

CONJOINT ANALYSIS OF THE PREFERENCE OF MOBILE TELEPHONE OPERATORS IN NIGERIA. A CASE STUDY OF MTN, GLOBACOM, ETISALAT, AND AIRTEL

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Abstract

In the determination of consumer preference for products or services, the level of satisfaction and the attributes are critical variables that consumers attached utility to in order to maximize their consumption of the product or service as well as value exchange. Consumer preference therefore has germane marketing implications and can be adequately dissected through conjoint analysis methodology. The study analysed the service attributes of four mobile telephone operators in Nigeria and the implications on consumer preference for each service provider. The findings reveal that in terms of relative importance of the service attributes and their utility values, connectivity (21.5) and service packages (18.3) are the leading attributes consumers prefer with respective levels of moderate and good customer service levels and MTN emerging as the most preferred service provider. It is therefore imperative that the mobile service operators take cognizance of these factors as they have significant impact to their service performance and consumers patronage.

Keywords: Attributes, Conjoint analysis, Attributes levels, Mobile operators.

1.0 INTRODUCTION

Communication is a vital part of human coexistence. This can take place on interpersonal basis, across a large audience, and even intra personal when an individual evaluates objects within him and his environment and gives meaning to them that cognitively guides his decision. Communication has been facilitated since the evolution of man through various means and has constantly evolved harnessing both soft and hardware devices and facilities to enable man achieve effective communication. The basis of communication is the message which is passed from the initiator called the sender through a medium to the receiver and the confirmation comes through a feedback.

The means or medium becomes very important in this instance since a message can be corrupted, interrupted, terminated, and lost in the medium. It therefore behooves on the sender or the users of any communication medium to identify and choose a preferred and effective medium or media that will satisfy such needs as accuracy, clarity, timeliness, safety, affordability, and accessibility in communicating their messages. A message can be communicated orally, pictorially, or through written texts.

The concept of globalization and the global village is fast coming to reality through the impact of telecommunications. Information and Communication Technology (ICT) keeps making the world smaller and smaller by the day, changing the shape of the globe from spherical to a flat world such that you can slide to the remotest part of the world in your hands and return in seconds. Information, Communication Technology (ICT) and

mobile telephony adoption is fast enhancing its realization and has become imperative and indispensable (Friedrich, Grone, Holbling, and Peterson, 2009), and mobile use is rapidly reaching the remotest part of the world (ITU, 2010).

The telephone has been a very effective means of communication for near, short, and long distances for decades. It has witnessed a lot of product transformation and innovations as it has proved to be the most stable and effective technological means of communication. In view of the importance people attach to communication, the need has been addressed on a continuous basis by marketers through the creation of assorted telephone devices to meet diverse needs both for hedonic and functional needs or both. Consumers make purchases for several reasons including hedonistic and functional goals (O'Curry & Strahilevitz, 2001). Hedonic consumption refers to situations in which the product or service is needed for fun, pleasure, arousal, or excitement (Hirschman & Holbrook, 1982). Functional products or services provide utilitarian benefits whereas some products or services may possess both functional and hedonic value simultaneously. The functional or hedonic feature of a given product or service may differ based on; (a) individual consumption preferences and purposes, (b) situations, and (c) the role of buyer/user. (Hirschman & Holbrook, 1982).

How each producer or marketer approaches the needs of the consumers to satisfying them creates differing perception among them. According to Bennett and Kassarian (1993), individuals cognitively organize their perceptions selectively towards objects, products, and people. The perceptive elements is informed by the environmental context, needs of the consumer, the nature of the stimuli effects, and what the consumer attributes to the object or product.

