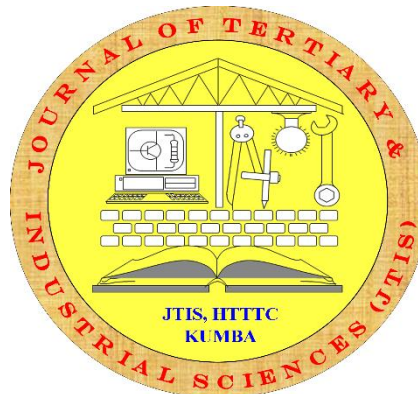ISSN   2709-3409 (Online)

JOURNAL OF TERTIARY AND INDUSTRIAL SCIENCES

A MULTIDISCIPLINARY JOURNAL OF THE HIGHER TECHNICAL TEACHERS' TRAINING COLLEGE, KUMBA

VOLUME 4, NUMBER 1
FEBRUARY, 2024

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EDITORIAL BOARD

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Customer Service Optimisation and Corporate Performance at Mobile Telecommunication Network: the Context of Cameroon and Nigeria

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ABSTRACT

Customer service is inevitable in every organisation, though the practice and scope is not standardised. Henceforth, this study seeks to analyse the extent to which customer service optimisation affects key business performance metrics at Mobile Telecommunication Network. The study was equally aimed at determining the collective predictive effect of customer service perceptions on customer satisfaction/revenue performance. To achieve these objectives, the study adopted a cross-sectional survey research design. Data was collected with the use of a questionnaire administered to a sample size of 384 respondents from Cameroon and 384 in Nigeria. The instrument was structured on a 5-point Likert scale with a pilot study of 40 copies. Structural equation modelling was constructed with multivariate relationships between service quality elements and key performance indicators. An online survey was used to reach out to the vast and geographically dispersed respondents. Quantitative data analysis applied descriptive, bivariate, and multivariate techniques leveraging the SPSS version 19 statistical package. A correlation and regression analysis was done. A duration of six months was used to collect and retain 720 treated copies of the questionnaire. Findings revealed that customer support, offering appeal, service interaction and personalised advice all displayed positive statistically significant correlation with satisfaction and revenue measure with offering appeal perfection ranging from 37.1% to 61.4%. Further, analysis proved a 51.3% of performance explained by customer service optimisation. To conclude, the support services provided to customer, the appeal offered, the personalised services provided and the service interactions all contributes to MTN's performance. The researcher thus recommends that the management of MTN should invest more resources (technological, financial, human capital) into the training of customer service team to ensure they are empowered, skilful and knowledgeable to continually buttress their competencies in providing outstanding customer services. Customer service optimisation should also be embedded into MTN's core values.

Word count: 299

Keywords: customer service optimisation; customer service perception; business performance metrics; MTN Nigeria and Cameroon.

I. Introduction

Offering services to customers is a traditional practice, but the desire for outstanding services is what every customer dreams and aspires to obtain from every organisation. It is on account of this that Smith (2020) recognises customer service as a critical ingredient to business success and key to achieving competitive advantage. When customers feel thrilled by the customer services they obtain, they are bound to make repeated purchases, thus increasing revenue, reducing marketing communication costs, and building customer loyalty (Jones, 2021). Customer service therefore does not only contribute to financial performance but significantly determines the non-financial corporate performance in many industries (Lee & Johnson, 2022).

Customer service is an activity that has undergone significant changes over time, ranging from transactional interactions to technology-driven multifaceted activities. In ancient times (3000BCE – 500CE) in countries like Egypt, Greece, and Rome, customers could simply visit the marketplaces, and merchants sold goods directly with the use of marketplace scribes to assist and give basic support (Kumar, 2017). With time, during the medieval period (500 CE – 1500 CE) customer service practices expanded in scope. As business evolved, skilled craftsmen and artisans provided goods that were accompanied by services that were quite customised to the needs of customers (Dunning, 2013). The period of the Industrial Revolution (1500 CE – 1800 CE) changed the scene as mass production required more standardisation and an increased need for efficiency. This led to improved structuring in the provision of customer service with sales scripts and standardised processes more eminent (Lee, 2018). In the early 20th Century, many organisations could boost by owning customer service departments with staff responsible for answering customer's calls, attending to inquiries, handling complaints, and providing some degree of support (Harris, 2018).

