden Gate University posit that IMC is the blending of promotional variables using consistent, meaningful and credible messages, directed at selected targeted markets with target media using the amount of money to accomplish communication Objectives in a measurable way.

He developed 7Ms strategy.

1. **Market(s):** Targeted customers
2. **Mission:** Marcomm (marketing communication) objectives
3. **Message:** Creative themes
4. **Method:** Blending communication techniques
5. **Media:** Channels of marketing communication
6. **Money:** Budget that is the cost implication
7. **Measurement:** Results analysis

Promotional mix or IMC tools which are often used by telecommunication firms in Nigeria like MTN,Airtel, Glo Mobile, Starcomms, Multi-links, Visafone and Etisalat to execute their IMC plan are advertising, sales promotions, personnel selling, public relation/publicity and direct marketing activities. The combination of these promotional elements in transmitting seamless brand capturing messages about company's offerings to their target audience for attention and trial or even sustaining patronage becomes a strategic focus of integrated marketing communication drive.

**Advertising:** Advertising makes meaning only when transmitted. In today's competitive environment, the media platforms are enormous (Okpara, G.S., Anyanwu, A and Inyanga J. I.N. 1999). Most telecommunication companies use these elements to reach out to a large audience.

Advertising is a non-personal communication or mass communication channel that is usually paid for by an identified sponsor. Orji (2003) defines advertising as all activities (religious, business, social or cultural) that educates, informs or persuades the audience about the existence and usefulness of a good, service or idea by an identified sponsor. Advertising objectives of most of these telecommunication companies in Nigeria may be to inform, persuade and remind their customers both actual and potential about their offerings with a view to retaining them. To me, advertng is a non-personal form of interaction through communication about a firm being the sponsor for its offerings.

**Sales Promotion:** Most times, companies' sponsors' public shows in form of sales promotion. Sales promotion is a non-current selling effort undertaking to stimulate demand for a product or service. Sales promotion is seen as a variety of ways deployed by a sponsor to stimulate the purchase of a product or brand. It is usually tactical and non-selling these can be inform of coupons, loss leaders, point of purchase displays, premiums, prizes, product sample etc. sales promotion can be directed either to the customer, sales staff or distribution channel members,

Mobile telecommunication companies sponsors these shows as a strategic tool to retain their customer. Most times, when they offer free gifts, like free airtime, bonuses and all that, the idea is to increase patronage.

**Selling:** Of all communication mix elements, personal selling is peculiar because of its person to person interaction during presentation. AMA (1960) defines personal selling as the oral presentation in a conversation with one or more prospective customer for the purpose of making sales. The aim is to inform and encourage the customer to buy or at least make a trail Most times, companies use this tactics to persuade potential customer to patronize their product Mobile telecommunication companies often approach people through this means. Most lines are sold through this medium with enticing words from commissioned sales men; they are apparently influential due to the presence of women.

**Public Relations:** Public relation is an indispensable tool in maintaining good relationship between an organization and its public Orji (2003) it is a conscious, deliberate and planned effort established to improve and sustain mutual understanding to elicit patronage from a target public. This method can be achieve through publicity events, press releases, newsletters, blogs social media etc. the fundamental objective is to identify the target audience and tailor messages that will be relevant to each audience.

**Publicity:** When awareness is created through a mass media about an organization and its offerings then publicity function has been undertaking, usually this action is not paid for by the organization. It is commercially significant news or editorial comments about ideas, services or institution. Bush and Houston (1985) opined that publicity is any message concerning an Organization appearing in mass media as an item of news, for which organization does not pay for and is not general considered to be the source. It is an act or device, designed to attract public interest. In this digital age, there are two major types of publicity, offline and online publicity.

Offline publicity include print media (magazines, journals, newsletters, post cards, bills, fliers) television, radio, bill boards etc. online publicity is done through the internet.

**Direct Marketing:** This is a form of advertising where organization communicate directly to customers through a variety of media including cell phone text messaging, email, websites, online adverts data marketing, fliers, catalogue distribution, promotional letters and targeted television, newspapers and magazine.

**Internet Marketing:** This refers to advertising and marketing effort that uses the web and email to drive direct sales 'for electronic commerce, in addition to sales leads. Internet marketing can be broken down into more specialized pattern such as web marketing, email marketing, social media marketing, and search engine optimization. In Nigeria, telecommunication companies use the online system to strategically communicate and retain their customers.