The Nigerian market witnessed a significant shift in telephony service when in 2001, the federal government initially awarded operating licence to two firms to operate the global system for mobile (GSM) telecommunication facility in Nigeria, Econet now AIRTEL, and MTN. GLOBACOM later joined the GSM revolution by offering the consumer a more dynamic billing system through per second billing, a feat MTN and Econet (Airtel) initially claimed was too difficult to achieve. That single extra entry opened the GSM market for a real battle for market share in terms of subscribers' base and sales. With the increasing civilized warfare in the GSM market battlefield, the industry players started churning out competitive product packages and marketing strategies to alter the consumers' choice pattern in order to attract consumers to them as the preferred service provider or to switch from an incumbent service provider to a more preferred one.

In a competitive market, new products are accepted only if the customer expectation is fulfilled (Danaher, 1997). Hence understanding consumer preference is useful in positioning products favourably in the market and aids in product matching. Consumer preference is also valued as a proxy for product design and formulating pricing strategies. If a marketer successfully can understand the needs of the consumer, he can anticipate the product features in order to target customer segments (Brassington & Pettitt, 2003). In economic terms, identifying consumer choice is desirable in assessing the substitution possibilities of a product.

It is therefore necessary to determine the consumer preference for mobile phone operators and to gauge consumers' expectations for the product, which will eventually enable us to assess the market potential in terms of product acceptability and consumers' willingness to pay for various mobile quality attributes. Many products fail as they are dumped in the market without a prior investigation (Huang & Fu, 1995). In such a

context, it is believed that the results of this study would enable marketers to enhance their product offerings through identifying specific as well as general preference requirements of different market segments.

1.1 Statement of the problem

Mobile telephone service providers in Nigeria have continued to develop various service packages in order to attract new customers or retain existing ones. The competitive landscape has become unprecedented resulting in the application of marketing strategies with service packages that will influence the consumer's choice pattern for the preferred service provider. According to NCC (2012), the respective subscriber base of the mobile operators as at December 2012 is as follows: MTN (47,440,991), GLOBACOM (24,124,716), AIRTEL (23,092,195), ETISALAT (14,912,801), and overall teledensity of about 82 percent.

Service packages are developed to address customers' needs and to resolve complaints in order to enhance customers' satisfaction. Concern about enhancing customer's satisfaction took a significant dimension recently with the introduction of a new platform to enhance the switching desires of customers known as Mobile Number Portability (MNP). The MNP is a service that allows a customer to retain his number when switching from one mobile operator to another. In addition to this, the operators on their part have continued to contend with the teeming demand of consumers by providing market offerings that would provide satisfaction to the consumers. These include the offering of different product packages, promotional packages, sponsorship, quality customer service, installation of improved and efficient hardware and software facilities meant to accommodate more subscribers and ease the flow of call traffic.

The present study attempts to evaluate consumer preference for the mobile phone operators in Nigeria on the basis of their ability to perform up to customers' satisfaction using conjoint analysis methodology. Extant literature evaluates consumer preference of mobile phone service in Nigeria but with less consideration for the use of conjoint analysis. The present study will suffice to make plausible contribution in this area.

1.2 Aim and objectives

The study aims to identify consumer preference for mobile phone operators among MTN, GLOBACOM, ETISALAT, and AIRTEL in Nigeria using conjoint analysis methodology. The objectives of the study include:

- (i) To analyze the service attributes and their levels in order to determine consumer preference for each of them
- (ii) To identify the most preferred mobile phone service operator in Nigeria in relation to the attributes and their levels.

2.0 Review of related studies

Consumer preference

Perception plays a very important role in the preference construct of consumers. Perception refers to the organized behaviour of an individual through the use of his sensory organs that determine how he reacts to objects, products, people, and real things within his environment. The resultant reaction constitutes his attitude which can be interpreted as positive or negative. Such outcomes with respect to products are vital to firms and indeed marketers. This is because consumers' attitude determines the level and pattern of business strategy.

