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Customer Perceptions of GSM Impact on Service Delivery of Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) In Nigeria

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Abstract
Studies on GSM impact on service delivery of SMEs are inadequate in Nigeria and this is required for them to survive in this competitive environment. Hence, this study investigated the perception of customers on benefits and hindrance of Global System of Mobile Communication on service delivery of Small Medium Enterprise (SMEs) in Nigeria. Research has found that perfect service occurs at customer's moment of value especially when the customers want it, where they want it, how they want it and in a manner that is guaranteed to the customers known as perfect delivery. Evidence from literature shows that GSM has contributed positively to the economic situation of Nigeria being an emerging communication industry in Africa, with Nigeria rated as one of the fastest growing market in this field of communication. This research was conducted on some selected and registered SMEs in Oyo State Nigeria. The SMEs covered are sachet water producer, block Industry, dry cleaners, Motels and Restaurants. In this study customer`s perception on benefits and hindrances associated with GSM in Nigeria were analysed. Primary source was used to collect the data by means of structured questionnaire and were analyzed via frequency tables and percentages. The results revealed that SMEs customers in Nigeria perceived GSM as tool for improved service delivery through GSM is used to order raw materials, GSM has saved customers transactional time, GSM is being used to market product. The outcomes of this study would help the management of SMEs to develop effective strategic planning for the future of mobile business in developing countries like Nigeria. Again, there is the need to sensitize the service provider on degree at which SMEs use or adopt GSM so as to improve their service delivery.

Keywords: small and medium enterprises (SMEs), global system for mobile communication (GSM), service delivery

INTRODUCTION

In today's highly competitive global market place, the pressure on organization's to find new ways to creating and delivering value to customers is growing stronger. ICT is today being applied in many organizations in a wide range and operations areas. It has provided new ways to store, process, distribute and exchange information both within companies and with customers and supplier in the supply chain (Somuyiwa and Oyesikun, 2010). Most SMEs in Nigeria use Global System of Mobile communication (GSM) to communicate their customers and by this build stronger relationship. They realize that easy access to ICT and the delivery of their product or services are important drivers in developing and sustaining market competitiveness nationally and internationally. Business-to-Customer and electronic-business can help companies to achieve competitive advantages by providing customers with superior services. The source of competitive advantage is found in the ability of the organization to differentiate with eyes of the customer from its competition and again from operating at lower cost and hence at lower cost and greater profit. According to Haag et., al., (2002). For SMEs to address customer needs in this ever-changing environment and also to be winner in the market-place, timing and superior service are becoming the keys to attain competitive advantage. Customers nowadays are becoming more time sensitive and time oriented in terms of time and service delivery. Evidences from the literature like (Yang 2001; Elegbeleye 2005; Ajiboye, et., al., (2007) showed that GSM has considerable impact on the economy being an emerging communication industry in Africa, with Nigeria rated as one of the fastest growing market in this field of communication.

According to Ayo, et., al., (2007); Nigeria was the fastest growing telecoms nation in Africa and the third of the world. The country had experienced a phenomenal growth from a tele density of 0.49 in 2000 to 25.22 in 2007. This trend had brought about a monumental development in the major sector of the economy, such as banking, telecoms and commerce in general. GSM is one of the most explosive developments ever to have taken place in the telecommunications industry (Wojuade (2005), Anyasi and Otubu (2009)). Audile (2000) described GSM as part of evolution of wireless mobile telecommunication that includes high speed circuit, switched data, general packets radio system and universal mobile telecommunication service.