## **Theoretical Framework**

The term "theory" suggest an abstract understanding of a process. Miller says it is a process, Hoover (1984) defines it as "a set of proposition related, which suggest why events occur in the manner they do" Foss and Griffin (1999) opined that it "a way of framing an experience or



event-an-effort to understand and account for something and the way it functions in the world”, Integrated marketing communication as a process is an approach by an organization to give a unified message by integrating all the elements in the mix to elicit positive response and Obtain loyalty on the part of customers. Theories are real world phenomenon and such can be used to relate to several circumstances. It is in this context I relate the theory of cybernetics and the likelihood elaboration model to integrated marketing communication.

### **Cybernetic Theory of Message Transmission**

In 1948, Norbert Wiener coined the term ‘ cybernetics’ to explain more on the existing theory of message transmission by incorporating his idea that messages sent within a system in an effort to control their surrounding environment (Wiener 1954) the basic function of communication, according to Wiener in his theory is to influence or control the environments in which one lies or operates The ideas suggest that the goal of human communication is to become familiar with certain environments while at the same time influencing the behavioral outcome of an aspect of it According to Wiener, the purpose of cybernetics is to develop and language and technique that enables the individual attack the problem of control and communication in general and finding the proper repertory of ideas and techniques to classify their particular manifestation under certain concept. He defines the problem as control and system malfunction. He introduces the idea of entropy and feedback. According to Wiener people are built like complex machines which are capable of receiving, processing and giving feedback to affect changes in the environment.

The relevance of this theory to the study is that Integrated marketing communication tools transmits messages to the audience which is intended to affect their patronage decision and most often stimulate the drive for defection. Like wiener, messages are capable of creating conviction why a listener of MTN advert on television should move from GLO mobile to MTN. The idea behind most radio jingles, or newspapers and television advert is to control the mind of their audience by indirectly discrediting the services of their competing rivalries

### **Likelihood Elaboration Model**

Elaboration likelihood model was developed by Richard E. Peety and John T. Caceoppo in 1980’s. According to this model, persuasion which is part of our daily life occurs when readers, listeners or viewers learns a message from what they read, listen or watch which is translated to them in form of ideas and will be persuaded by it. One learns something from and be persuaded. However, learning does not combine with persuasion as when one hate an advert or message and do not want to hear it, it will be difficult to persuade such individual. (ELM) Explains how persuasion helps in changing the attitude of a reader or viewer. Communication firms put into consideration human emotion and situation before executing their promotional programs. (ELM) further explains how each and every message undergoes two stages of persuasion. They are central and peripheral route, acting as persuasive techniques. Central route occurs when attitudinal changes occurs because of purposeful evaluation of a message while peripheral route occurs when elaboration and attitude change do not occur from the inference but rather by association, most of these mobile telecommunication adverts are highly persuasive even when you seems not interested they will deploy a means of persuading you.

## **2 1 2 Customers Retention Strategy**

Customers retention refers to all activities and actions companies take to reduce the number of customer defections. The goal of customer retention programs is to help firms retain as many customers as possible and this is achieved through customer or brand loyalty programs. Customers retention is usually a strategic task to any mobile communication firm. They must incorporate it as because of its long term benefits especially on returns on investment. Free airtime, free data, free T. shirts and all that are all strategic steps in pinning down customers within the mobile telecommunication sector in Nigeria. Let me add that retaining customers is capital intensive because all the free and bonuses erodes firms profit. Retaining customers can come in the following ways;

1. Engaging them
2. Allowing them to experience the company's brand
3. Understanding their relationship with their brand
4. Exploring their social media influence
5. Providing value
6. Making them feel special and responding to every concern of theirs.

There are a number of customer retention strategies firms can use. These may include price slash, product customization, customer care, special offers, discounts (Reichheld, 1990). Stun and Thiry (1991) opined that a retained customer does display immunity to competitive pull. Customer may graduate from being a client, to supporter and finally an advocate.

### **Customer Retention Methods**

Customer retention strategies are program of action mapped out by a firm in an attempt to discourage customers from defecting or switching to competitors brand. Some of the factors responsible why customers stay or leave are lack of empathy, service quality, Reichheld (1996), Some unsatisfied customer may choose not to defect, since they may not get better service delivery elsewhere, hence customers satisfaction is important indicator for customers retention.

There may still be range of other factors like incentive, market coverage or cooperate image. Management should consider the range of these factors (Omotayo 2008).

