

# Customers Reactions on Service Delivery by Major Telecommunications Operators in Nigerian Newspapers

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## Abstract

Data from the Nigeria Communications Commission (NCC) stated that MTN lost a record of 667,245 Internet subscribers in one month in 2019. Figure shows that MTN's total Internet subscribers stood at 52.2 million in July 2019 while the number dropped to 51.6 million in August 2019. It was observed that customers' reactions bordered on issues ranging from unsolicited calls and short message services (SMS), unsubstantiated deductions of call credit units, poor service connection, network failure, cumbersome SIM swap process among others. This paper, thus, examines two Nigerian national dailies-The Punch and The Nation newspapers coverage of customers' reaction to mobile telecommunication network services from 2015 to 2017. Using the content analysis research method, the study is anchored on the Social Exchange theory. The findings revealed a significant pattern of more negative than positive reactions by subscribers within the years under study. The negative complaints were high in 2015, dropped significantly in 2016, and rose again in 2017. On this, MTN recorded 15 (or 32%); Airtel 13 (or 28%), Glo10 (or 21%), while Etisalat (now 9Mobile) was 9 (or 19%), as against Etisalat (9 Mobile), 9 (or 19%), Glo 4 (or 8%) and Airtel 3 (or 6%) positive reactions by the customers during the period. Study thus recommends that Nigerian newspapers should once in a while carryout a survey on quality of service delivery by GSM operators and use such stories on the front page of their respective newspapers.

**Keywords:** Telecommunication, Newspaper Coverage, Quality of Service, Social Exchange /Rational Choice Theory

## 1. Introduction

A former Nigerian Minister for Communications, Col. David Mark (Rtd), was once quoted that: "telephone was not for the poor" in 1989. During his era as the Minister for Communications, the analogue telephone was operational, meant only for the rich. In same period, telephone was regarded as a luxury, not readily available to ordinary Nigerians, and in most developing countries. In the industrialized world, access to telephone was taken for granted. For instance, in 2003, high income economies with 15 percent of the world's population had 71 percent of the world's telephone lines. The disparity between the rich and poor countries in terms of "teledensity" (number of main telephone lines per 100 inhabitants) has changed in the last decade. Although, some have argued that the gap is growing, at least in terms of quality and access to advanced services [1].

There were over 161 million subscribers to the Global system for Mobile Communications (GSM) in Nigeria [2]. Data from the country's regulator for the telecommunication industry, the Nigerian Communications Commission (NCC) showed a steady increase in the number of mobile subscriptions on a monthly

basis [3]. According to, NCC puts the number of active mobile subscribers in the country at 148, 597,767[3].

However, subscribers feel that they are not getting their money's worth in terms of services rendered by these telecommunications operators. The Nigerian Communications Commission (NCC) and the Consumer Protection Council (CPC) seem to be helpless on complaints about poor customer service delivery of all the GSM providers- MTN, GLO, Airtel, and Etisalat (9 Mobile) in the country. Many town hall meetings and colloquia on poor customer service have been held in the past to address this problem [4]. The operators have been commanded to desist from bad practices. But the real issues in the customer complaints seem to have been left unattended.

The customer is regarded as "king" when it comes to service delivery and patronage. Traditionally, some organizations rely on customer complaints to ascertain customer satisfaction, though many organizations no longer use only customer complaints, rather they adopt various qualitative and quantitative mechanisms to measure customer satisfaction [5]. In this regard, measuring

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customer satisfaction provides the feedback of how successful an organization is at providing products and/or services to the satisfaction of customers.

Having satisfied customers does not only hold the potential of increasing an organization's customer base, but also increases the use of more customer mix and increase the firm's reputation [6]. Customer service as observed by and emphasized by consist of a "series of activities designed to enhance the level of customers' satisfaction that is, the feeling that a product or service has met customer's expectations [7]." It also involves a series of comprehensive activities targeted at the satisfaction of customers and customers' perception of a service or product.