The recovery period after the wars (1950 CE – 1980 CE) witnessed additional impetus with staff receiving formal training on customer service. Surveys and focus groups were highly used to provide feedback on monitoring progress in the domain of customer satisfaction (Bove, 2018). This trend was highly challenged around the 1980s with the advent of technology, as some aspects of customer service became digitalised with the use of automated call centres, online support, and interactive voice responses. A significant number of organisations went as far as utilising customer relationship management software (Mittal, 2017). In this current century, digitalisation is aggravating the scene as social media, artificial intelligence, virtual assistance, and many other digital facilities make customer service provision possible around the clock (Nguyen, 2020).

Established in 1994 in South Africa, MTN may not have experienced the full flesh stage-by-stage evolution of customer service practices, but it caught a glimpse of the 20th

century and has by no doubt embraced the realities of the 21ˢᵗ century. Though with headquarters in South Africa, MTN Group has expanded rapidly serving over 203 million people across 22 countries both in Africa and the Middle East (MTN, 2023). MTN Nigeria began operations in 2001 and a year later was able to serve 250,000 subscribers. The Nigerian market has a very large population and with the rising youthful demographics, mobile subscribers are anticipated to reach 150 million by 2025 (GSMA, 2020). On the Cameroon side, MTN Group is a subsidiary that came into existence on 15 February 2000 through the acquisition of an existing mobile operator in Cameroon. This telecom company has been rated one of the largest investors in the private sector of Cameroon with about CFA F 1,000 billion worth of investment since 2000. The linguistically diverse populations and the geographically dispersed nature of the country serve as a major challenge to MTN (World Bank, 2020). In the findings of Efange (2021), these challenges only get compounded by the Anglophone crisis which has lasted since 2016 – a region dominantly exploited by MTN Group as opposed to its competitors.

Mindful of the fact that organisations operate as a system, it is but real to acknowledge that the loops of any sub-system are likely to have a spill-over negative effect on the organisation as a whole usually measured in its performance. MTN Group is by no exception bound to expand and upgrade its customer service endeavours to avoid being stamped out by competitors. Customer services in these parts of the world have been characterised by a lack of clear communication channels in some technical-oriented aspects. In some other scenarios, customers have to wait for so long at the service delivery points before being attended to owing to the high customer-to-customer service attendant ratio. The need for specialised or personalised services that are rare to come by with some customer complaints never attended to, and even when attended to the problem is never solved to the customer's satisfaction. Even in situations where awareness for improvement is recognised, appropriate benchmarks are never available as the sector seems so unwelcoming for potential entrants. It's owing to all these observations that this study seeks to examine the extent to which improved customer service can have a bearing on the corporate performance of MTN. The specific objectives are to:

1.   Analyse the extent to which customer service optimizations affect key business performance metrics at MTN Nigeria and MTN Cameroon.

2.   Determine the collective predictive effect of customer service perceptions on customer satisfaction/revenue performance.

2. Literature Review

The literature review for this study embodies conceptual, theoretical, and empirical.