As marketers introduce and move their products to and around the consumers, the consumers' perceptions guide them on how to react to make choices through selective attention to only favourable stimuli, objects, and products among competing alternatives; by selective distortion to fit appropriately befitting promotional messages and discard the unfavourables. Furthermore, consumers would through selective retention select and retain only favourable information about an object or product in their memory. Hence, perception is considered as a portent aspect of the consumers buying behaviours, preferences and patronage.

Conjoint analysis

According to Green and Krieger (1991), the focus of conjoint analysis is squarely on the measurement of buyer preferences for product attribute levels (including price) and the buyer benefits that may flow from the product attributes. Secondly as a micro-based measurement technique, part-worth functions or preferences for attribute levels are measured at the individual level (Green and Srinivasan 1978, 1990), such that if preference heterogeneity is present, the researcher can find it. Conjoint studies typically entail the collection of respondent background information (e.g., demographic data, psychographic data) and the researcher should be careful particularly with the buyer's demographic variables so that they do not necessarily correlate well with attribute preferences (Moore, 1980).

Conjoint analysis identifies consumers' overall preference as additive sum of partworths of product attributes or features represented by dummy variables which can be estimated to know the contribution of each feature to the overall consumer preference, cluster the partworths to identify segments, and simulate preferences by adding new products to the consumer's choice sets (Hauser & Rao, 2002).

Wainwright (2003) defines conjoint analysis as a survey of data collection and analysis for eliciting preferences for an object or item. The premise is that relative importance of attributes considered jointly can be better measured than when considered in isolation. Min (2007) assumes that the preference for an object is a function of the specific attributes of the object rather than the object *per se*. Conjoint analysis helps estimate the relative importance of different attributes and the various levels of the attributes of a product which allows the policy maker to observe the individual impact of each attribute on the overall benefit or satisfaction (Hauber, Johnson, Sauriol, & Lescrauwaet, 2005). Conjoint analysis technique was introduced into marketing by Paul Green and Vithala Rao in 1971 to help solve marketing problems.

3.0 METHODOLOGY

The study methodology is based on conjoint analysis using the full-profile approach to construct a complete profile of attributes and attributes levels of the brands and to enhance the respondents' ability to evaluate each profile holistically.

3.1 Theoretical/conceptual framework

Consumers' need of communication for various purposes engendered the motivation by marketers to develop products that will satisfy the need. The challenge to the marketer is the diversity in wants. Telephone is one effective way the marketer has been able to meet the communication needs of consumers and equally succeeded in offering a wide range of choices for the consumer to choose and to buy their preferred option in line with their perception. Based on the Cognitive Theory of consumer choice behaviour by Hasen

(1972), and embracing attitude and preference theories, the present study evaluate consumers behaviour in terms of their preference among the competing mobile telephone operators in Nigeria.

Another study carried out in Nigeria draws from the learning theory for organizations and market orientation. Asiegbu, Igwe, and Iruka (2012), observes that a mobile phone service provider that is armed with adequate knowledge of factors that propel prospects to use mobile phone services would be in a better position to design appropriate strategies that will engender enduring relationships with its customers. Their findings reveal that social affinity, switching cost, and customer service affect intention-to-use a mobile phone service among university lecturers.

A number of models are available to explain the consumer product purchases based on the characteristics of the products (Housthakkar, 1952; Lancaster, 1966) and these models are referred to as Lancaster characteristics demand model or Lancaster's characteristics theory of value. The Lancaster's characteristics theory of value choice modeling approaches assume that any good can be described in terms of its attributes or characteristics and the levels they take.

This involves eliciting people's stated preference for different options in a hypothetical setting. However, this is valid for many goods and services, but the validity is questionable for certain goods because the utility that they receive depends not only on observable attributes but also in all sorts of intangible and hard-to-measure facts.

The study adopted the Full-profile conjoint analysis approach. Full profile approach uses complete profile of brand which is constructed in terms of all attributes and attributes levels specified by the study design (Malhotra, 2007). The respondents can be asked to rank order all stimuli or to provide a metric rating of each stimulus. Full-profile analysis remains the most common form of conjoint analysis and has the advantage that the respondent evaluates each profile holistically and in the context of all other stimuli (Hauser & Rao, 2002).