The globalization of world economy has further amplified the importance of telecommunications to the economy. The Telecommunication Sector is one of the fastest-growing sectors in Nigeria as averred by Ajiboye *et al.* (2007). The phenomenal growth of GSM since it was introduced in Nigeria about six year ago confirms this. GSM is indeed one of the major dividends of Nigeria's transition to democracy. Since its invention, mobile phones have become a necessary product to many business owners and more users are expected and obviously the growing pace of worldwide mobile population will not slow down in the near future. The global mobile telecom users will be about 3.2 billion; the 45% of the world's population 2011 according to Total Midyear population forecast for the world. This is together with the substantial growth of mobile phone as Hsiao (2004) confidently claimed on the potential growth of the mobile internet users. When more mobile phone users adopt mobile internet services, the m-commerce industry has a better opportunity for business growth.
In the off-line environment, it is common knowledge that the quality of services and products is a key determinant of customer satisfaction and loyalty (Parasiraman *et al*., 1988). Recent empirical evidence shows that, this holds true also for electronic service providers. The quality of services delivered through a web site has become a more significant success factor than low prices or being the first mover in the market space (Reibstein, 2002). The extent to which the SMEs in Nigeria take the advantages of GSM for effective service delivery with their customers is the tenet of this paper.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Studies on GSM impact on service delivery of SMEs are inadequate in Nigeria as at the time of this work. Many studies show that SMEs are the driving engine of growth, job creation, and competitiveness in domestic and global markets. To achieve their full potential in these areas SME's in Nigeria needs to catch up with the new managerial and economic trade such re-business, the telephone system in Nigeria has been challenged for years. Since the introduction of GSM, mobile telephoning has rapidly become the most popular method of voice communication in Nigeria; and the use of GSM in order to satisfy their customer wants most importantly the quality of their service delivery. The extent of GSM usage by SMEs and the effect on customers' service delivery needed to be research into. There is a paucity of research in this area in Nigeria. Thus, this paper endeavors to investigate the usage of GSM as tool for improved service delivery in the Nigerian SMEs. To achieve this, the following questions are to be answered in the study:

1. What is the impact of GSM on customer's service delivery in Nigerian SMEs?
2. Will the adoption of GSM by SMEs improve service delivery?
3. What are those factors that hinder the use of GSM?

To answer the above questions, this paper sought to test one major hypothesis:
H0: There is no significant relationship between GSM usage and Customers service delivery.

In order to achieve the objectives of the study, the paper is divided into five sections. Apart from section one that introduce the paper, section two discusses the literature review and conceptual frame work, section three described the methodology of the study, section four presented the results and section five is for conclusion and recommendation.

LITERATURE REVIEW AND CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

Mobile telecommunication is becoming one of the most important industries in the world. Although, perhaps, not the intent of introducing a new technology, the implementation of the GSM standard has directly and indirectly contributed to economic growth, led to the creation of new employment opportunities and contributed significantly to the GDP of many countries (Wojuade, 2005). The development of GSM in the world was prompted by the need to provide seamless telecommunications through Europe; Ajiboye, Adu, and Wojuade, (2007). Back in the early 1980s, analogue mobile telephony was growing rapidly and operators find it increasingly difficult to interconnect the various networks in Europe. This was so because each implementation of the analogue service was fundamentally different, which made inter-working a serious challenges. To address this challenge, a study group called 'Group special mobile' (where GSM got its name) was formed and was tasked to provide a standardized system for mobile telephony. Out of this group (and seven years later), the GSM standard was realized. In January 1992, the first GSM network, OY Radioing AB in Finland went on air.

The concept, importance, economic implications and policy implication of GSM have been discussed by some authors and researchers. According to Balogun (2000), the emergence of GSM facilitates economic development as it provides easy and effective communication needed to stimulate and promote trade between Nigeria and its foreign partners in the world. GSM has emerged as in integral essential part of the culture and life of Nigerians. It had played a significant role in communication and encourages investment; Tella *et al*. (2007). In respect to employment, Manuaka (2008) and Okereocha (2008) found that, over 1,000,000 Nigerians have been directly and indirectly employed by the operators.
While supportive enterprises and service organizations like banking, haulage, consultancies, insurance etc have themselves blossomed. According