2.1 Conceptual Literature

Customer Service Optimization

Customer service optimisation involves improving and enhancing the whole process of providing customer services by a company. Kotler and Keller (2016) view customer service as all necessary organisational efforts that support and respond to customers from the pre-purchase through the post-purchase phases. Such efforts may assist in creating awareness, acquisition, boarding, consumption, or retention of customers. This definition supports the holistic approach with the inclusion of policies, processes, and technologies all geared at fostering customer satisfaction and probably exceeding expectations (Smith, 2020). He further advocates that aspects associated with optimising customer service include customer-centric approach, personalised interaction, omni-channel support and data-driven decision making. The rapidly evolving technology has augmented the approach to the delivery of customer service in which human-mediated reactions, as well as digital facilities, are utilised to collectively service quality (Smith, 2020; Joyner, 2021). Smith (2020) attributes customer research, customer feedback and using customer journey mapping to customer-centric approach. Grewal et al., (2021) equates personalised customer service to using customer data to understand their preferences, past interactions and purchase history. This study adopts both views in choosing customer support, offering appeal, service interaction and personalised advice as variables to measure customer service optimisation.

Corporate Performance

The performance of a corporation is said to be the overall level of efficiency and effectiveness with which a company achieves its strategic goals. According to Kaplan and Norton (2004), it's a combination of financial performance, operational efficiency, market share, customer satisfaction and employee's productivity. The non-financial measures likely to establish the level of corporate performance include customer satisfaction rates, employee engagement levels, environmental sustainability indices, and social responsibility initiatives (Eccles & Krzus, 2010). These indicators provide a better comprehension of corporate performance than the narrow view of financial performance which is quite particular to shareholders and less concerned of external and other connected stakeholders.

The study adopts a composite measure of corporate performance made up of the customer satisfaction level and revenue performance of MTN. This reflects the multi-dimensional view of performance advocated by researchers like Kaplan and Norton (2004).

2.2 Theoretical Review

As relationship marketing theory conceptualizes mutually beneficial provider-user engagements central to organisational success (Gronroos 1990, 1994), this study

anticipates uncovering clear linkages between MTN's customer service capabilities and maximising operator profit generation across both nations.

Social exchange theory further grounds the anticipated finding that positive service interactions stimulate reciprocal subscriber behaviours boosting commercial performance. The theory suggests parties initiate and sustain exchanges expecting valued benefits from others (Emerson, 1976). Over repeated encounters, reciprocity norms cement long-term cooperative commitments (Cropanzano & Mitchell, 2005). Providers must therefore consistently deliver superior value encouraging users' purchase and referral behaviours that jointly generate profits. If users feel undeservedly slighted, they may retaliate against perceived breaches of goodwill equity by exiting contracts or spreading negative word-of-mouth (Bolton & Mattila, 2015). Thereby social exchange perspectives explain both the potency and fragility of service relationships.

Additionally, signalling theory frameworks apply for interpreting how developing market consumers may view strong customer service resources relative to less responsive firms as credible signals of an operator's commitment to delivering on implicit quality guarantees (Spence, 1973). Consumers otherwise struggle to assess technical credibility amidst limited choices. Thereby service expenditures symbolically communicate reliability - explaining disproportionate satisfaction levels and softened reactions to failures. As MTN competes against smaller providers on the continent, signalling theory has clear explanatory power.

In summary, identified theoretical lenses help contextualize links between customer service and corporate performance within relational dynamics in developing world telecoms. The analysis can determine if empirical findings uphold theoretical expectations around these connections and whether theoretical factors explain MTN's African market success.

2.3 Empirical review

The services marketing literature provides extensive evidence that quality customer service substantially impacts corporate performance indicators including revenue, market share, customer acquisition/retention, and profitability over time across industries (Anderson et al., 1997; Rust et al., 1995; Silvestro & Cross, 2000; Sousa & Voss, 2009). As Heskett et al. (2008) summarise, good service leverages operational excellence and employee engagement producing satisfied customers displaying loyalty - yielding growth and profitability. Whereas poor experiences undermine credibility and abandonment which damages earnings.