Full-profile conjoint takes the approach of displaying a large number of full product descriptions to the respondent. The evaluations of these packages yield large amounts of information for each customer/respondent. Full-profile conjoint analysis has been a popular approach to measure attribute utilities. In the full-profile conjoint task, different product descriptions (or even different actual products) are developed and presented to the respondent for acceptability or preference evaluations.

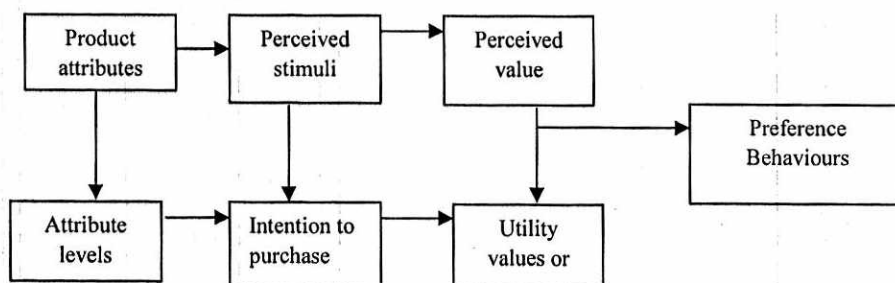


Figure 3.1: Conjoint Analysis Model for Product Preference

The product attributes and levels (profile) create the stimuli that enable the total perception of the product value which determines the consumer preference. Each product profile represents a part of a fractional factorial experimental design that evenly matches the

occurrence of each attribute with all other attributes. By controlling the attribute pairings, the researcher can correlate attributes with profile preferences and estimate the respondent's utility for each level of each attribute tested. In the rating task, the respondent gives their preference or likelihood of purchase (Qualtrics.com, 2013).

3.2 Conjoint case study

Four major mobile telephone service operators in Nigeria were selected for this study: (MTN, GLOBACOM, ETISALAT, and AIRTEL).

MTN Group is a South Africa-based multinational mobile telecommunications company, operating in many African, European, and Middle Eastern countries. Its head office is in Johannesburg, South Africa. MTN has an array of mobile telephone communication products and services ranging from the packages, to value added services, devices and roaming.

Globacom Limited (or Glo) is a Nigerian multinational telecommunications company with headquarters in Lagos, Nigeria. Glo is a privately owned telecommunications carrier that started operations in August 2003. It currently operates in four countries in West Africa, namely Nigeria, Republic of Benin, Ghana and Côte d'Ivoire and it is a 100 percent Nigerian owned company. Glo built an \$800 million high-capacity fibre-optic cable known as Glo-1, a submarine cable from the United Kingdom to Nigeria. Glo is privately owned by the Mike Adenuga and operates a number of Strategic Business Units (SBUs) as follows: Glo Mobile is the Mobile Network Unit. Glo Gateway is a subsidiary of Glo which is Glo's International Wholesale Voice and Data Exchange Trading Business Unit. Glo Gateway covers over 140 countries under its roaming services, and connected to 235 networks. Glo-1 has the potential to provide high speed internet services, faster, more reliable and cheaper telecom services for the public and both local and foreign business investments and transactions. Glo-1 also improves teleconferencing, distance learning, disaster recovery and telemedicine among several other benefits for Nigerians and the people of West Africa.

