Quality Service Delivery in the Telecommunication Industry of Ghana: The Perspective of MBA Students of Sikkim Manipal University

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ABSTRACT:* Ghana's mobile telecommunication industry is perhaps one of the fastest growing sectors of the Ghana economy. The sector is made up of six telecom operators namely, MTN, TIGO, Vodafone, Airtel, Expresso and Glo. Despite the high number of Mobile Telecommunication service providers in Ghana, complaints from customers with regards to their dissatisfaction of the quality of services provided have increased in recent times. The researchers therefore decided to seek the opinion of MBA Students of Sikkim Manipal University. Questionnaires were used as the data collection instrument in the case of primary data whiles information from other related articles and books were also used as secondary data. In all a sample of 46 responses were used for analysis out of a population of 180. Based on the SPSS data analysis software, it was concluded that, competition does not necessarily leads to quality service delivery according to the respondents. Even though there is a fierce competition in the Ghana Telecommunication industry, this has not led to quality service delivery. Some recommendations made include ensuring the availability of experts in the industry who can churn out policies and roadmaps to guide the telecommunication industry as well as mobile networks investing more into network expansion and maintenance in order to ensure reliable mobile telecommunication services at all times instead of spending so much resources on advertisement and promotions.

KEYWORDS:* Telecom, Quality, Ghana

I. INTRODUCTION

Ghana's mobile telecommunication industry is noted to be one of the fastest growing sectors of the Ghana economy and there is fierce competition within this sector made up of six telecom operators namely, MTN, TIGO, Vodafone, Airtel, Expresso and Glo. Despite the high number of Mobile Telecommunication service providers in Ghana, complaints from customers with regards to their dissatisfaction of provided services have increased in recent times. The dissatisfaction of consumers has been attributed largely to poor quality service delivery by the operators and it is often highlighted in the media and widely discussed among the general public. The country's telecom watchdog, the National Communications Authority has threatened to crack down on mobile network providers if they fail to tackle the chronic problem of poor quality service [7].

The state of customer satisfaction with service quality delivered in Ghana's Mobile Telecommunication Networks (MTNs) is not clear as there is scanty documentation on the issue. According to a discussion paper on telecom developments and investments in Ghana [6], the authors noted that "the goals set by government have only partly been met – especially with respect to the development in rural areas – and the quality of service is still low and has even deteriorated on some indicators. There is, therefore, a widespread dissatisfaction with the general telecom development in Ghana among users as well as policy decision makers and administrators.” In recent times, there has been more customer complaint about poor service quality which has been reported by the National Communications Authority (NCA) [2].

Since the past decade, the industry has witnessed a tremendous increase in subscriber growth rate for all the mobile telecom operators [4]. Though mobile subscribers have increased in Ghana Mobile Telecommunication Networks (MTNs), it does not provide justification that customers are satisfied with the service quality delivered by mobile telecom networks in Ghana.

In the now competitive era, innovation has been brought to sharper focus, with introduction of several services such as international roaming, mobile money, internet facilities, and teleconferencing facilities giving customers a range of choices apart from merely making and receiving calls [9]. This notwithstanding, mobile telecommunications networks in Ghana are buffeted with frequent interconnectivity problems and customers continue to raise eyebrows about the service quality delivered by these companies [10]. Thus, Adjetey doubted whether Ghanaian telecommunications companies have policies in place to ensure total satisfaction of their customers [1]. But it would seem that competition and advancement in information communications technology is likely to exert pressure on managers in this industry to demonstrate customer-centric and continuous service improvement as a way to ensuring customer satisfaction.

A. VARIOUS DIMENSIONS OF SERVICE QUALITY

In measuring customer satisfaction with service quality, it is significant to examine the service quality concept, its importance and the dimensions it has. Service quality has been a difficult-to-define concept that has aroused considerable interest and debate in the research literature. This is because the meaning of quality can be referred to in many attributes such as the experience of the service encounters, or “moments of truth”, the evidence of service; image; price, and so on. These form the customer’s overall perceptions of quality, satisfaction and value [11]. There are a number of different "definitions" as to what is meant by service quality. Since service quality is basically defined from customer perspective and not the manufacturers, it is usually referred to as customer perceived quality.

The concept of consumer-perceived quality (CPQ) was first defined by Gro¨nroos in 1982 as the confirmation (or disconfirmation) of a consumer’s expectations of service compared with the customer’s perception of the service actually received. One definition that is commonly used defines service quality as the extent to which a service meets customers‟ needs or expectations [6]. Parasuraman, Zeithaml and Berry support the same view, defining the concept of service quality as a form of attitude, related, but not equivalent to satisfaction, that results from a comparison of expectations with perceptions of performance.

Customer satisfaction has been viewed as an important indicator of corporate competitiveness, since it has a positive link to customer loyalty and profitability. A better understanding of the satisfaction formation process can allow firms to improve their customer satisfaction and loyalty more effectively. Consistent with this direction, many researchers have devoted to identifying the determinants of satisfaction [8]. Among all the factors that have been identified as antecedents of customer satisfaction, service quality may be the one that has received considerable attention. Indeed, service quality has become an important research topic in service management. The conceptualization and operationalization of service quality are the recurring issues in the service literatures.