Nevertheless, it appears that the perception of customers is that the telecommunication operators have conspired to inflict untold pains on the millions of active users in Nigeria [8]. As popular opinions believe that subscribers on these networks daily experience dropped calls, aborted short message service (SMS), opaque charges, poor audio quality, unavailability of service in some locations, lines jamming and futile attempts to make calls. Essentially, these customers are not getting value for the bills they pay to telecom operators.

Some of these network subscribers have thus been lamenting their inability to reach call centre agents via the designated numbers provided by the network providers to make complaints. These customers have therefore adopted the culture of writing their complaints to newspaper editors, voicing their anger and frustration. This has provoked the essence of this study on The Punch and The Nation newspapers coverage of customers' reaction on the services provided by the Global System for Mobile Telecommunication network in Nigeria's panning a three-year period (2015-2017).

### 1.1 Problem Statement

There has been a tremendous growth in the Nigerian telecommunications sector based on the deregulation of the industry. There are five GSM network and 13 CDMA-based network operators in Nigeria. These GSM operators include Airtel, MTN, MTEL, Globacom and Etisalat, while CDMA network operators include Multilinks, Starcomms, O'net, Visafone among others [9]. A survey showed that MTN leads the market share with 43.93% as at June 2012; Globacom with market share of 5.47%; Airtel with 20.16% and Etisalat (now 9 mobile) with 13.29% market share respectively. Notwithstanding this apparent market continuous growth and dominance, the dearth of consumer-based research and relevant literature in a telecommunication service sector of an emerging third world economy such as Nigeria cannot be ignored.

Following various complaints made by subscribers to the major Global System for Mobile Communication providers in Nigeria from issues arising from services rendered by the telecommunications operators, this study became necessary. Some of the problem's customers complain of include call setup failure, inter-network connectivity, network congestion and call drop. The problems bedeviling the sector, according to

are: instability in power supply, security of infrastructure, inter-Network connectivity, network congestion, call setup failure and call retention/call drop [10]. All these factors contribute in one way or the other to the poor quality of services rendered by GSM operators in the country.

According to Parasuraman et al., the larger the gap between a company's and customer's perceptions concerning both service products and service delivery, the smaller the probability of satisfying the customers [7]. This indicates that telecommunication companies should have more profound understanding of their customer's needs. An investigation of the relationship between service provision by Mobile Telecommunication Networks in Nigeria and customer satisfaction appears therefore of interest to this study.

Studies conducted in this area have been more on customer preference, customer retention for mobile telecommunication in Nigeria [11]. Few studies have been done in the area of customer reaction on GSM services providers in Nigeria, however, not much have been done in the area of newspaper coverage of customers' reactions. Due to the relevance of the customer to an organization's existence, this study, therefore, focused on customers' reaction on whether they are satisfied/dissatisfied from the quality of service they receive from the GSM operators. The study also looked at the frequency of coverage of customers reaction on the quality of service provided by operators of GSM; examined the prominence given to customers' reaction by the newspapers, and evaluated the GSM operators services that elicited the most positive reactions from customers as reported by the two newspapers.

This study is guided by following research questions:

**RQ1:** What is the frequency of coverage by the Punch and Nation newspapers on customers' reaction based on the equality of service delivery by GSM operators in Nigeria?

**RQ2:** What is the prominence attached to the coverage of customers' reaction by the Punch and Nation newspapers based on the quality of service delivery by GSM operators in Nigeria?

**RQ3:** Which of the GSM operator has the most positive customers reactions based on the quality of service delivery in Nigeria as reported by the Punch and Nation newspapers?

### 1.2 Literature Review

**Historical Background of Telecom in Nigeria:** After Nigeria gained independence in 1960, there were only 18,724 functional telephone lines for an estimated population of 45 million. During this time, the tele-density ratio was 0.04 telephones per 100 people [12,13]. According to the International Telecommunication Union, by 1996 Nigeria's tele-density ratio was a mere 0.36 (Ajala, 2005). It rose slightly to 0.4 by 1999 [14]. Nigeria's tele-density was a far cry from the African average of 1.67 [13].