AIRTEL (Bharti Airtel Limited), commonly known as Airtel, is an Indian multinational telecommunications Services Company headquartered at New Delhi, India. It operates in 20 countries across South Asia, Africa and the Channel Islands. Airtel has GSM network in all countries in which it operates, providing 2G, 3G and 4G services depending upon the country of operation. Airtel is the world's third largest mobile telecommunications company with over 261 million subscribers across 20 countries as at August 2012. It is the largest cellular service provider in India, with 183.61 million subscribers as at November 2012. Airtel Africa is a subsidiary of Indian Telecommunications Company operating in 17 countries across Africa. The company started as Econet Wireless Nigeria (2001); Vodacom Nigeria (2004); and the same year to V-Mobile Nigeria; Celtel Nigeria (2006); to Zain Nigeria (2008) and now Bharti Airtel Nigeria.

ETISALAT or Emerging Markets Telecommunication Services (EMTS), trading as Etisalat, is a Nigerian company duly incorporated under the laws of Nigeria in partnership with Mubadala Development Company and Etisalat of the United Arab Emirates. Incorporated in Nigeria as a private company, it acquired the Unified Access License from the Federal Government in January 2007. The license includes a mobile license and spectrum in the GSM 1800 and 900 MHz bands. Etisalat acquired a 40% stake in EMTS and is now the operator of the Unified Access License. Etisalat has been the telecommunications service provider in the United Arab Emirates since 1976 and has footprints in 18 countries traversing the Middle East, Asia and Africa. In its many years of operations, it has built up state-of-the-art telecom infrastructure and taken a leadership

position of innovation, and quality service delivery among regional and international operators. In Nigeria, Etisalat made the first official call on its network on 13 March 2008. In September of same year, it kicked off commercial operations with the innovative 0809 choose campaign which enabled Nigerians choose numbers special to them as their mobile numbers. Full commercial operations began in October 2008. On 26th September 2011, Etisalat launched its 3.75G HSPA+ network in Nigeria. The 3.75G HSPA+ network will enable Nigerians enjoy super-fast broadband services for both personal and business needs.

4.0 DATA COLLECTION PROCEDURE AND ANALYSIS

Mobile telephone service product attributes

A product attribute refers to the features of a product that the consumers evaluate in order to make a purchase. The attributes can be tangible or intangible and include attributes such as size, color, functionality, components and features, which affect the product's appeal, acceptance or preference in the market.

The following attributes were identified with the mobile telephone service rendered by these companies in Nigeria. An apriori approach to identify product attributes which are salient in the market was conducted by interviewing 20 selected consumers and asking them to rate six attributes of the mobile phone service operators based on their preference and service expectations on a scale of 10 in Lagos State. The result of the mean score for the respective attributes based on the interview is shown below:

Braun and Srinivasan (1975), suggest that a preliminary data collection effort questioning consumers regarding attributes important to them, usually helps in identifying those attributes that are most frequently regarded as relevant. Random samples of 200 mobile phone service consumers were interviewed using structured questionnaire from mobile phone service consumers in Lagos state. The choice of Lagos state is justified because of its characteristics as a cosmopolitan city with the presence of people from almost all parts of Nigeria living or carrying out various transactions there.

Table 4.1: Result of Interview on Mobile Phone Operator Service Attributes

Item	Attribute	Description	Rating
1	Connectivity	Signal level, signal visibility, and geographical reach of service	8.3
2	Product packages	Packages developed, branded, and rebranded to meet consumer needs	7.6
3	Customer service	Responsive attitude to customer needs and attention to resolve customer complaints	7.8
4	Internet bundles and incentives	Incentives to stimulate purchase, motivate buyers and dealers in order to attract and retain customers.	7.3
5	Tariff	Charges for various services and products	6.1
6	Subscribers base	The level of interest in purchase of operator's line and enjoying the operator's service in view of the number of subscribers	7.95

The questionnaire was developed using attributes and attributes levels as stimuli and was within the capability of the respondents in line with the six selected attributes. Analysis of the stimuli made use of results from orthogonal factorial design which allows for efficient

estimation of all main effects (Malhotra, 2007). 186 or 93 percent of the questionnaire distributed were returned with no error that necessitated any form of rejection and proved useful for the analysis.

