

Does The Consumer Stand To Gain In The Competitive Telecommunication Industry In Ghana? A Case Study Of Tamale Metropolis Of Northern Region Of Ghana, W.Africa

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Abstract: The proliferation of mobile phone service providers in the second decade of the twenty-first century has brought in its trail some very fierce competition among the various service providers. This study sought to examine this situation of competition to see if this has translated into a desirable change in the industry and especially to see what that means to the consumer, Tamale as a case study. 96 cluster-sampled people within the Tamale town ship were selected to fill a questionnaire. The data obtained from this source together with secondary data obtained from service providers were analyzed with the help of SPSS17. The findings established among other things that competition has made service providers devise new strategies in order to be more effective in providing accurate service to meet customer's expectations. Though not in any way commensurate with the pace of the competition, it has led to improved service leading to customer's satisfaction. Findings suggest that there are some difficulties encountered by firms such as poor customer care, service delay and inadequate personnel. In conclusion, the challenges notwithstanding, the competition has racked in some advantage to the consumer. Some of the major recommendations are: thinking of customers as kings in their operation, monitoring competitive environment, ensuring innovation to supplement existing service through technological system, firms employing more personnel to facilitate service delivery.

Keywords: Commensurate, Responsiveness, Telecommunication, Innovation, Competition

I. BACKGROUND AND INTRODUCTION OF THE STUDY

Competition, as defined by the Oxford Learner's Dictionary is the rivalry between two or more people, organizations, nations, schools and things for what they desire or not desire. Such a competition when it is healthy can yield good results but disastrous results when it is otherwise. Governments, firms and individuals do look for the best way out sometimes by privatizing state companies to private investors to make sure they compete effectively and efficiently in delivering goods and services to the general public. Firms that enjoy that face little or no rivalry at all can afford to fail to deliver quality services to consumers due to lack of competition in the industry. In fact, when state companies are privatized and more competitors are allowed into an industry, different techniques and strategies are devised by the industry

players to enhance their attractiveness to consumers. This way, competitions are made keen and companies are kept on their toes and hence, and get highly sensitive.

Given one company in an industry providing services to the public and having all the protection and rules that prohibit other companies from competing then such a company will most likely deliver below standard services. In Ghana for instance, the telecommunication service industry initially was characterized by low competition making it difficult for consumers to access quality service delivery. Because of the monopoly firms did not care about improving their performance. For instance, the ultimate rule in the production era was that, let us produce, they (consumers) will buy. But the emergence of other companies in the industry (MTN, Vodafone, Tigo, Airtel and Espresso) increased competition triggering off re-thinking of the customer as a "king" which helped to improve quality service- delivering

II. PROBLEM STATEMENT

Among many other things competition is expected to bring about improved service delivery for very obvious reasons. Though competition abounds today in the telecommunication industry it has not always been the case thinking especially of the recent past years. The period of 2006 up to date has witnessed a phenomenal increase in the desired competition. What engages the attention of the writer is to ascertain whether or not the phenomenal competition has been accompanied by a commensurate improvement in quality of service in the telecommunication industry and especially whether the customer stands to gain or not. High call rates, low service quality, limited service times and poor and irregular customer care characterize the type of service given us by service providers. To add insult to injury there are other serious challenges among which are; ineffective management, low working conditions and high waiting times. Furthermore, there is low network coverage which makes services inaccessible to some consumers and also lacks privacy. Such a state of affairs is bad enough and calls for a very critical look into the situation with the view to unearthing certain vital solutions to an otherwise poor state of affairs.

Time and again consumers have registered their dissatisfaction on services rendered them yet still the problem rages on with that which borders on customer satisfaction with the type of service delivery in the telecommunication industry featuring prominently. (Ghanaweb.com.2013). Does the increase in competition in the industry reflect in improvement of service delivery? Efforts in this study are geared towards analyzing what pertains in the competition, what most effectively boosts customer satisfaction in Ghana's telecommunication industry where Tamale is a case study.

III. GENERAL OBJECTIVE

The objective of the study is to explore the healthy competition in the telecommunication industry in Ghana along lines of effective consumer satisfaction.