However, within a year after the liberalization of the telecommunication industry in 2001, the story changed dramatically. By May 2005, Nigeria with an estimated population

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of 128, 771, 988 had more than 9 million GSM subscribers, making the country one of the fastest growing GSM markets in the world [13]. Although, the explosive growth in the GSM industry has brought huge revenue to both the operators and government through tax and license fee [10].

According to, there are five GSM network and 13 CDMA-based network operators in Nigeria [15]. The GSM operators include Airtel, MTN, MTEL, Globacom, and Etisalat while CDMA network operators include Multilinks, Starcomms, O'net, Visafone among others.

The adoption of the Global System for Mobile Communication (GSM), was expected to serve as a viable alternative to the then analog (NITEL) system. During its launching in 2001, the core objective was to provide effective telecommunication services that will support good speech quality, roaming, spectral efficiency and minimized cost.

### 1.3 Customers Complaints and Quality Service

The telecommunication service quality is determined based on consumer's reaction towards the service provided as the success of the service is contingent on the ability of the firm to build relationships with consumers; the consumer should therefore be the primary objective at the heart of the organizational activities which aim at achieving satisfaction and retention respectively. Various surveys have been conducted to determine the satisfaction of consumers with their mobile telecommunication service providers as they failed to adhere to relational activities that focused on the interests of the consumers (ibid).

The issue of quality of service in the telecommunication service sector has been a problem unresolved and unsolved since the advent of the GSM in Nigeria. Service is a major component that drives any successful business. To the customer, quality of service cannot be compromised or negotiated upon. Quality of service refers to the state of nature of services rendered by the telecommunication operator, which can either be good or bad quality [16]. The International Telecommunication Union technically, defined quality of service in the ITU standard X.902 as a set of quality requirements on the collected behaviour of one or more objects. In addition, quality of service comprises requirements on all the aspects of a connection, such as service response time, loss signal-to-noise ratio, cross talk, echo, interrupts frequency response, loudness level, etc

### 1.4 Print Media Coverage

Communication scholars believe that the print media is yet very relevant and continues to shape our lives on a daily basis [17]. Sambe in explains that the print media especially newspapers is not only relevant but is responsible for most of the opinion formed on public issues in any society [17]. In support of the importance of the print media, argued that the print media as an important arm of mass communication continues to play a dominant role in contemporary societies through well researched pieces that stimulates members of the society into creative thinking and positive reactions [17,18].

observed that newspapers are popular in most contemporary societies for variety of reasons [19]. According to, most often newspapers provide coverage of issues that are very important and likely to be emphasized by their placement, headlines and extent of coverage [17]. Also, confirmed that the print media are important to the growth and development of every society that one cannot progress without a newspaper [17]. argued that newspapers are presumed not only to have certain objective effect on society but also to serve a social purpose, and added that their effect included disseminating information, expressing different voice and view, helping public opinion to form on issue and facilitating debate [20]. Media scholars and telecommunication operators believed that customers' reaction, negative or positive, are indicators to the delivery of their products and services, especially in regard to the Global System for Mobile Telecommunication network services as reported by the Punch and Nation newspapers.

### 1.5 Theoretical Framework

The Social Exchange framework was formally introduced in the works of the sociologists George Homans (1961) and [21]. Social Exchange Theory (SET) explains that individuals regulate their interactions with other individuals based on a self-interest analysis of the costs and benefits of such interaction [11]. In other words, people seek to maximise their benefits and minimize their costs when exchanging resources with other [22].

The Rational Choice Theory has its root in the writing of the Scottish economist and philosopher, based on the invisible hand in the market forces that naturally causes the supply and demand chain of products in a free market economy. The core assumption of the Rational Choice Theory is the belief that individuals do not take random decisions from the market, but take rational decisions that are of benefit to them based on comparative advantages and disadvantages of choices available to them. In this regard, the net benefit is valued beyond the monetary value. According to the theory, it may go beyond things like affection, respect, adoration, power, a feeling of belonging, and even the gratification in helping others. Thus, the various issues with the QoS of the various subscribers of the GSM will affect their reactions and responses to their network provider.