Table 4.2: Distribution of Users of GSM lines

Prime network in use	No/Percentage	Lines	No/Percentage
MTN	63 (34)	One line	35 (18.9)
Airtel	35 (18.9)	Two lines	74 (39.6)
Glo	46 (24.5)	Three lines	66 (35.8)
Etisalat	42 (22.6)	All four lines	11(5.7)

Table 4.3: Mobile Phone Service Attributes and Attribute Levels

Attributes	Levels
Internet bundle	Fast
	Slow
Tariff	Expensive
	Cheap
	Moderate
Connectivity	Fast
	Modest
	Slow
Customer service	Good
	Poor
Subscribers	Large
	Small
Packages	Good
	Fair

Respondents were asked to rate attributes levels based on their level of preference and the mobile operators based on their level of satisfactory service between most preferred and not preferred. Rating is believed to be more convenient for respondents and easier to analyse and has therefore become increasingly popular (Malhotra, 2007). The attributes in (Table 4.3) were then used to generate a plan card (Table 4.4) using orthogonal array using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS Version 20.0). These plan cards consist of different combinations of the specified attributes and the attributes were combined in 18 different ways including holdouts.

These 18 cards formed the basis of the questionnaires that were administered to the respondents to rank their preferences. Since Conjoint Analysis (CA) is based on the notion that consumers value products based on the utility provided by its attributes, information provided by the respondents were then analysed. Attributes levels which range from two to three levels were adequate and suitable to generate the stimuli designed for the respondents (Malhotra, 2007). The stimuli were simplified for the respondents

through the use of the explanations made during the use of the initial instrument for interview where each of the attributes and the description of the level of preference were elucidated.

Table 4.4: Orthogonal Array Combination of Attributes of Mobile Phone Service Product

	Card ID	data	plan	signal	service	subscribers	packages
1	1	slow	modest	modest	good	modest	attractive
2	2	fast	cheap	modest	poor	Large	poor
3	3	fast	cheap	fast	good	modest	poor
4	4	slow	cheap	slow	good	modest	attractive
5	5	fast	expensive	slow	good	Large	attractive
6	6	fast	modest	fast	good	modest	poor
7	7	slow	cheap	fast	poor	Small	attractive
8	8	fast	expensive	fast	poor	modest	attractive
9	9	slow	expensive	fast	good	Large	poor
10	10	fast	expensive	modest	good	Small	attractive
11	11	slow	expensive	modest	poor	modest	poor
12	12	slow	expensive	fast	good	Small	poor
13	13	slow	expensive	slow	poor	modest	poor
14	14	fast	expensive	fast	poor	modest	attractive
15	15	slow	modest	fast	poor	Large	attractive
16	16	fast	modest	slow	poor	Small	poor
17 ^a	17	slow	modest	slow	good	modest	poor
18 ^a	18	slow	expensive	slow	good	Large	attractive

a. Holdout

In conjoint analysis, respondents are given a fractional factorial design of profiles, each of which is described by the levels of the features it contained, and are asked to rate levels representing the profiles in order to indicate their preferences and to reduce the number of stimulus profiles to be evaluated. Orthogonal array serves as a special class of fractional designs that enables the efficient estimation of all main effects and takes care of all interactions (Malhotra, 2007). The key consideration in the decomposition is that the elements should be as complete as feasible, understandable to the respondents, useful to the product development team, and as separable as feasible (Hauser & Rao, 2002).

5.0 RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

Table 5.1 shows the result of conjoint analysis indicating part-worth or utility estimate as well as the relative importance of each product attribute.