SPECIFIC OBJECTIVES

- ✓ To assess the expectations of consumers in the delivery of telecommunication services.
- ✓ To determine the most effective determinant to customer satisfaction

GENERAL RESEARCH QUESTION

How can the healthy competition going on in the telecommunication industry be explored to the benefit of the consumer?

SPECIFIC QUESTIONS

- ✓ What are the expectations of consumers in the delivery of telecommunication service?

- ✓ What gives consumers the greatest satisfaction?
- ### SCOPE OF THE STUDY

The research work is being conducted in Tamale Township. Tamale is the Northern Regional capital. The survey covered all the suburbs of Tamale township. As far as mobile use is concerned there was a great degree of homogeneity in the suburbs therefore the ten of them were cluster-sampled included: Choggu, Sabonjida, Changli, Nyanshegu, Shishegu, Gbanbaya-Nakpanzo, Kpalsi, Nyohini, Russian Bangalows, Tishigu, Kalpohini Estates.

The research findings will come in handy to industry players (telecommunication service providers) about the situations on the ground in the industry, so that appropriate service techniques can be used to boost customer satisfaction. Moreover, apart from the studies adding knowledge to the available literature it can help relate firms to strategize for a competitive advantage.

LIMITATION OF THE STUDY

This being a personal effort in the direction into further academia the sample was not big enough to arrive at the desired margin of error. Time also reared its ugly head. These constraints notwithstanding, determination propelled us on to come out with the final piece of hard work.

IV. LITERATURE REVIEW

INTRODUCTION

The discussion on relevant literature that pertains to the research objectives has been considered in this session. The following headings have been followed: nature of competition, concepts of service, consumer expectations on service delivery, techniques used by firms in service provision and assessing effects of competition on service delivery.

What is particularly good about competition is that many firms have joined the wagon of service provision and are fuelled up to take up the mantle of providing as much quality services in the market as they can humanly afford so as to snatch the much needed competitive advantage to attract customers and equally stay in business.

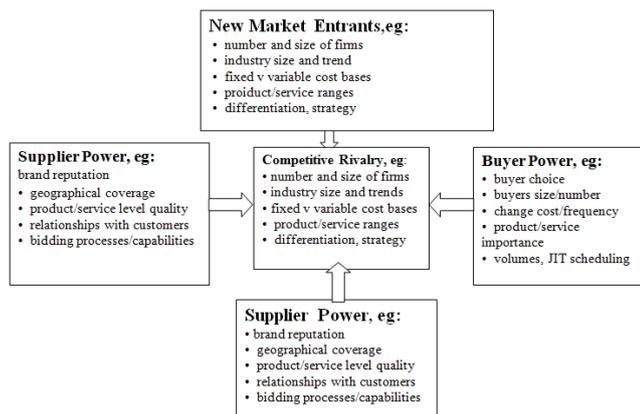
THEORIES OF COMPETITION

Competition in economics, is the rivalry among sellers trying to achieve such goals as increasing profits, market share, and sales volume by varying the elements of the marketing mix: price, product, distribution, and promotion. [en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Competition \(economics\)](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Competition_(economics))

According to Wikipedia (2013), competition "is a contest between individuals, groups, animals, organizations, etc for a territory, a niche, a location or resources, for resources and goods, prestige, recognition and awards, for mates and groups or social status for leadership, it is the opposite of cooperation. Whenever at least two parties strive for a goal which cannot be shared or which is desired individually the situation of competition comes about but cannot be in sharing and

cooperation. Naturally competition does occur naturally between living organisms which co-exist in the same environment. In a particular industry there are five forces that influence competition in a particular which affect the profitability of firms. The strength of these forces regulates the delivery of added value created by the firm (Porter, 1985). Producers or firms in the industry should make effort to understand the nature of their competitive environment so as to provide or develop effective or competitive strategies to achieve their objectives of growth and profitability. According to Porter (1985), the five forces include the power of suppliers, the power of buyers, the threat of potential entrants, threats of substitute products and finally rivalry among existing firms in the industry. These forces are presented on the diagram below.