### 1.6 Empirical Studies

carried out a study by Nigerian Communications Commission (NCC) all the three major operators were found to perform poorly in the area of number of time that users dial before connection is made [10]. The survey shows that only less than half of the subscribers on each of the networks do get their calls through on the first or 2nd dial (Airtel-49%, MTN-46%, GLO-47%). In other words, subscribers who dial 3-times or more were (Airtel-49%, GLO-50%, MTN-50%). The Nigerian Communications Commission (2011) conducted Quality of Service (QoS) audit of the four networks in Nigeria for a period of the four networks in Nigeria for a period of 21 days from September 21, 2004 to October 11, 2004 [23,16]. The tests were in two categories namely; voice network performance/quality and Prepaid Performance Test while investigating on the Key Performance Indicator (KPI).

evaluated the impact of GSM operating companies on Nigerian economy [24]. The study objectives were to ascertain the impact of GSM operating companies on Nigerian economy; to determine the impact of GSM technology on the people of Nigeria; to identify the challenges faced by GSM operating companies in Nigeria. The study used both primary and secondary sources of data. Study found that the advent of GSM companies facilitated economic development, increased GDP and attracted foreign direct investment (FDI). The study concludes that the deregulation of the Nigerian telecommunication sector, hence, the introduction of GSM and, therefore, recommends that the government should expand tel-density and directly make telephone communications cheaper and accessible by giving more licenses to GSM operators in order to allow for healthy competition among the GSM operators.

studied evaluation of the quality of service of Global System for Mobile Telecommunication (GSM) and also to suggest on how to improve on their services [16]. Study adopted the passive research method, which involves the gathering real traffic data at one point or more on the network. This study observed that quality of service is seen as a key performance indicator that is used in determining the efficiency of an industry in terms of services rendered.

A study by researched on Global System for Mobile Telecommunications Services: The Unending Battle of Quality of Services in Nigeria with the main objective to assess the quality of GSM services [13]. Research design adopted was the cross-sectional survey using a sample of 1600 respondents consisting of 800 in Ibadan Main City (MC) and 800 in Less City (LC) areas was selected. Study revealed infrastructure inadequacies, government's inconsistent policies, heavy import duties and multiple taxation limited the capacity of GSM providers to offer quality services and relatively low tariffs.

evaluated the significance of price (call rate), service availability, promotion and brand image as it affects users' perception in

selecting a mobile telecommunication services provider in the Nigerian telecommunications market using Ibadan, a Nigerian municipality as the case study [9]. The study used a sample survey of cross-sectional mobile phone users. The result revealed that paths to call rate ( $p=0.023$ ), service quality ( $p=0.034$ ) and service availability ( $p=0.037$ ) were more significant in the users' choice process than promotion and brand image.

carried out a study examining the influence of service quality on preference for mobile telecommunication (GSM) service providers among students of tertiary institutions in Lagos State [25]. Specifically, the study determined the influence of service assurance on preference for GSM service provider and assessed the influence of service empathy on preference for GSM service provider among students of tertiary institutions in Lagos State. Study found that service assurance positively and significantly influenced preference for mobile telecommunication (GSM) service providers among students of tertiary institutions

## 2. Methodology

The study used the content analysis method which examines the manifest content of communication [26,19]. Study adopted both qualitative and quantitative approach. In other words, and believe that objectivity can be achieved by using multiple measures and triangulating the data collection process [27]. The study population comprised of the 25 national dailies operating in Nigeria [27]. The sample size consists of the two newspapers (Punch and Nation) and purposive sampling was used to select the newspaper because the two newspapers hold much reach, appeal and interest to readers. Study adopted the census sampling technique by examining all the two newspaper editions for the three years period (January 2015-December 2017). To ensure that data obtained can be relied upon, two M.Sc. Students from a private University in Lagos State carried out the coding with a prepared code sheet and the data they obtained were compared. The data obtained revealed a high ratio level of 4:5 inter-coder reliability.