### **Service Quality**

Maintaining long term relationship as well as surviving in contemporary business world requires the delivery of quality Service to customers. Claycomb and Mann service quality refers to the consistency with which customer's expectation is met and the general superiority of the service relative to that of the competitor". The actions that guarantees service quality may include delivery on time, variety of options, prompt in attending to complaints, competent staff, these positive intentions can drive the need for referrals.



## **Customer Satisfaction**

To build a comprehensive customers value, customers' satisfaction should be the cardinal objective of any organizations. (Kotler & Keller, 2009) views customers satisfaction as 'the perceive monetary value of the bundle of economic, functional and psychological benefits customers expect from a given market offering' Zeithaml and Bitner (2000), define customer satisfaction as the "evaluation of a product or service in terms of meeting expectation" Consumers measure their experiences from a product or service after acquisitions, consumption and disposition Hoyer and MacLanis (1997).

## **Customers Loyalty**

The reason for customer's loyalty is as a result of defection rate, witnessed across industries. The concept of loyalty can be defined as "a deeply held commitment to repurchase or re-patronize a preferred product or service consistently in the future, thereby causing repeating the purchase of same-brand or same brand-set, despite situational influences and marketing effort having the potential to cause switching behavior.'" (Oliver, 1999). Keaveney (1995) gave reasons for switching behavior within the service industry as price variation, inconveniences, core service failures, failed employee responses to service failure, ethical problem, involuntary factors, competitive issues and new failures.

## **Incentives**

Sometimes, firm tries to use incentives in form of coupon, discounts, bonuses for certain level of patronage. Incentives may be seen as inducement or supplementary reward that serves as a motivational device for a desired action or behavior. Incentives motivate an individual action. Either a customer or an employee to perform certain action. An incentives structure is central to economic activities (both in terms of individual decision-making and in terms of co-operation and competition within a larger institutional structure).

## **Corporate Image**

Corporate identity or image is the manner which a firm presents itself to the public such as customers, investors as well as employees. Corporate identity is a primary goal of corporate communications. A typical identity will be a way of branding, trademarks, product design, logo etc.

## **2.2 CONTEXTUAL REVIEW**

Brief background of mobile tele-communication industry in Nigeria. Global System of Mobile (GSM) services was introduced in Nigeria during the leadership of president Olusegun Obasanjo in 2001 Before this time NITEL (Nigerian telecommunication Limited) which have been privatized by the same government enjoyed a monopolistic market, being the sole provider of the nation's telephone services.

Omotayo et al., (2011) believe that the degree of competition in the telecommunication industry became high as a result of the launching of Mobile Telephone Network (MTN),

Econnet now Airtel, (M-Tel) formerly Nitel, Globacom now Glo Mobile, Star Comms, multi-Links, Visafone and Etisalat etc.

These service providers design, offer and aggressively promote different types of services with incentives to different market segments. The subscribers now have better chances of evaluating each service provider with a view to knowing who to be loyal to. Also, due to the stiff competition within the industry, Telecomm companies have deployed a program of actions, for each customer group with a view to controlling reasonable market-share, retain profitable customers and discourage defection to competitors. Each of these companies has different customers retention approach to that effect.

### **2.2.1. Advertising as an Integrated Marketing Communication Tool and Service Quality**

Advertising is an essential tool to telecommunication firms about service and its reliability. Advertising is a non-personal communication channel, usually paid for by the sponsor to create awareness and provide information about their product and service. MTN, GLO, ETISALAT, VISAFONE etc. make use of both print and electronic media to display their various products or service to users. Sometimes, it comes as jingles on radio stations, newspapers publication, online advert etc. In each of the medium, there is a display of a satisfied customer on the screen or bill boards which clearly shows how customers who have subscribed those services feel about the respective mobile telecommunication provider on their service quality. The MTN slogan for service quality may be “24 hours service, good customer relationship and service reliability all the time”. Glo and other providers may have theirs and in some instances they will stimulate a trial on the media to show its practicability. People are trapped upon watching or listening to the advert and those who want to defect can easily do so. The understanding is that the rhetoric’s of a message can trigger the spirit and continuity.

### **2.2.2 Direct Marketing as Integrated Marketing Communication for Sending Information about how Satisfied their Customers are in using a Particular Service or Product as a Customers’ Retention Strategy**

Anderson et al., (1994) point out a distinction between customer satisfaction and future experiences of customers when they come in contact with a product or service and value received. Direct marketing which is a strategy firms use to communicate directly to consumers through variety of media. Mobile telecommunication companies in Nigeria like MTN, ECONET, AIRTEL etc. most times print fliers, promotional letters, or electronic means to inform their customers the desired benefits derivable from using specific package. They use the same media platforms to show case other individuals who are satisfied with their services and will not be willing to switch to other networks. In most situations, they do it to solicit patronage attention for newly introduced service .