to Soyinka (2008), mobile phone has empowered the poor by opening up veritable windows of wealth generation for them to get out of the scourge of poverty. For Adebayo (2008), the introduction of mobile telecoms has the potential for reducing the cost of doing business and increasing output. Soyinka (2008) and Ndukwe (2008) reported that the GSM business has contributed to the economy in the area of GSM recharge card printing. This has had the effect of saving Nigeria of about $150 million monthly while providing employment and new skills to the dealers. It has also improved entertainment and networking among Nigerians, using short message service, SMS, and the signal calls. This view has been collaborated by Okereocha (2008). According to him, the telecommunication sector has become a major tool for empowering Nigerians, and with the continued inflow of massive investments and the doggedness of the industry regulator, the future look bright.

Sridhar and Sridhar (2003) argued that telecommunication has the potential to benefit urban areas, employers, employees and the society by reducing the need to travel and by reducing office distractions. As at 2002, more than 108 million users world-wide are working outside the boundaries of their enterprise. Evidence of such teleporting has been found in India, Europe, and USA. The findings of Shin *et al*. (2000); testified to this claim.

The role of mobile phone in maintains customer relationship is clear. Mobile phones are used more often for keeping in contact with customers and clients compared to any other form of communication. Today, GSM covers over 1.2 billion users on 630 networks in over 210 countries, and is the fastest growing technology of all time. The initial release of GSM was called GSM phase I, and it is commonly referred to as the 1st generation. This release made provision for the basic voice, SMS and Circuit Switched Date (CSD) services. CSD allow a maximum data rate of 9.6kbs and was capable of fax transmission as well. Supplementary services at that point were very basic consisting of call forward and called barring capabilities. The second generation (GSM Phase 2) was released in 1995 and provided enhanced supplementary services, amongst which were Calling Line Identity (CLI), all waiting and multiparty services. Data services however remained limited to 9.6kbs. GSM Phase 2+ was an enhancement to GSM Phase 2 and was released two years later in 1997. Realizing the need for enhanced data service, Phase 2+ address this requirement by making provision for high speed circuit switched data (HSCSD) and General Packet Radio Services (SPRS). HSCSD and GPRS allowed maximum data rates of 48kbs and 177kbs respectively (Ajiboye, Adu, and Wojuade, 2007).

To attain customer loyalty, long-term viability and profitability and consequent success, institutions are placing increasing emphasis on the customer satisfaction (Reichheld *et al.*, 2000). Excellent service is a profit strategy and the ultimate, aim of the company is to be continually productive and profitable. Today new business world that includes such facts as electronic commerce and customer relationship management is certainly an existing one with many challenges like making the best use of information, information technology and people within the organization as argued Haagi, Cummings and McCubbry (2002). In their words perfect service occurs at customer's moment of value especially when the customers want it, where they want it where they want it, how they want it and in a manner that is guaranteed to the customers known as perfect delivery.

In the off-line environments, it is common knowledge that the quality of services and products is a key determinant of customer satisfaction and customer loyalty (Parasuraman *et al*., 1988). Recent empirical evidence shows that, meanwhile, this holds true also for electronic service providers. The quality of services delivered through a web site has become a more significant success factor than low prices or being the first mover in the market space (Reibstein, 2002). Parasurman *et al*. (2000) emphasizes the face that past conceptualizations of service quality created to evaluate traditional service and characterized by personal interaction between customers interact with technology rather than with service personnel.

Nowadays, many SMEs firms are adjusting to become customer focus. With the emergence of the GSM, customer focus has to be presented on the electronic platform. A key component of improved customers focus is the implementation of tools that allow development of better relations between SMEs and their customers (customer SMEs relationship). The SMES industry today is witnessing ICT revolution to the extent that wireless and mobile technologies are becoming widely accepted by Nigeria SMEs, Customers now have freedom too order supply, make enquiry about a product, receive payment alert, birthday and holiday festival greetings and other personal information.