Specifically, satisfied users are more likely to purchase ancillary products and upgrades generating additional revenue (Mittal & Kamakura, 2001; Cooil et al., 2007). They also provide free advertising through positive word-of-mouth and online reviews that boost lead generation, thereby lowering acquisition costs (Kumar et al., 2013). Loyal

subscribers further minimise sensitivity to temporary price hikes or service issues that prompt complaining or deflection among less committed users thereby stabilising income streams (Capraro et al., 2003). By calculating customer lifetime values, firms can strategically allocate resources to optimise the profitable longevity of their best buyers rather than chasing problematic users through discounts that erode margins (Gupta et al., 2006).

Additionally, various meta-analyses substantiate that satisfied customers are less costly to serve through more efficient self-servicing and fewer calls requiring employee attention (Loveman, 1998; Szymanski & Henard, 2001). This effect enhances productivity and containment of overhead expenses fundamental to profit gains. Satisfaction even seemingly moderates cultural tendencies towards avoidance or confrontation such that contented users utilise both voices and exit judiciously. This practice provides constructive feedback used for improving operations rather than simply abandoning firms or spreading negativity (Chebat et al., 2010). Thereby loyalty shields against reputation damage that severely impairs acquisition capabilities and necessitates expensive recovery marketing.

Therefore, in competitive, service-centric industries like telecommunications, delivering consistently positive user experiences fosters enduring, mutually profitable relationships with the highest-value customers while detracting from the worth of competitors (Reinartz & Kumar, 2003). Firms can leverage sophisticated customer relationship management (CRM) systems integrating capabilities for translating service quality insights into customised loyalty-building interactions at scale (Payne & Frow, 2005). When effectively implemented, CRM boosts profitability anywhere from 25 to 85 percent according to a meta-analysis by Ngai (2005).

However, while customer service strategies certainly increase incomes, and market share and reduce churn over time, associated investments in staffing, systems, and policies can counter-intuitively erode short-term profit margins before financial benefits from loyalty take effect (Silvestro & Cross, 2000; Torres & Tribó, 2011). Telecoms must spend substantially on round-the-clock call centres, technical support teams, automated engagement platforms, etc. to deliver effective user assistance at scale (Santouridis & Trivellas, 2010). In hypercompetitive developing markets, these costs likely intensify since high subscriber growth and churn require overprovisioning capabilities allowing responsiveness even during sudden, massive demand spikes. Therefore, firms must strategically balance resourcing against acceptable waiting times and completion rates (Maiga et al., 2015).

These tensions are likely to intensify for telecom firms as they struggle to balance resource constraints against subscriber growth imperatives (Malisuwan et al., 2016). To be precise, financially optimal service investment equilibrium points remain unclear

though, and require examination through contextual analysis like that associated with MTN's Nigeria and Cameroon operations.

Anderson (1998) and Zeithaml (2000) both found that customers who realize a positive experience are likely to be loyal and consequently result in repeated purchases. On the other hand, poor customer service is like to cause customer dissatisfaction which is likely to push customers to switch to competitors (Mittal, 1999). Findings have also shown that companies that invest in customer service endeavours have a higher number of loyal customers, and consequently increased revenues and profit margins. (Reichheld, 1993; Kano, 1984). Not only these, but it's an indirect market communication through word-of-mouth which is highly trusted by customers and contributes to organisational financial performance (Mittal, 1999). Highly engaged employees are likely to provide excellent customer service which will directly improve customer satisfaction and loyalty (Harter, 2003). Several research works have shown a direct relationship between customer service and increased revenue and profitability (Reichheld, 1993; Kano, 1984) while other studies complement this view by attributing high overall organizational performance to excellent customer service provided by engaged employees (Hart, 2011; Schneider, 2017).

Researchers attribute heightened service expectations to limited alternate connectivity options available to low-income users for whom maintaining vital access enables livelihoods and socioeconomic participation (Frempong & Stork, 2005). Meanwhile, inadequate responsiveness also exacerbates negative perceptions of operators exploiting consumers deemed unimportant or undeserving of quality engagement (Mtingwi & Van Belle, 2013). Therefore, in the developing world context, offering uniform customer service constitutes both an ethical imperative and commercial necessity for telecom operators - with target satisfaction levels exceeding those sufficient for sustaining developed market operations. However, while essential for performance, scaled service delivery adaptations entail substantial expenses threatening short-term profit margins (Malisuwan et al., 2016).