Table 5.1: Preference of Mobile Telephone Operators in Nigeria

Attributes	Level	Utility estimate	Utility range	Importance (%)
Internet bundle				
	Fast	.097	0.194	13.175
	Slow	-.097		
Tariff				
	Expensive	-0.093	0.745	15.777
	Cheap	- 0.326		
	Moderate	0.419		
Connectivity				
	Fast	0.334	3.93	21.499
	Modest	1.453		
	Slow	-1.453		
Customer Service				
	Good	1.484	1.818	16.229
	Poor	-0.334		
Subscribers Base				
	Large	.233	0.466	15.050
	Small	-.233		
Packages				
	Good	0.570	2.906	18.269
	Fair	4.500		

The result of conjoint analysis showed that the most important attributes of mobile telephone service to the consumers are connectivity and overall service package. Connectivity contributes 3.93 to the consumers' total utility while overall service package contribute a total of 2.906 to the total utility of consumers.

Consumers have preference for good customer service with a utility range of 1.818. Tariff plan of mobile phone operators is also preferred by consumers with a utility range of 0.745.

The next most preferred attributes to the consumers is the number of subscribers among friends and relations. The attribute contribute 0.466 to the consumers' total utility. Internet facility provided by mobile operators in form of internet bundle is also preferred by consumers with a utility range of 0.194. Overall, the result indicates that the preference range that would deliver the most utility for mobile telephone service consumers would include service attributes such as modest connectivity (1.453), fair overall service packages (4.500), good customer service (1.484), moderate tariff plan (0.419), fast internet bundle (0.097) and a well-accepted service indicated by large number of

subscribers (0.233). Furthermore, the derived utility values were then used to determine the importance of each attribute.

Pearson's R, and Kendall's tau, association values were used to assess the validity of the conjoint analysis model. The Pearson's R (0.826) and Kendall's tau (0.694) values were high and indicated strong agreement between the averaged service ratings and the predicted utilities from the conjoint analysis model.

Table 5.2: Correlations between Observed and Estimated Preferences

Correlation	Value	Sig.
Pearson's R	0.826	0.000
Kendall's tau	0.694	0.000

Results in Table 5.3 show the preference ranking of mobile service provider in Nigeria. Evidence from Friedman and Kendal's mean rank indicates that MTN is the most preferred service provider followed by Glo, Etisalat and Airtel respectively.

The results of descriptive statistics pertaining to the present study clearly show the pattern of preference and rate of usage of GSM services in Nigeria. Table 4.1 shows that MTN is the most patronized operator and consumers generally possess between two and three lines across the four operators evaluated in this study.

Table 5.3: Preference ranking of most preferred mobile service provider

	Ranking Test Diagnostics	
	Friedman and Kendal's mean rank	Chi-Square statistics
Etisalat	4.44	27.032*
MTN	4.85	
GLOBACOM	4.49	
Airtel	4.24	

*Sig at 1% level.

Most of the factors indicated by the consumers to have preference impact on their satisfaction of the quality of mobile phone service are consistent with findings of earlier studies. Asiegbu, Igwe, and Iruka (2012), find that social affinity, switching cost, and customer service affect intention-to-use a mobile phone service among university lecturers in Nigeria and Oyatoye, Adebisi and Amole (2013) find that a combination of affordable cost and wide coverage maximizes customers' satisfaction. Significantly, the present study identified the preference for product packages as a salient attribute by consumers of GSM service in Nigeria as an addition to findings of previous studies as stated above. These findings provide a reinforcing revelation for mobile telephone operators in Nigeria to develop and market their products and services.

6.0 CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The present study used conjoint analysis technique to examine consumer preference of salient mobile telephone service attributes in Nigeria. Four mobile service providers were evaluated on six attributes and their related levels. Consumers rated MTN as the most preferred service provider and indicated their exceptional preference for a modest connectivity communication link and quality packages which is based on the part-worth

attached to the attributes levels and relative importance of the attributes which will enhance the satisfaction of their hedonic and functional needs.

Conjoint analysis in the present study has therefore helped to show areas of directing marketing efforts and budgets by these companies as well as other related services in Nigeria since the findings from the study have genuine marketing implications for customers' satisfaction and overall service performance for the industry.

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