METHODOLOGY

The study was carried out in Oyo State, South West, Nigeria. The choice of Oyo state is not unconnected with fact that it has a high degree of socio-economic activities and serve as a settlement state that accommodate a lot of people from other parts of the country which consequently lead to its rapid market expansion(Adewoye and Akanbi 2012).

A survey method was used for the purpose of this study. The targeted population was Small Medium Enterprises that are located both in the city and less

city. The survey instrument used in this study was a structured questionnaire. Sample frame was SMEs that have permanent site and have been in existence for the past four years, and sample size of 60 SMEs was selected at random using accidental and purposive technique. The questionnaire captures SME's customer perception on the effect of GSM on effective service delivery of SMEs and the benefit and hindrances of GSM usage by SMEs in Nigeria. The study adopts a descriptive survey research design to describe customer's perception of the impact of GSM on service delivery in Nigerian SMEs and its implications for the communication industry. The study was drawn mainly on GSM subscribers who were Nigerian SMEs customers as the target population. The sample comprises of 240 respondents randomly selected from 60 SMEs in Oyo state. Data was collected from primary sources using questionnaire as instrument. The present study was limited to impact of GSM on service delivery of SMEs in Oyo State in year 2012. Data collected was analyzed using frequency table and percentage analysis while hypothesis was tested with chi-square statistics. The non-parametric statistical test Chi-square was used to test the formulated hypothesis using STATA 10 data analysis package/software.

RESULT AND ANALYSIS

GSM Impact and Service Delivery

Result from table 4.1 shows that, 48% of the respondents strongly agreed that GSM is being used to order raw material, 25% agreed to it; 3% of the respondents were in different to it; while 23% of the respondents disagreed to the question; and lastly only 1% of the respondents strongly agreed. The table also indicated that GSM is meant for high income earners: 18% respondents indicated on that by strongly agreed with it; 16% respondents agreed to it; 4% were different to it; while 17% of respondent disagreed to the question; and lastly 45% strongly disagreed to the question that GSM is meant for high income earners.

Table 4.1 revealed that the use of GSM save customers transactional time. About 54% of the respondent strongly agreed with it; 45% respondents agreed to it; while 1% was indifferent; and none disagreed nor strongly disagreed with that. This connotes that GSM has saved customers transactional time. Result on Investigation into whether SMES customers received fast transactional message through GSM were presented on table 4.1 that up to 64% agreed to it; 5% of respondents strongly agreed; while 35% of respondents showed indifferent attitude toward it; and none disagreed nor strongly disagreed with it. Table 4.1 also revealed that power supply can affect the use of GSM for business. Indications came from the opinion that of respondents where 77% strongly agreed to it; 9% respondents agreed; while 5% respondents each were indifferent and strongly disagreed respectively; and only 4% respondents disagreed that power supply can affect the use of GSM for business. Likewise, the table revealed the result of investigates made of the use of GSM for business transaction encourages time management. 18% of the respondents strongly agreed with this; 32% agreed with it; about 21% were indifferent to it; while 11% and 18% of respondents disagreed and strongly disagreed respectively with it which implies that the use of GSM for business transactions encourages true management.

Moreover, the result of investigation made to know whether the use of GSM for SMEs business transactions discourages unwarranted journey are shown on table which revealed that 42% of respondents strongly agreed to it; 33% of respondents agreed with it; 24% were indifferent to it; while only 1% disagreed and none strongly disagreed with it. The implication of this is that the use of GSM for SMEs business transactions discourages unwarranted journey. In the same manner, table revealed that the use of GSM requires special skills. 25% respondents strongly agreed with it; 13% of them agreed with it; 8% showed indifferent attitude towards it; while 38% disagreed with it and only 17% strongly disagreed. This is as a result of highly illiteracy between and among the SMEs holder and the customers.