These tensions feature prominently even in MTN's Group-sponsored analysis of Nigerian operations indicating customer care spending accounted for their highest operating costs after taxes (Olasanmi, 2017). This corresponds with Kaliba et al.'s (2016) conclusion that while customer service positively and significantly predicts loyalty, augmenting engagement infrastructure imposes major financial overheads. Indeed, the study revealed profitability initially declined with expanding service investments - only recovering longer-term via subscriber retention.

To conclude, the literature suggests that customer service has a critical role to play in organisational performance. This thus implies there is a need to prioritise customer service in most organisations. The unique nature of telecommunication services, as a basic necessity to which mankind must rely to communicate, makes MTN even more

crucial at the helm of curiosity and consequently the need to research as it impacts almost 75% of all citizens in Cameroon and Nigeria. An area that is yet to be explored by researchers in this domain.

3. Methodology

This study sourced primary data by employing a quantitative, cross-sectional survey research design. Self-administered structured questionnaires help gauge perceived service quality, satisfaction, and usage behaviours. The survey instruments were deployed concurrently to 384 MTN subscribers in both countries enabling statistical testing to address the research objectives. The sample size is validated by the American Statistical Association (2019) recommends a sample size of 300 - 500 for large population studies of this nature. The questionnaire was designed to capture standardised measures of MTN's service reliability, assurance, tangibles, empathy, and responsiveness in alignment with conceptual models like SERQUAL that quantify perceived quality (Parasuraman et al., 1988). Satisfaction and loyalty intentions are also assessed as outcome variables alongside recorded usage behaviours as performance measures from the customer's perspective as found in the balanced scorecard prescribed by Norton and Kaplan (1992). Pilot testing before full-scale administration provides generalizable insights. Structural equation modelling examines multivariate relationships between service quality elements and key performance indicators.

In addition to the personal details of respondents, the instruments had three main sections as follows;

A) Customer Service Perceptions: This section used the 5-point Likert scale measuring respondent perceptions regarding various aspects of MTN's service delivery. The dimensions for service delivery included; reliability, assurance, tangibility, empathy, and responsiveness. Statements were associated with factors like network uptime, and call centre responsiveness in an attempt to quantify perceived service quality.

B) Satisfaction/Loyalty Outcomes: In the first section, a 5-point Likert scale was equally used to assess overall customer satisfaction. In addition to using the response for analysis, it was equally meant to assist in possible areas for recommendations sourced from outcomes from perceived service levels.

C) Usage Behaviours: The 5-point Likert scale statements captured key performance indicators like monthly usage expenditures and consumer choice factors. This enabled correlated analyses between service perceptions, satisfaction, and commercial returns translated into revenue and profitability.

To ease data collection given the scope and geographical dispersion of the respondents, the questionnaire was converted into an online response form and the responses were

channelled to a Google account monitored by the researcher. A significant time lapse of six months (from July to December of 2023) was dedicated to the collection of data. Pilot-phase survey was carried out involving 40 MTN subscribers in each country.

Quantitative data analysis applied descriptive, bivariate, and multivariate techniques leveraging Statistical Package for Social Science software assessing significant relationships between measured customer service perceptions, satisfaction/loyalty intentions, and financial returns shaping corporate performance. Group means testing highlights subsample demographic differences useful for strategic adaptations. Reliability analysis confirms survey measures' internal consistency for accurate modelling. Factor reduction through principal component analysis derives generalizable performance drivers from the combined perceptual indicators that explain service quality variance (Tabachnick et al., 2001). The correlational analysis quantifies bivariate relationships between individual service measures and key satisfaction/revenue outcomes (Pallant, 2020). Multiple linear regression modelling then determines the collective predictive capacity customer service quality has on satisfaction and usage behaviours driving revenues and profitability (Williams et al., 2010). Stepwise solutions filter superfluous indicators. Before/after comparisons with control variables assess service perception improvements required lifting key returns. Established linkages inform structural equation models depicting multivariate effects connecting targeted service quality enhancements to usage, revenue, and profit gains.