PORTER'S FIVE FORCES OF COMPETITIVE POSITION



Cooley's general theory (Walter B. Bordenhafer, 1895), University of Washington, posits that organizations of course lead to competition and at the same time arises out of competitive system. Class consciousness which is introduced by organisations and permits a more serious type of struggle which is not bad in themselves, according to Cooley but may become so under certain conditions. This aspect of competition is deemed as bad if it transcends the larger social organization but on the other hand considered good if it confines itself to competition within the national order. Herein lies the impact of competition in the industry

THE CONCEPT OF SERVICE

In our context here one authority whose take on the matter at hand appears plausible is (Kotler et al, 2000). According to them service is 'any activity or benefit that one party can offer to the other party which is essentially intangible and does not result in the ownership of anything'. For example, Teaching, Banking, postal service, electricity supply etc.

In a similar vein Ingram, Loforge and Bearden (2004) define service as a nonphysical product such as hair cut, football game, or a doctor's diagnosis.

From the above definitions, it means that service has a unique characteristic which distinguishes it from physical products like a shirt or a pen. It should be appreciated here that he definitions also give us the most basic and universally cited

differences between goods and service. Rather than objects, services are performances or actions that cannot be seen, felt, tested or touched in the same manner as goods (Kotler and Armstrong, 2001).

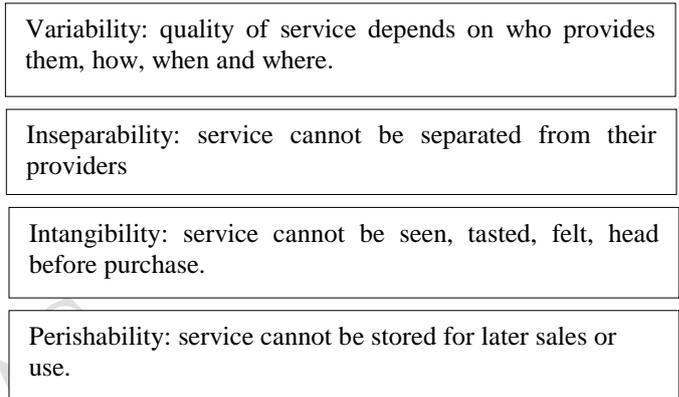
CHARACTERISTICS OF SERVICE

A service company such as cell phone service providers must consider four crucial attributes when designing marketing program (Kotler and Armstrong, 2001). These are:

- i Intangibility, ii Inseparability, iii Variability, iv Perishability

These characteristics are of paramount importance in enhancing service quality and delivery.

The diagram below shows the four main characteristics of service.



Source :(Kotler and Armstrong, 2001)

THE CONCEPT OF SERVICE DELIVERY AND CUSTOMER EXPECTATIONS BY SOME AUTHORITIES

In peering into this arena of business, it has been expedient to consult works of authorities, relevant materials and publications, which throw more light on the subject under discussion. Notably in this regard is an authority as Johnson (1991) who observed that quality encompasses every aspect of your firm and it is actually an emotional experience for the customer (students). Customers want to feel good about their purchase, to feel that they have gotten the best value.

They want to know their money has been well spent, and they take pride in their association with a company with a light quality image.

According to Bross (1986) "The essence of studies in consumer preference is to adjust the product to the public, rather than as in advertising to adjust the public to the product".

It is the view of Merli (1990) that "customer satisfaction is regarded as the only relevant object for ensuring and continuously increasing business".

Day and Taylor (1992) on their part noted that "management commitment to service quality plays a very important role in satisfying the customers' need and wishes". Most service providers believe that they already have commitment to service quality; however, their commitment is in general, based on the company's own internal and technical perspective. We see the service provider lacking viewing from the customer's angle. The service providers have to use their

resources for other organizational objectives, such as sales, profit or maintaining market shares.

Equivalently speaking, a service provider that does not set own initiatives to its internal service quality should be made to know that enhancing service quality will result in better company performance.

Bearden and Teel (1983) noted “in principle that, the two main things closely related to service are namely; expected quality and experienced or perceived quality. It is to be understood that the first is the customer’s expectation of service quality and the latter is the customer’s perception of service quality. The customer will always assess the experience by comparing them with whatever they expected or wished to receive”.