Service quality that is delivered can meet or exceed customers' expectations are mainly influenced by customer's prior expectations. Customer loyalty on the other hand refers to a deeply held commitment to re-buy a preferred product or service in the future despite situational influences and marketing efforts having the potential to cause switching behavior.

B. SERVICE QUALITY AND THE TELECOMMUNICATION INDUSTRY IN GHANA

Following decades of poor service performance, especially by the state-owned enterprise in charge, i.e. Ghana Post & Telecommunications [6], the telecommunications industry in Ghana was deregulated. Prior to the deregulation exercise, the industry, as dominated by P&T, was characterized by deficient telecommunications infrastructure and operational inefficiencies, and services provided by P &T were very poor with low penetration rate. However, this trend would be partly mitigated by the deregulation exercise, which has no doubt encouraged a few new entrants into the industry promoting a stable operating environment for all participants as well as promoting fair competition and efficiency [3].

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BIZ Community.com wrote that, the state of customer satisfaction with service quality delivered in Ghana's Mobile Telecommunication Networks (MTNs) is not clear as there is scanty documentation on the issue. According to investments in Ghana [6], the authors noted that "the goals set by government have only partly been met – especially with respect to the development in rural areas – and the quality of service is still low and has even deteriorated on some indicators. There is, therefore, a widespread dissatisfaction with the general telecom development in Ghana among users as well as policy decision makers and administrators." In recent times, there has been more customer complaint about poor service quality which has been reported by the National Communications Authority (NCA)

II. METHODOLOGY

The targeted population of 180 Masters of Business and Administration (MBA) was selected within the Sikkim Manipal University, Accra Center. The university was chosen because it has a heterogeneous population which means it consist of different nationalities with various cultural and educational backgrounds. Again, most individuals within the university are mobile users which use at least one of the six telecommunication networks. The respondents to the questionnaires were selected randomly. The questionnaires were used to source for information from sixty (60) respondents within the MBA students of Sikkim Manipal University. However, 54 of the questionnaires were able to be retrieved whiles only 46 were well answered and therefore used for the analysis.

The research was designed using both open and closed questions. This was useful taking into consideration the nature of the target population which is literates. Again, the questions were carefully designed so as to solicit the appropriate responses from the respondents. It is also to capture respondents' experiences in their own words in their response to the open-ended questions.

III. DATA ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

In the analysis of the data collected, Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS) was used. SPSS has the advantage of sorting data collected by category into tables as well as their respective interpretations.

Tables and Charts which have used to analyze the data collected have been outlined in the pages that follow.

Table 3.1: Nationalities of Respondents

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid				
Ghanaian	35	76.0	76.0	76.0
Ivorian	1	2.0	2.0	78.0
Chadian	1	2.0	2.0	80.0
Indian	1	2.0	2.0	82.0
Nigerian	7	16.0	16.0	98.0
No Response	1	2.0	2.0	100.0
Total	46	100.0	100.0	

With a frequency of 35 and a percentage of 76, Ghanaians were the majority who responded followed by Nigerians with 16%. Ivorian, Chadian and Indian came next with 2% each. 2% of the respondents did not indicate their nationalities. This does not affect the research but helps to identify the respondents' nationalities.

Table 3.2: Mobile Networks of Respondents

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid				
MTN	30	47.0	47.0	47.0
TiGO	16	25.0	25.0	72.0
Vodafone	6	10.0	10.0	82.0
Airtel	7	11.0	11.0	93.0
Expresso	3	4.0	4.0	97.0
Glo	2	3.0	3.0	100.0

Total	46	100.0	100.0	

Even though the total respondents are 46, the totals of the various networks exceed that number. The explanation behind this is that, some of the respondents use more than one mobile network. The Glo mobile network represents the least mobile network subscribed to with a percentage of 3. 47% of the respondents use MTN mobile network which is the largest network subscribe to. 25%, 10%, 11% and 4% represents TiGO, Vodafone, Airtel and Expresso mobile networks respectively.

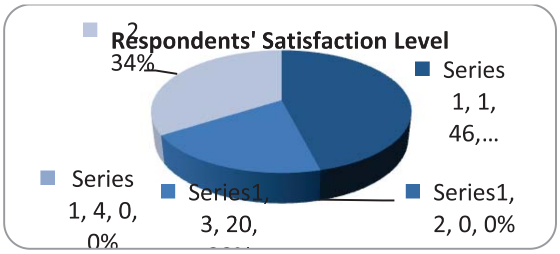

Chart 3.1: Pie Chart of Respondents' Satisfaction level using Mobile Networks

The chart above shows the satisfaction levels of the respondents using mobile networks 20% of the respondents indicate that, they are more satisfied with using their mobile network, whereas 34% are less satisfied with using their mobile network. Respondents who are very satisfied with using their mobile network represent 46% of the total respondents.