More so, to know the opinion of respondents whether poor network affects the use of GSM for business were shown on the table where 92% of respondent strongly agreed with it; while the measuring 8% agreed with it; and none were indifferent nor disagreed nor strongly disagreed. Also from the table, it showed the implications of high tariff rate on the use of GSM for SMEs where 32% strongly agreed with it; 31% agreed with it; 17% of respondents were indifferent; while 7% disagreed and 13% of respondents strongly disagreed with it. This implies that high tariff rate do hinder the use of GSM for SMEs.

Table also gives the result of investigate made to know if GSM is being used to market product which was strongly agreed with by 50% respondents; 46% respondents agreed with it; 3% were indifferent; while 1% disagreed and none strongly disagreed to it. This connotes that GSM is being used to market products. The table further reflects the result that fake GSM and its accessories hinder the use of GSM for SMEs as 82% of respondents strongly agreed with it; 9% agreed; 2% were indifferent; while 4% of respondents disagreed and 3% of them strongly disagreed. Table reveals that thefts also hinder the use of GSM for service delivery of SMEs. 52% of respondent strongly agreed with it; 36% agree to it; 4% of respondents disagreed; and 8% strongly disagreed; none were indifferent. Similarly, the table revealed result that cost of repairing handset hinder the use of GSM, indications came from the opinion

that of respondents where 48% of respondents agreed and 18% strongly agreed; only 2% disagreed; while 32% were indifferent and none strongly disagreed. Lastly, investigation on if GSM is not relevant in SMEs transaction because it is expensive to maintain bring the result thus: 4% of respondents strongly agreed with it; 11% agreed to it; 16% were indifferent; while 61% of respondent disagreed; and the remaining 8% strongly disagreed to it. This implies that the majority of the respondents believed that the use of GSM for SMEs service delivery is relevant and cost effective.

Table 1; Distribution of Respondents' Responses on Customer's Perceptions of GSM Impact on Service Delivery of SMEs

Questions	SA	A	I	D	SD	Total
GSM is used to order raw materials?	115	60	8	55	2	240
	(47.92)	(25)	(3.33)	(22.92)	(0.83)	(100)
GSM is meant for high income earners?	80	40	10	40	70	240
	(33.33)	(16.67)	(4.17)	(16.67)	(29.17)	(100)
GSM has saved customers transactional time?	130	108	2	0	0	240
	(54.17)	(45)	(0.83)	(0)	(0)	(100)
SMEs customers receive fast transactional message through	12	153	75	0	0	240
GSM?	(5)	(63.75)	(31.25)	(0)	(0)	(100)
Power supply can affect the use of GSM for business?	186	22	11	10	11	240
	(77.5)	(9.17)	(4.58)	(4.17)	(4.58)	(100)
Use of GSM for business transaction encourages time	43	77	50	27	43	240
management?	(17.92)	(32.08)	(20.83)	(11.25)	(17.92)	(100)
Use of GSM for SMEs business transactions discourages	100	80	58	2	0	240
unwarranted journey?	(41.67)	(33.33)	(24.17)	(0.83)	(0)	(100)
Use of GSM requires special skill?	60	30	20	90	40	240
	(25)	(12.5)	(8.33)	(37.5)	(16.67)	(100)
Poor network can affect the use of GSM for business?	220	20	0	0	0	240
	(91.67)	(8.33)	(0)	(0)	(0)	(100)
High tariff rate can hinder the use of GSM for SMEs?	79	75	40	16	30	240
	(32.92)	(31.25)	(16.67)	(6.67)	(12.5)	(100)
GSM is being used to market product?	120	110	8	2	0	240
	(50)	(45.83)	(3.33)	(0.83)	(0)	(100)
Fake GSM and its accessories hinder the use of GSM?	196	22	5	10	7	240
	(81.67)	9.17	(2.08)	(4.17)	(2.92)	(100)
Thefts hinder the use of GSM?	125	85	0	10	20	240
	(52.08)	(35.42)	(0)	(4.17)	(8.33)	(100)
Costs of repairing the hand set hinder the use of GSM?	44	114	77	5	0	240
	(18.33)	(47.50)	(32.08)	(2.08)	(0)	(100)
GSM is not relevant in SMEs transaction because it is expensive	10	26	38	146	20	240
to maintain?	(4.17)	(10.83)	(15.83)	(60.83)	(8.33)	(100)

Note: Figures in the bracket indicate the percentage while figures not in bracket indicate the frequency
Source: Computations and Out-Put of STATA 10 based on Author's Field Survey (2012).