Explaining that organizational strategies must be developed as a way of enhancing customer satisfaction, Goetsch and Davis (1991) agreed that “customer satisfaction is a dynamic state associated with products, services, people, processes and environments that meet or exceed expectations”. Goetsch (1991) went ahead to define strategies as follows; that is, organizational strategies are the approaches adopted by the organization to ensure successful performance in the market place. These approaches are typically set forth in a comprehensive document called the strategy plan. This means that, the organization has to adopt activities, procedures, and processes that would go a long way to satisfy the customer they are dealing with, “everyone whether he sees the customer or not has the chance to build quality into the product or service offered. The people that see customers have a role that is not usually appreciated by supervisors and other management.” Getting into contact with customers is critical as many customers form their opinions about the product or the service solely by their contact with those they see.

Zeithaml and Bitner (1990) model of customer satisfaction stipulated that, quality service is the focus of assessment reflecting the customer’s perception on the five specific dimensions of service namely;

- ✓ Empathy
- ✓ Reliability
- ✓ Responsiveness
- ✓ Tangibility
- ✓ assurance

The concept of satisfaction on the other hand is more inclusive than the concept of quality service. Customer’s satisfaction is influenced by five variables namely;

- ✓ Service quality
- ✓ Product quality
- ✓ Price
- ✓ Situation
- ✓ Personality

As to the nature of customers’ needs, Juran (1989) explains further that “customers’ needs do not remain static adding that there is no such thing, as a permanent list of customers’ needs. Powerful forces that keep coming over the horizon and in ever changing directions beset us; new technology, market competitions, social upheavals and the international conflicts. These changing forces create new customer needs or change the priority given to existing ones”.

In facilitating communication a continual communication with customers is essential and for making sure that

mechanisms used are critical in establishing customer focus.

In 1990 Berryln associated competitive advantage with customer satisfaction. To him competitive advantage in the context of business is a powerful concept and achieving it should be the ultimate goal of any organization. Having the competitive advantage can be defined as being the customers’ supplier choice. Competitive advantage results from the set of characteristics your Organization is structured with which fundamentally lead customers to prefer to do business with you rather than with any other corporation.

That is all the more reason why Levite (1997) indicated that “A truly marketing-minded firm tries to create value satisfying goods and services that consumers would want to buy” with Drunker (2001) giving the assertion that “there is only one valid definition of business purpose; to create a customer”.

Sullivan (1997) had agreed that “the presence of the consumer as a participant in the process requires an attention to facilitate design that is not found in manufacturing. To him, the satisfaction and the quality of service are enhanced if the service facility is designed from customer perspective.”

Gordon (1999) held the view that “the customer is always right.” For him businesses that seek to survive in this turbulent environment should place the customer at the focal point.

According to Leewood (1996) “sell quality products at a reasonable price, treat your customers as human beings and they would always come for more”.

For Bevee and Thill (1999) their opinion was that “satisfied customers are more than a pleasant side effect of your business effort. Satisfied customers are the source of your profit; they are the reason you are in business (or at least they should be) unless you hold a monopoly position in a market. You are not going to stay in business if you can’t keep customers satisfied. Consistently delivering first rate quality customer service allows a company to build a number of important strength, including competitive barriers, consumer loyalty, clearly differentiated products, and lower marketing cost and higher prices. Finally, the issue surrounding quality must be enforced; customers pay you to meet their expectations and you have a responsibility to do so.

Marketers must therefore have at their minds that customers satisfaction should be their key priority since the market consists of other competitors, in order to take advantage of these opportunities the firm or organization can ensure quality service delivery, good pricing strategy, proper time delivery of service, service differentiation of firm to attract the interested customers ,availability service by the service providers to their customers carrying out marketing research to understand and identify the needs and wants of customers in marketplace. Firms that endure pain to ensure that all these are put in place stand a greater chance of surviving in business.

CUSTOMERS EXPECTATION IN SERVICE DELIVERY

Before delving into the whole complex of dealing in telecommunication business it behooves any entrepreneur to assess what effect this variable has on the envisaged trend - the expectation of customers with respect to product in question. As it has been well stated by Adam Smith (1776)

service delivery is “the effort of two or more parties acting independently to secure the business of third party by offering the most favorable terms”. This, in a number of ways suggests that, the quality of a service is dependent on not only how it is being delivered but also on how it increases or reduces the satisfaction factor. A gap that glares up here is that what is perceived by customers is not exactly what is provided by service dealers as has been captured by Parasuraman et al., (1985). Such a gap could lead to poor quality of delivery and it takes prudent management to correct and put the firm in a position to compete.