## Data Presentation and Analysis

Newspaper	Frequency	Percentage
<i>The Punch</i>	16	34
<i>The Nation</i>	31	66
Total	47	100
<i>Source: Content Analysis, 2018</i>		

TABLE 1

In terms of newspaper coverage of GSM users reactions on the quality of the service rendered by operators, showed that most of the coverage, six out of ten, that is, 31 representing 66%, were reported in Nation newspaper, while Punch newspaper has 16 stories representing 34% of the coverage.

## Story Position Punch and Nation Newspapers Coverage of Customers Reaction over the GSM Service Providers in Nigeria

CONTENT	NEWSPAPER				TOTAL	
	Punch		Nation		Freq	%
	Frequency	%	Frequency	%		
1) Front Page						
2) Inside Page	16	100	25	100	47	100
3) Back Page						
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>31</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>47</b>	<b>100</b>
Story Depth	Punch		Nation		TOTAL	
	Frequency	%	Frequency	%	Freq	%
1) 1-5 Paragraphs	-	-	-	-	-	-
2) 6-10 Paragraphs	7	43.7	6	19.4	13	27.6
3) 11-15 Paragraphs	5	31.3	12	38.7	17	36.2
4) 16-20 Paragraphs	3	18.7	8	25.8	11	23.4
5) 21 & Above Paragraphs	1	2.3	5	16.1	6	12.8
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>31</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>47</b>	<b>100</b>
Story Type	Punch		Nation		TOTAL	
	Frequency	%	Frequency	%	Freq	%
News	11	68.7	25	80.6	36	76.6
Features	3	18.8	2	6.5	5	10.6
Opinion	2	12.5	4	12.9	6	12.8
Editorial	-	-	-	-	-	-
<b>Total</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>31</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>47</b>	<b>100</b>
Variable State of GSM Users	Punch		Nation		TOTAL	
	Frequency	%	Frequency	%	Freq	%
Lagos	14	87.5	30	96.7	44	93.6
Abuja	2	12.5	1	33.3	3	6.4
Others	-	-	-	-	-	-
<b>Total</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>31</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>47</b>	<b>100</b>

Source: Content Analysis, 2018

TABLE 2

In the aspect of the story placement, all the stories, 25 (or 100%) carried in The Nation newspaper on customers' reaction to the service provided by the major GSM operators were placed in the inside pages of the newspaper, and also, 22 (or 100%) of the stories were placed in same position in Punch publication.

Next, on the extent of coverage of customers' reaction to major Global Service for Mobile Telecommunication (GSM) showed that 17 (or 36%) of the stories were between 11-15 paragraphs; 13 (or 28%) and 11 (or 23%) were between 6-10 and 16-20 paragraphs respectively, while 6 (31%) of the stories on the reactions of customers of GSM providers have 21 paragraphs and above. In terms of story type based on the coverage of customers' reaction to Major Global Service for Mobile Telecommunication (GSM) operators showed that news has more than half, 25 (or 53%) as reported in the Nation newspaper, 11 (or 23%) of the coverage in the Punch, followed by opinion story with 4 (or 9%) on the coverage of customers' reaction to major Global System

for Mobile Telecommunication (GSM). Data also shows that the Nation newspaper Features on the coverage of the customers reaction has 3 (or 6%) of the story, while Features and Opinion has 2 (or 4%) each respectively published by The Nation and the Punch newspapers on the coverage of customers reaction to GSM operators in Nigeria.

On the state that has the most reactions, showed 9 out of 10, 44 of the stories representing 94% on coverage of customers' reaction to major Global Service for Mobile Telecommunication (GSM) were reported based on the reactions by subscribers in Lagos State; 14 (or 30%) and 30 (or 64%) reported by The Punch and The Nation newspapers respectively, while 1 out of 10, that is, 3 (or 6%) of customers' reaction to major Global Service for Mobile Telecommunication (GSM) were reported in the Federal Capital Territory (FCT); 2 (or 4%) and 1 (or 2%) were reported by The Punch and The Nation newspapers respectively.