Zeithaml and Bitner,(2000), see’s customer’s satisfaction as customer evaluation of a product or service. Hoyer et al., consumer’s measures experience received after using a product or service. Most times, these companies target the emotions of customer. Direct marketing activities or approach occurs more during the festive seasons. They send special messages, emails, give out fliers to users. The aim is to directly elicit positive responses from them and to introduce new plan.

### **Integrated Marketing Communication Tool (Sales Promotion) strategy, Drive Customer Retention Using Incentives**

American marketing association, in its Web Dictionary of Marketing “defined sales promotion as ‘media and non-media marketing pressure applied for a predetermine, limited period of time in order to stimulate trial, increase consumer demand, or improve product availability. These non-current marketing efforts attempt to provide value added incentives to users or dealers. The media platform can still be inform of advertising, prints and electronic. MTN, GLO, Airtel etc. give bonuses for recharging certain amount, currently there are several incentives, aimed at stimulating instant recharges. Like the MTN 400% bonus, users can as well borrow and pay later. GLO and Airtel networks still give bonuses for loading and have a soft landing for their data plan. Etisalat is not left out the essence for this initiative is to build strong customers relationship and strategically reduce the rate of defection. Some of these consumer oriented promotion can be inform of free samples or air time, coupons, discounts, premium offers, cash bonuses, personality promotion etc. Some sales promotional activities are communicated in the loyalty’ programs prize contest (Chandon & Wansink, 2000); in Nigerian, bonus offers and discounts is practice by all the mobile telecommunication companies. It is also practice in like manner around the globe (Ndukwe, 2008) Most of the time, the medium for sending out messages concerning incentives and new packages is through bulk SMS, street displays, bill boards, personal selling approach (face to face Interaction). These strategic roles creates a sense of belonging and sometime it is followed by direct calls from their customers care lines soliciting responses from customers about their services delivery and reliability. Another promotional tactics can be inform of painting strategic areas with their trade colors like MTN uses yellow, Glo-Green etc.

### **Integrated Marketing Communication Tool (Public Relation/Publicity) As a Driver of Customer Retention through Cooperate Image**

Professionally, maintaining favorable image between an organization and its numerous publics and at the same time creating a favorable significant commercial news items about that organization is a pointer a good co-operate image.

In telecommunication industry in Nigeria, news worthy items about telecommunication companies is all over strategic platforms like newspapers, journals, public outings etc. Telecommunication companies have equally been engaged in public presentations to their publics about their activities including constructive dialogue. In the areas of social responsibilities, good number of them, have embarked on scholarship schemes, construction of social institutions for the benefits of host environments. Some of them are into joint-venture schemes with a view to fostering community relation. All these have enhanced their reputation globally.

In Nigeria, each of the telecommunication companies especially the market leaders stand out for something unique to the environment and to their numerous clients. Kotler and Armstrong (2012) assert that public relations and publicity facilitate the building of good relation with a company’s various publics by obtaining better news worthy items that is of commercial significance, building up a good corporate image and heading off unfavorable rumours, stories

and events relating to such a company Ajai (2005), Consumers prefer organizations that portray credible image, and public relations seek to mirror such image.

### **3.0 GAPS AND OUT COMES**

Communication is an essential part of human existence. Life and businesses will be boring without communication. Bothered by the rate out which subscriber's defect- to other networks. Through the study, it was observed that some subscribers of telecommunication services operates what I termed as 'Dual Loyalty' Dual loyalty exist when an individual use two or more mobiles networks. The reason for this is that no single telecommunication provider has 100% reliability in service coverage.

### **3.2 FINDINGS**

The following findings were discovered during the study.

- It was observed that mobile telecommunication users are "dual loyalist"
- It was also discovered that service delivery for mobile telecommunication companies is poor.
- Through the study, it was discovered that some of the incentives given by mobile telecommunication companies were meant to encourage users to still retain their patronage.
- It was discovered that there are constant issues of network conjection, failure and service coverage which can be summarily be described as technical failures are enormous.
- It was also discovered that integrated marketing communication tools has fostered mutual/strategic relationship between service providers and their numerous customer.