Service firms have been increasingly competing for market share on the basis of delivery-time as firms now choose to set customer expectation by announcing their maximal delivery-time. Customers will be satisfied if their perceived delivery-times are shorter than their expectations. Thus a gap model of service quality is used to study how a firm might choose a delivery-time commitment to influence its customer expectation and delivery quality in order to maximize its market share (Zheng and Ho, 2003).

On the basis of response, delivery, or shipping time firms have been increasingly competing for market share. Many firms now choose to announce a guarantee on their maximal service delivery-time in order to entice customers (Zheng and Ho, 2003). For example, several cable TV companies (e.g., Time Warner Cable) guarantee that they will be on time for installation otherwise their installation is free. In a similar way, many product firms waive their shipping charges if they do not deliver their products on time. Some banks even order handsome rebates on mortgage direct correspondence to closing costs if they fail to respond to loan applications within hours.

The conventional wisdom is that such commitment can provide a powerful source of competitive advantage if the service guarantee represents a breakthrough in service and the firm is able to fulfill the guarantee at high reliability. The burning questions should be how a firm can choose a delivery-time commitment that will have the most significant marketing impact, what factors determine this choice. In selecting a delivery-time commitment, the firm must consider not only how customers will react to the commitment but also whether it has adequate service capacity to fulfill the commitment with high reliability. A tight delivery-time commitment has both benefits and costs. It can attract impatient customers, but the performance of a congested system might deteriorate unless service capacity is expanded accordingly.

Depending on the inherent random nature of the customer arrival and service delivery processes, an excessive capacity may be required to fulfill the tight service guarantee. Conceptually, the choice of a delivery-time commitment requires thoughtful balance of consideration of both marketing (i.e., customer) on the one hand and operations (i.e., capacity) related factors on the other.

The conceptual framework is illustrated below:

QUALITY GAPS

GAP 1: Market information gap; due to incomplete or inaccurate knowledge of customer’s service expectations.

GAP 2: Service standards gap; arising from failure to translate accurately customer’s service expectation into specifications or guidelines for company personnel.

GAP 3: Service performance gap; occur when there is a lack of appropriate internal support systems (e.g. recruitment, training, technology, compensations) that enable company personnel to deliver to service standard.

GAP 4: Internal communication gap; inconsistencies between customers are told the service will be like and the actual service performance (e.g. due to lack of internal communication between the service “primers” (such as salespeople) and service providers (such as after sales service representatives)).

GAP 5: Customers satisfaction gap; this occurs when customers derive full satisfaction in using a particular service.

Source: A. Parasuraman, Valerie A. Zeithaml and Leonard L. Barry (1985)

This framework builds on models and concepts from the marketing and operations literature. The basic building block of the above integrative framework is the well-known gap model of service quality developed in the marketing literature (Parasuraman, Zeithaml, and Berry, 1985).

The gap model suggests that if a customer expects a certain level of service, and perceives the service received to be higher, s/he will be a satisfied customer. This stream of literature points the importance of managing customer expectation and perception for improving service quality.

In addition, it is empirically shown that purchase intention (and hence demand rate) increases as service quality improves (Boulding, Staelin, Kalra, and Zeithmal, 1999).

INNOVATION IN SERVICE DELIVERY

To ensure that they last long in the competitive service industry, service firms must continuously change the way services are delivered because consumers’ needs are not static but keep on changing as a result of changes in taste and preference. Professional service firms need to embark on inventing new services and products through technology in order to satisfy these changing needs. In the book of Rose Dawson(2007), “Service Delivery Innovation”, it is said that, “firms can create and implement new methods of delivering professional services that result in increased client value, lower costs, and higher profitability.” That a service firm that uses effective innovation in service delivery will be able to create customer value, customer loyalty, and distinct services in the market place and make it easier for the customer to purchase. By so doing delivery speed as well as profitability increases while service firms gain competitive advantage in the service industry. In addition to satisfying discerning clients, professional service firms must deal with increased competition in a variety of forms. The availability of online information, the pace at which the competition copies innovative ideas, and industry consolidation result in a steady and relentless increase in the number and types of competitive forces a professional services firm faces. The reason for this being that service firms in an intense competition are equally faced with increasingly sophisticated customers, market globalization and evolving technology.