4. Findings and Discussion

Of the total of 768 respondents that were sampled, 752 total responses were received, and 32 incomplete submissions were excluded during data filtering and cleaning procedures. The final sample meeting completeness, accuracy, and demographic representation requirements consisted of 360 Nigerian and 360 Cameroonian participants. The age and gender demographic characteristics of the surveyed MTN subscribers showed that the highest number of subscribers 163 Nigerian subscribers were between the ages of 25 and 34 years, while those of Cameroon within the same age group were 152. The least number of respondents were above 45 years registering 18 for Nigeria and 31 for Cameroon. On a general scale, the male gender is more MTN subscribers with Cameroon counting 213 and 191 for Nigeria as opposed to the female of 147 Cameroonians and 169 Nigerians.

The demographic results further indicated that both samples, though slightly youthful overall, obtained a reasonable spread across age segments for analysis - including 132 middle-aged subscribers. Youth below 35 made up 81% of Nigeria's base versus 74% in Cameroon. This indicates a gender balance aligned with market profiles - skewing moderately male overall, especially in Cameroon.

Objective 1: The link between customer service optimizations and business performance in MTN Nigeria and Cameroon

A correlational analysis was conducted between the customer service perception factors and a composite indicator of customer satisfaction/revenue encompassing usage levels, recommendation likelihood, and contract renewal rates. Table 1 presents this correlation matrix.

Table 1: Pearson Correlations between Perceptions and Satisfaction/Revenue

		Satisfaction/Performance
Customer Support	Pearson Correlation	.426**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.003
	N	720
Offering Appeal	Pearson Correlation	.614**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.007
	N	720
Service Interactions	Pearson Correlation	.502**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.003
	N	720
Personalised Advice	Pearson Correlation	.371**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.002
	N	720

All four perception realms displayed positive and statistically significant (p <.01) correlations with the satisfaction/revenue measure. Offering appeal perceptions had the strongest linkage (r = .614) followed by service interactions (r =.502) and customer support (r = .426). Personalised advice had the weakest yet still meaningful correlation (r = .371) - unsurprising given its lower absolute ratings.

Objective 2 Predictive effect of customer service perceptions on Customer satisfaction/revenue performance

A multiple linear regression model was constructed to estimate the collective predictive effect of customer service perceptions on customer satisfaction/revenue performance.

Stepwise solutions retained offering appeal, service interactions, and support as significant predictors, explaining 51.3% of the variance on the dependent measure (R2 = .513, F = 182.42, p < .001). Personalised advice was excluded from the final model. Table 7 summarises output with standardised beta coefficients indicating the relative predictive strength of the retained factors. Offering appeal made the strongest unique contribution (β=0.421, p<.001) followed by service interactions (β = 0.301, p<.001) and lastly, customer support (β = 0.212, p=.007). The subsequent summary of the model shows a coefficient of determination of 0.571 suggesting that the model explains more than 50% of the variations in satisfaction and performance of the company

Table 2: **Coefficients**[a]

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	T	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	12.461	12.001		6.11	.012
	Offering Appeal	.957	1.013	.421	9.97	.000
	Service Interactions	.822	3.219	.301	6.50	.000
	Customer Support	.495	4.237	.212	2.72	.007
a. Dependent Variable: Satisfaction/Performance						

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.715[a]	.571	.496	80.329
a. Predictors: (Constant), Offering Appeal, Service Interactions, Customer Support				

Projecting from the model coefficients, a 10% lift across all three driver realms can improve satisfaction/revenue performance from 5.1% to 6.3%. Targeting offering appeal improvements through better communication of flexible plan benefits and feature utilities will likely yield optimal gains. The analysis substantiates customer service perceptions significantly predict a composite indicator of satisfaction and commercial returns - especially around competitive plan/feature appeal and interaction quality. Results inform strategic prioritisation of key drivers enhancing both subscriber relationships and profit outcomes throughout African markets.