Table 3.3: Respondents' Change of Mobile Network

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	23	50.0	50.0	50.0
Yes	23	50.0	50.0	100.0
No	46	100.0	100.0	
Total				

The table above indicate respondents' answers to changing their mobile network. . The respondents are split in this case. 50% of the respondents indicate that, they have changed mobile network before. The same percentage of respondents indicates that, they have not changed mobile network before.

Table 3.4: Respondents' Reasons for Changing Mobile Network

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid				
Just the desire	10	22.0	22.0	22.0
to change	15	33.0	33.0	55.0
Poor Quality	00	00.0	00.0	55.0
Just for Fun	21	45.0	45.0	100.0
Other	46	100.0	100.0	
Responses				
Total				

Table above determines the reasons for respondents to change their mobile networks. 22% of the respondents change their mobile network just for the desire to change. 33% change because of poor quality whereas 45% gave various reasons for changing their mobile network. No respondents change mobile network for the fun of it.

Table 3.5: Whether Respondents' Expectations from Mobile Network are met?

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid Yes No No Responses Total	6 26 14 46	13.0 57.0 30.0 100.0	13.0 57.0 30.0 100.0	13.0 70.0 100.0

The above table determines whether respondents who have some kind of expectation from their mobile network have their expectations met. 13% of respondents indicate that, their expectations are met. Majority of the respondents representing 57%, however, indicate that, their expectations are not met. The remaining 30% of the respondents did not respond to that particular question.

Table 3.6: Existence of avenues for Respondents to lodge complaints

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid Yes No Total	35 11 46	76.0 24.0 100.0	76.0 24.0 100.0	76.0 100.0

Table above indicates the existence of avenues for respondents to lodge complaints about their mobile network. Majority of the respondents were those who claims avenues exist for them to lodge their complaints. Those respondents are 76%. The remaining 24% indicate that, avenues do not exist for them to lodge complaints about mobile networks.

Table 3.7: Whether Respondents' complaints are attended to?

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid Yes No Total	36 10 46	78.0 22.0 100.0	78.0 22.0 100.0	78.0 100.0

Table above determines whether the complaints by respondents about their mobile network are attended to. 22% of the respondents claims, their complaints are not attended to, whereas the remaining 78% which represents majority of the respondents think their complaints are attended to.

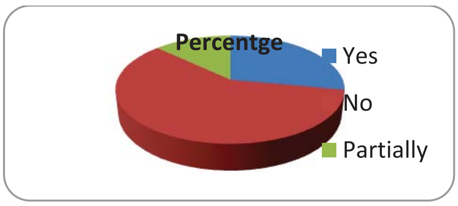

Chart 3.2: Pie Chart of Whether Mobile Networks is properly regulated?

The figure above indicates whether the operations of mobile networks are properly regulated. Whereas 28% think the operations of mobile networks are properly regulated, 59% representing the majority of respondents think otherwise, which is NO. 13% of the respondents, however, think their operations are partially regulated.

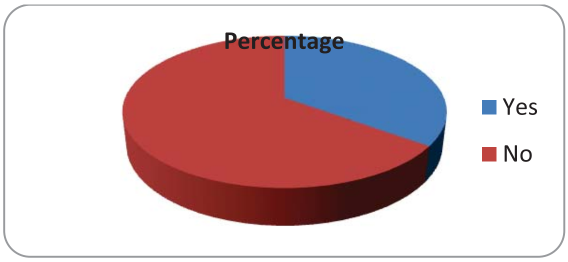

Chart 3.3: Whether competition among Mobile Networks leads to quality service delivery?

The above Chart determines whether competition among mobile networks leads to the quality of service delivered to customers. 65% of the respondents are of the opinion that, competition among mobile networks leads to quality service delivery. The remaining 35% of the respondents think that, competition among mobile networks does not lead to quality service delivery.

4.0 Conclusion and Recommendations

From the summary of findings and the analysis of data collected using questionnaire, it could be concluded that, competition does not necessarily leads to quality service delivery. Even though there is fierce competition in Ghana's Telecommunication industry, this has not led to quality service delivery per the study findings. Most subscribers think that, if the mobile networks fail to satisfy their customers (subscribers), they should be made to pay fines; to pay compensation to these subscribers; to be sanctioned and finally, their certificate of operation to be withdrawn.

We recommend that, there should be the availability of experts in the industry. Unlike the other sectors of the economy like the banking and insurance industry, the telecommunication industry lack experts who can churn out policies roadmaps to guide the industry in ensuring standardize operations as well as a clear direction that, the industry is heading towards too.

Also, mobile network should improve on their customer service satisfaction. One major problem subscribers face has to do with the usage of their service which include making calls – be it local or foreign, and using the internet. Normally, when these problems occur, it is reported to the mobile network. First, avenues should be made available for subscribers to be able to lodge their complaints after which customer service should improve to handle these reports as and when they are reported.

Finally, the Consumer Association of Ghana should be strengthened and empowered to among others to take it upon them to take these mobile networks who fail to deliver quality service to court to prosecute them or made to pay huge sums of compensation to subscribers.

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