Firms into service delivery in telecommunication industry are confronted with many challenges due to lapses in information communication technology. Despite the many opportunities associated with the rapid spread of information technology, there are several problems associated with it these include; (a) the unlimited opportunities for innovation which make marketing management more expensive. Any delay will mean loss of several opportunities, managers are compelled to spend so much in research and developments to keep abreast with technological changes, (b) more leisure activities provided by the information technology retards productivity. (c) information technology also limits the life span of the service posing a challenge to service providers in the industry.

V. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

INTRODUCTION

Here the general method that has been followed in conducting the survey and the sampling technique as well as data gathering style has been outlined. Sufficient indication as to the sources of the data and the statistical tools to be used to analyze the data has been given. It consists of the sources of data, data collection methods and instruments, sampling techniques, sample size and analysis.

RESEARCH DESIGN

As the twenty-first century enters into its teens, the mobile phone usage index in Ghana as a whole is getting higher and in the cities like Tamale it is approaching unity (Inter Media survey 2014/15). This helps to give an idea of the homogeneity or otherwise of the target population as far as that variable is concerned. As a matter of statistical fact the study population is homogenous as almost every matured individual possesses a mobile phone. What may vary markedly is the extent of usage by the individual. As such the various suburbs have been seen as homogenous and therefore cluster-sampled. The whole township was seen as a collection of clusters and ten clusters chosen at random. In each of the clusters (suburbs) a systematic kind of picking was down to ensure that a real highly unbiased sample was used for the study.

In order to be sure that ethics were followed to the letter, while in the suburbs one found a cardinal point preferable the chief's palace, a mosque, a chapel square, a health post etc. A toss of the ballot stick showed where (to which direction) to start. Thereafter the household to enter was decided by a systematic sampling. Once inside a household a complete record of all those who have or use mobile phone was taken in some bottom up type of system and by some balloting technique, the middle member is selected for interviewing. At this stage one does not discriminate among the various mobile phones nor does one select specific service provider. Data was also sourced from professional magazines and publications from newspapers internets and relevant text books. The data was collected analyzed using SPSS (17) whiles tables and charts were used where necessary for detailed elaboration.

TARGET POPULATION

Tamale doubles as the capital city of Northern Region of Ghana and the Tamale Metropolitan Assembly. The Assembly lies between latitude $9^{\circ} 16'$ and $9^{\circ} 34'$ North and longitudes $0^{\circ} 36'$ and $0^{\circ} 57'$ West. It shares common boundaries with Sagnarigu District to the west, Savelugu/Nanton District to the North, Tolon District to the West, Central Gonja District to the South-west, East Gonja District to the South and Yendi Municipality to the East. Tamale Metropolis occupies approximately 750km^2 , which is 13 percent of the total land area of the Northern Region. Apart from Urban Tamale, which occupies a total land area of about 130 sq. km? The Metropolitan Assembly has three Sub-metropolises namely; Tamale North, Tamale Projecting the 2010 census population of Tamale of 293,881 with the UN satisfied population growth rate of 3% we realize an estimated current population of $393,881 \times (1.03)^5 = 340,688$ with males and females accounting for approximately 50 percent each. The population aged 0 – 5 was slightly below that of 6 – 12 years whilst the majority of the population is between the ages of 15 and 64. The Tamale Metropolis can be said to comprise more youth indicating the tremendous human resource potential underlying the strength and resilience of the area in pursuing social, economic and political development goals.

SAMPLE SIZE DETERMINATION

For the purpose of academic study a sample size of ninety-six (96) was used and this sample size was used because of lack of resources and time constraints. There was some proportional distribution which on the average resulted to ten respondents from each of the ten sampled suburbs of Tamale township: Choggu, Sabonjida, Changli, Nyanshegu, Shishegu, Gbanbaya-Nakpanzo, Kpalsi, Nyohini, Russian Bangalows, Tishigu, Kalpohini Estates.