## Customers Reactions to Service Delivered by GSM Operators in Nigeria

Network	Punch/ Nation		Punch/ Nation		Punch/ Nation		G/TOTAL	
	Year 2015		2016		2017		Total	
	Negative	Positive	Negative	Positive	Negative	Positive	Freq	%
MTN	8 (17%)	None	2 (4%)	None	5 (11%)	None	15	32
GLO	6 (13%)	1(2%)	None	3 (6%)	None	None	10	21
ETISALAT 9MOBILE	None	2 (4%)	None	7 (15%)	None	None	9	19
Total	21 (45%)	3 (6%)	2 (4%)	13 (28%)	8 (17%)	None	47	100

*Source: Content Analysis, 2018*

**TABLE 3**

Table shows that out of the 47 reports on customers' reaction within the three-year period MTN had most negative reactions from customers in 2015, with 8 representing 17%, followed by Airtel with 7 (or 15%), Glo has 6 (or 13%), while Etisalat (9 Mobile) had no negative reaction from customers in the period under review. On the contrary, Glo and Etisalat (9 Mobile) had 1 (or 2%) and 2 (or 4%) positive reactions from customers in 2015 respectively. The reactions by customers in 2016 showed a reduction in negative reactions by GSM users. The mobile giant, MTN had 2 negative reactions representing 4%. On the other hand, Etisalat had most of the user's positive reactions with 7 (or 15%), while Glo and Airtel have 3 positives representing 6% each respectively. In the third consecutive year, 2017, data showed that the negative reactions slightly increased as MTN had 5 (or 11%), while Airtel had 3 (or 6%). Conversely, none of the other mobile networks had negative reactions as reported by the newspapers in 2017.

### **RQ 1: What is the frequency of coverage by the Punch and Nation newspapers on customers' reaction to the quality of service delivered by GSM operators in Nigeria reported?**

In terms of the frequency in the coverage of GSM users' reactions on the quality of the service rendered by operators in the two newspapers content analysed within the period of three years, showed that most of the coverage, six out of ten, that is, 31 representing 66%, were reported in Nation newspaper, while Punch newspaper has 16 stories representing 34% of the coverage. A breakdown of this figure further shows an average of six stories and above for both newspapers within the three years investigated.

### **RQ 2: What is the prominence attached to the Punch and Nation newspapers coverage of customers' reaction on the quality of service delivered by the GSM operators in Nigeria?**

In response to second research question shows that all the stories in Nation newspaper 25 (or 54%) on the coverage of customers' reaction on service delivery of the Major Global Service for Mobile Telecommunication (GSM) were placed in the inside pages of the newspapers, similarly, 22 (or 46%) of the stories were placed in same position in the Punch newspaper. On the extent of coverage of customers' reaction over major Global Service for Mobile Telecommunication (GSM) shows that more than 3

out of ten, 17 (or 36%) of the stories have 11-15 paragraphs; 2 out of 10, 13 (or 28%) and 11 (or 23%) have 6-10 paragraphs respectively, while 1 out of 10 of the paragraphs of customers' reaction to major Global Service for Mobile Telecommunication (GSM) shows that 6 (or 13%) have 21 paragraphs and above.

### **RQ 3: Which of the GSM operators has the most positive customers reactions on quality service delivery in Nigeria as reported by the Punch and Nation newspapers?**

In response to this research question shows that 47 stories reported on customers' reaction within the three-year period? This study revealed that MTN had the most negative reactions by customers in 2015, with 8 representing 17%, followed by Airtel with 7 (or 15%), Glo has 6 (or 13%), while Etisalat (9 Mobile) had no negative reaction from customers in the period under review. On the contrary, Glo and Etisalat (9 Mobile) had 1 (or 2%) and 2 (or 4%) positive reactions from customers in 2015 respectively.