The analysis substantiated significant linkages with medium effect sizes between targeted customer service enhancements - especially heightened competitive

plan/feature appeal and service staff competency - and composite performance indicators constituting usage revenues, satisfaction, and loyalty intentions. These tight connections affirm arguments regarding customer experience optimisations fundamentally driving developing world mobile operator success (Malisuwan et al., 2016).

Specifically, the outsized impact of improved offering flexibility and functionality responding to distinct subscriber needs better fulfilling mobility-dependent livelihood roles mirrors Mtingwi & Van Belle's (2013) conclusions on constrained choice environments with limited fallback options amplifying negative perceptions of apparent neglect. Boosting user ability to appropriately match expenditures to personalised requirements through tailored bundles and enhanced self-service thus unlocks value.

With over 50% of performance measure variability accounted for, the multiple regression model reconfirmed customer service perceptions' indispensable predictive role governing subscriber satisfaction and associated commercial outcomes like continued usage and referral potential constituting revenue in developing markets (Olasanmi, 2017). Prioritisation must therefore focus on heightening fragile satisfaction levels through competitive feature/plan improvements and service interaction competency fortification - especially where bottlenecks like network availability persist.

Though material investments pose temporary profitability challenges, signalling theory suggests users interpret rising engagement costs as credibility cues (Spence, 1973). This likely explains high satisfaction amidst acute infrastructure constraints where smaller operators lack comparable resources. Thereby strong customer service resourcing signals represent an indirect pathway for elevating perceptions beyond pure network effects - provided expenditures balance against long-term returns (Kaliba et al., 2016).

5. Conclusion

To conclude, there is clear evidence that customer service optimisation significantly contributes to corporate performance. Placing customer satisfaction as a top priority by adopting appropriate customer service strategies are factual ways to achieving high performance and sustainable organisational growth. Supporting customers in their attempt in utilising MTN services, offering an appeal, making provisions for interactive services and personalising advice to customers; are fundamental to the satisfaction of customers and MTN's increase in revenue.

Implications of the study

The findings of this study requires that MTN should invest in training, technology and processes that are aimed at enhancing the satisfaction of customers, consequently adding their customer base. The findings also provide that MTN should place customer satisfaction on the top of the organisations scale of preference for it will increase

revenue, customer satisfaction and result to customer loyalty in the highly competitive telecom industry to which MTN belongs. MTN should equally optimise customer service in order to reduce cost of marketing communication as many customers will be willing to engage in word-for-mouth marketing strategies when they experience outstanding customer service.

Recommendations

As a follow up to the implications advanced, the following recommendations can be made;

The Management of MTN should allocate sufficient resources (financial, technological, manpower) in the training and development of customer service providers so that they could improve on the support services, personalised advice and service interaction provided by them. The Management should equally empower the customer service to enable them determine when and how to personalise services and also ascertain the level of interaction needed in the services they offer at any point in time. The corporation should establish integrated systems to collect and analyse customer feedback regularly based on macro, micro and mini market segmentation scales through surveys, feedback forms, suggestion boxes and social media monitoring systems. The MTN management team should incorporate customer service priorities in the core values of the organisation, thereby making it the organisations culture. This will not only limit it to customer service team, but the entire employee body of MTN.

Suggestions for further studies

For further studies, researchers may want to explore the long term effect of customer service optimisation by adopting a longitudinal study. They may equally assess the effect of technology on customer service optimisation. Also, there is need to examine the cross-cultural customer service among MTN Nigeria and MTN Cameroon. These studies can provide valuable inside to the understanding of customer service optimisation and corporate performance.

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