SAMPLING TECHNIQUES

There is a high degree of homogeneity in the metropolis in so far as mobile phone use is concerned therefore each suburb was taken as an independent cluster and ten randomly chosen by balloting to form the sample used for the study. At this stage we were oblivious of the plural nature of the service providers because the survey outcome was to drop an indication of the distribution of the various service providers.

SOURCES OF DATA

Data were obtained from both primary and secondary sources. A self-designed interview guide was used to obtain some vital information from a purposively selected sample of staff of service providers and questionnaires were served to the 96 respondents from within the township. The management of the service providers volunteered some secondary data on our request

ANALYTICAL PROCEDURE

The data so obtained were sorted, and fed into the

computer for the SPSS 17 statistics package to analyse. Statistical analysis included Frequency tables

VI. DATA ANALYSIS AND PRESENTATION

INTRODUCTION

This chapter deals with the presentation and analysis of data collected from the field. Two sets of questionnaires were administered- one set was for cell phone users and the other set of questionnaires was for management of cell phone services. The data were analyzed and presented as follows.

Age Groupings of Respondents	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid 10-20	18	18.8	18.8	18.8
21-30	52	54.2	54.2	72.9
31-40	13	13.5	13.5	86.5
41-50	13	13.5	13.5	100.0
Total	96	100.0	100.0	

Source (Field work 2014)

Table 1: Age of Respondents

From Table 1 above, 18 respondents were from the age grouping of 10-20 years, 13 from 41-50 years, 13 from 31-40 age group with the modal class of 21-30 having 52. It therefore implies that most of the respondents were cell phone users between the ages 21-30 years. This suggests that the use of mobile phones is rather very popular with the youth in that age bracket. Obviously this age group is made up of the youth supposedly in the post secondary or tertiary institutions who make maximum use of the recent innovations in the mobile phone industry.

Service provider	Customer base	Market share (%)
TiGo	127,226	18
Vodafone	135,508	19
MTN	377,728	52
Airtel	74,688	10
Expresso	8,692	1
Total	723,842	100

Source: Adom radio news/Ghana report June, 2013.

Table 2: Customer base of firms in the telecommunication industries

Table 2 shows the market share of the various firms in the telecommunication service industry in Tamale with MTN commanding more than half of the combined market (52%). Vodafone with 127,226 customer base equivalent to 19% ranks next. Tigo follows with 18% share, Airtel has 10% and Expresso lags behind with a customer base of 8,692 equivalents to only 1% of the market share. The increase of MTN market could be due to their wide cell phone network

coverage nationwide and the capital investment made. (As far as mobile sale is concerned MTN appears to have taken a commanding lead in and around Tamale partly because at some time in the mobile regime the market dynamic worked out to have only MTN chips were available on the market.

Type of service	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid provision of money transfer	29	30.2	30.2	30.2
health tip-bits	20	20.8	20.8	51.0
currency exchange rates	2	2.1	2.1	53.1
borrowing units	18	18.8	18.8	71.9
Wider coverage	12	12.5	12.5	84.4
None	7	7.3	7.3	91.7
Bank prompts	4	4.2	4.2	95.8
raffle promotion	2	2.1	2.1	97.9
9	2	2.1	2.1	100.0
Total	96	100.0	100.0	

Source: Field data 2014

Table 3: Most satisfying innovation

The question on people's most desirable innovation yielded the chart in table 3. As shown respondents indicated with 29 out of 96 representing 30.2% of total frequency that the recent provision of money transfer is the most cherished innovation in the mobile service industry. With a frequency of 28.2% the innovation that borders on Health Tip Bits is the second most cherished facility. This in several ways demonstrates how the study population cares about their health. Wider coverage takes the next position with a 12.5% frequency. The rest of the innovations take up frequencies much lower than 5%. This is far from suggesting the innovations of low frequency are not necessary but rather but rather the peaking ones are preferred over the rest.