The negative reactions by customers to the MTN service delivery 2016 showed a decline by GSM users. The mobile giant had 2 negative reactions representing 4%. On the other hand, Etisalat had most of the user's positive reactions with 7 (or 15%), while Glo and Airtel have 3 positives representing 6% each respectively.

In the following year, 2017, showed that the negative reactions slightly increased as MTN had 5 (or 11%), while Airtel had 3 (or 6%). Conversely, none of the other mobile networks had negative reactions from customers in 2017. The finding of this study is in line with that of which revealed that infrastructure inadequacies, government's inconsistent policies, heavy import duties and multiple taxation limited the capacity of GSM providers to offer quality services and relatively low tariffs [13]. Similar study by also corroborated the finding by this study on poor service delivery that only less than half of the subscribers on each of the networks do get their calls through on the first or 2nd dial [10].

### **3. Discussions**

This study is based on the content analysis on the coverage of customers' reactions of subscribers to the major mobile telecommunication firms by two leading national dailies in

Nigeria-The Punch and The Nation newspapers, covering a period of three years, 2015 to 2017. Data showed that forty-four of the reports emanated from Lagos-based customers and three from Abuja telecommunication subscribers. Topping the list of positive customers' reactions is Etisalat (now 9Mobile) with four points, followed by Aitel and Glo with three points each, while MTN did not receive any applause commendation from subscribers.

On the negative reactions, the South African telecommunications giant, MTN got the highest negative reactions from customers with twelve points (12 times), followed by Airtel –ten points (10 times), while Glo got seven (seven times). Etisalat (now 9Mobile) recorded no negative reactions from subscribers. According to the stories published by the two dailies, the complaints bordered on issues ranging from unsolicited calls and short message service (SMS), unsubstantiated deductions of call credit units, poor service connection, network failure, cumbersome SIM swap process among others.

Out of a total of forty-seven reports on customers' reaction within the three –year period, thirty-six were recorded as hard news while five and six represent features and opinion piece respectively. Study found that reactions came from subscribers in Lagos State and the Federal Capital Territory (Abuja) out of the thirty-six states of Nigeria.

A breakdown of the figures within the two years, ten months under focus revealed that Etisalat (now 9 Mobile) received no negative reaction from customers on its network services, while Airtel and Glo got such reactions three times each from customers over the efficiency of their network services in 2016. On the other hand, customers condemned mobile telephone network services of MTN eight times in 2015; twice in 2016 and twice in 2017.

The stories were all placed in the inside pages of the two newspaper. This may have been largely due to the fact that the newspapers have dedicated pages for telecommunication news. It was observed that there were no correspondences or rejoinders from the affected telecommunication companies to the issues raised by subscribers whose complaints were published as opinion in the two newspapers. However, the study revealed significant pattern of complaints by subscribers within the thirty-four months under review. For example, in 2015 MTN recorded eight complaints; Airtel had seven and Glo got six, making a total of 21 complaints, while Etisalat (9 Mobile) had none. The complaints dropped significantly to two in 2016, and rose again to five in October 2017. In all, despite the relatively low complaints recorded in 2017, the fact that the figure rose from two last year to five negative reactions from subscribers is a pointer to the rising negative reactions among customers.

#### 4. Conclusion and Recommendations

In conclusion, this paper examined newspaper coverage of customers' reactions on the service delivered by major telecommunications operators in Nigeria. As expected, not all customers will be satisfied with the quality of service delivery

with all the five major GSM service operators in Nigeria; however, only Etisalat was given a clean bill by customers as it got away with positive response from customers. On the prominence attached to the stories on customers reactions to GSM operators on service delivery, showed lack prominence in the coverage of the issue. Going also on the frequency of report, showed that the issue was not frequently reported as expected based on the importance of communication to society. This study therefore recommends that a newspaper page should be devoted to reporting GSM service delivery issues in Nigeria. Similarly, Nigerian newspapers should once in a while carryout a survey on quality of service delivery by GSM operators and use such stories on the front page of their respective newspapers. This will be making Nigerian newspapers to be socially responsible to their readers in the enhancement of quality service by GSM operators in the country.

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