Hypothesis Testing

H_0: There is no significant relationship between GSM usage and Customers service delivery.

Decision: Since the chi-squares calculated (X^2-cal) are greater than chi-square tabulated (X^2-tab) which makes all the figures to be highly statistically significant with the probability of F = 0.000 collectively; we reject null hypothesis stated earlier: there is no significant relationship between GSM usage and Customers service delivery in SMEs because with the result. Thus, we accept alternative hypothesis that: there is significant relationship between the GSM usage and the Customers service delivery in SMEs.

Table 2; Chi-square Analysis table of Relationship between GSM Usage and Service Delivery in SMEs

S/N	Relationship	Pearson Chi-Square (Value)	Pr (Value)	Remark
1	q1 vs q3	121.8404	0.000	Significant
2	q1 vs q4	32.9908	0.000	Significant
3	q1 vs q6	131.8513	0.000	Significant
4	q1 vs q7	91.4150	0.000	Significant
5	q1 vs q11	339.8147	0.000	Significant
6	q1 vs q15	108.5779	0.000	Significant
7	q3 vs q4	73.5878	0.000	Significant
8	q3 vs q6	105.4441	0.000	Significant
9	q3 vs q7	333.5385	0.000	Significant
10	q3 vs q11	136.3196	0.000	Significant
11	q3 vs q15	123.2299	0.000	Significant
12	q4 vs q6	92.6474	0.000	Significant
13	q4 vs q7	127.0502	0.000	Significant
14	q4 vs q11	85.5969	0.000	Significant
15	q4 vs q15	33.9508	0.000	Significant
16	q6 vs q7	108.6151	0.000	Significant
17	q6 vs q11	82.8787	0.000	Significant
18	q6 vs q15	154.3027	0.000	Significant
19	q7 vs q11	56.9173	0.000	Significant
20	q7 vs q15	232.4798	0.000	Significant
21	q11 vs q15	57.6021	0.000	Significant

Source: Computations and Out-Put of STATA 10 based on Author's Field Survey (2012).

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

The major focus of this paper is on impact of mobile communication system on the customers service delivery in the Nigeria SMEs. Attempt was made to examine this impact on specific issues as time managements, convenience, transaction cost, and quick alert as well as associated risks. Perhaps, the first observation that should be made is that the advent of GSM has change the ways of communication and transactions among Nigeria. The uses of GSM for SMEs transaction encourage time management, discourages unwarranted journey thus reducing the risks associated with travelling every time for SMEs traveling for raw material and financial transactions and transaction with SMEs has been more convenient. However, poor network and power supply has been the major factors that are the use of GSM for SMEs in Nigeria. Also High tariff rate hindered the use of GSM for SMEs business since customers are made to pay for the charges.

The use of GSM has become widespread in Nigeria with SMEs adopting it as customers' relations strategy for improved service delivery. The results of the findings and the hypotheses tested showed that the use of GSM enabled SMEs customers to receive timeliness messages services like transaction alerts, account enquiry etc via mobile phones at convenience. Thus, customers have been able to save considerate time with relatively leaser costs to the customers. The outcomes of this study would help the management of SMEs to develop effective strategic planning for the future of mobile business in developing countries like Nigeria. Again, there is the need to sensitize the service provider on degree at which SMEs use or adopt GSM so as to improve their service delivery.

In view of the above findings the following recommendations were made:

- SMES should encourage the use of GSM by their customer.
- Telecommunication industry should upgrade their infrastructure and reduce their tariff in order to provide effective service and to encourage e-transactions.

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