### **3.3 DISCUSSION OF FINDING**

From the study, it was discovered that so many subscribers of mobile network services are not completely loyal to one particular service provider. The reason for this is due to poor network, lack of service coverage in some location etc. the fallout of this, will be high level of migration from one service in some location etc. The fallout of this will be high level of migration from one service provider to another.

Also, the delivery of these services is so bad that in some locations for example you may find. MTN, Glo-Mobile and others will be absent and vice visa, people travel either for work or leisure and end up buying another line for easy communication.

Most of the incentive or bonuses like extra data or free airtime are primarily a strategic plan to encourage users to maintain their services rather than defecting to others. They use it as a compensation for their poor service delivery at the same time to knock off competitors who may introduce a new scheme, to attract new set of customer.

Technical failure is one of the reasons for network conjection and poor service delivery. In most of their service centres, the generating set will work and breakdown. When this happens,

subscribers within that location can no longer make calls. Sometimes one is billed when he or she did not actually use data or airtime.

Finally, marketing communication tools like advertising, publicity, sales promotion, direct marketing etc have been comprehensively packaged, used for the purpose of delivery quality assurance, customers' relationship induced messages with a view to securing good brand position and to sustain their customer base.

#### **4.0 CONCLUSION**

In concluding this paper, I will not fail to commend the contributions of these mobile telecommunication firms in Nigeria especially in creating job opportunities, social programmes and micro and macro-economic benefits to the economy. All these have multiplier effect and a resounding growth in our GND and GDP rates. Business opportunities have been created and enhanced due to the introduction of mobile telephones. Mobile network providers like MTN, ECONET, ETISALAT, VISAFONE, GLO Mobile etc are seriously competing and expanding the horizon of our economic and social sectors. Integrated marketing communication tools have been fully utilized to explore benefits that abound. It was discovered from the study that IMC tools have positive impact in driving the customers' retention strategies of these companies.

#### **4.1 RECOMMENDATIONS**

For purposes of this study, I recommend the following measures to mobile telecommunication companies as a way of improving then service delivery.

- Network providers should expand their technical capacity to deal with network conjections.
- Billing rates and time should not be uniform during the weekend and non- working hours should attract low billing rates.
- Service charges for borrowing airtime should be abolished since; it represents welfare incentives to users who are in urgent need for airtime.
- They should intensify and strengthened their social responsibility, emphasizing more on customer relationship.
- A comprehensive package scheme should be introduced and reviewed in order to reduce the dual loyalty that has pervaded the telecommunications sector.
- Companies should periodically review their service packages in line with economic and social realities. The issue of service coverage should be tackled to enhance efficiency

#### **4.2 CONTRIBUTION TO KNOWLEDGE**

This research intends to add this as contribution to knowledge and to assist others who may want to carryout full empirical studies. Since all the mobile telecommunication companies

have numerous packages or services for their numerous customers. A comprehensive package should be introduced, which will be self-activating. Any new plan or scheme will automatically activate itself without any code. The name should be mobile comprehensive services. It will have the ability to migrate from the residual service provider to other network, without any charge. This normally will reduce the incidence of rapid defection.

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## **APPENDIX**

A brief rundown of the four major telecommunication companies in Nigeria with their services are:

### **MTN Tariff Plan**

- MTN tru talk +: It provides a means of making calls at lower rate
- MTN Zone: Inter-calls between MIN and MTN at lower rafts.
- MTN Xtra Pro
- MTN Xtra special: a perfect tool for international calls
- MTN prepaid plan
- MTN beta talk 200% airtime bonus
- MTN Ipulse: It attract lower cost plus extra data bonus
- MTN xtra value bundle
- MTN migration

### **Gb-Mobile Service**

- Instant top-up
- Glo xchange a mobile money
- <sup>SS</sup> Glo data service
- Glo café app
- Glo infinitizer
- Glo 4x
- Self-care

### **Airtel Services in Nigeria**

- Airtel self-care
- Premier packs
- Data offers
- Airtel care app
- Caller tunes
- Magic voice
- Payg infotainment service
- Airtel credit
- Hellow tunes
- SMS/trust message

### **Etisalat Nigeria Services**

- Etisaqiat mobile assistant
- Etisalat dotrne
- Etisalat easyflex
- Etisalat easy life.
- Etisalat easy ADZ
- Etisalat easy wallet
- Etisalat easy business
- Etisalat my zone Etisalat e-top up
- Etisalat football cOmmunity
- Etisalat easy blaze
- Etisalat easy starter