Expectations	No. of respondents	Percentage (%)
Quality service	50	52
Low call rate (price)	20	20.8
Promotion(bonuses)	18	18.7
Fast delivery	8	8.3
Total	96	100

Source: Field Survey, 2014

Table 4: People's Expectations

In Table 4, customers expectations as far as services provided are concerned have been put in a frequency table. Out of the total responses received, 50 are expecting the type of service providers offer to be of the quality type in order that it can be flagged as satisfactory. If as at now the efforts made by providers are leaving plenty room to desire then their

subsequent efforts should now be geared to achieving this desired goal. Coming next are 20 of the respondents who are expecting the stiff competition among providers to lead to reduced call rate. 18 respondents on the other hand would imagine that the aggressive competition should bring about more bonus packages (credit bonuses) to be offered consumers while 8 people representing 8.3% of the respondents are expecting the competition to bring about faster delivery times than we have now. With these, it can be deduced that customers' priority in their expectations is for quality in the services they receive to have value for money.

Impact	No. of respondents	Percentage (%)
Positive	61	63.5
Negative	27	28.1
Neutral	8	8.3
Total	96	100

Source: Field Survey, 2014.

Table 5: Impact of competition on service delivery

As to what people's impressions about the effect of the competition among service providers are has been summarized in Table 5 where 63.5% of the respondents indicated that competition among service providers has improved service delivery in the Metropolis. 27 of the respondents thought there had rather been some retardatory developments stemming from the competition among providers. Eight (8) of the respondents indicated neutrality in so far as competition affecting the existing mobile phone service industry is concerned. As majority of the respondents 61 representing 63.5% of valid respondents agreed that there has been a positive impact and hence improvement in service delivery, it therefore implies that MTN service providers are working to improve upon their service delivery. This positive impact of competition in the industry has made service providers deliver quality services in order to increase their customer base (market share) in the industry. This indeed is accompanied with high investment leading to an increase in the cost of delivery.

VII. MANAGEMENT RESPONSE

THE GROWTH OF TELECOMMUNICATION INDUSTRIES

The responses from management were the same as that of users and can be interpreted with a single glance without difficulty. The management of telecommunication industries saw the growth (in terms of the subscriber base) of the industry to be positive-that is, more people are attracted to use phone. This was expressed by management because it has made them diverse innovative strategies that enhance excellent service delivery. This according to them increases the number of customers in the industry.

Also, with regards to the impact of competition

management said I puts them on their toes to provide quality services to meet customers' expectations, enhancement of services to customers at an increasing cost and also leads to increase in innovative products and strategies.

CHALLENGES ENCOUNTERED IN SERVICE DELIVERY

Cell phone service providers just like any other "business enterprise" are faced with numerous challenges in providing quality cell phone services to its client. Some of the challenges provided by management during Field Survey include the following:

- ✓ *INADEQUATE PERSONNEL*-as people who are suppose to render services to customers in the organization are not enough, customers who call the organization cannot get quick services and the few staff available might be under pressure to serve them. This can lead to poor service delivery and hence, frustrations on both parties.
- ✓ *CONGESTION IN REACHING TELECOMMUNICATION INDUSTRIES*-when too many customers are on cell phone line of a particular cell network at the same time, it become difficult for users to reach their target recipients which leads to call failures. This is obvious during phone in programs on TV and radio discussions.
- ✓ *NON POSSESSION OF ID CARDS*-as telecommunication service providers are mandated to register their customers so that calls made can be traced (caller identification) and taxes determine, some customers who come to register their cell phone numbers do not have appropriate identification card (e.g., voter ID and National Identification Card) which poses a lot of challenge.
- ✓ *SECURITY*-that is, criminal persons who know much about telecommunication network (hackers) take advantage of getting access to user's information by way diverting calls and gambling through text messages. This has been a worry to service providers in the industry since it discredits them.
- ✓ *LEGAL ISSUES*-as the number of firms rises from two to five more stakeholders including the government have become more concerned and hence devising more laws (e.g., top time tax) which affect cost of service provision.
- ✓ Unstable to sustain GPRS

From the field, cell phone service providers were asked to give their own opinions as whether they encounter challenges in service delivery or not and as it was revealed, all the total respondents of fifteen (15) who represents 100% said yes. Management of Airtel explained that there is lack of personnel to take care of long queue which brings a lot of tension during service delivery. On the part of MTN, there is congestions in their cell telecommunication which lead to call failures, Tigo and expresso said they face problems during customers SIM card registration as a result of lost ID cards while management of Vodafone said they are unable to sustain GPRS services. This means firms in the industry have varying problems that affect effective service delivery and need to be address independently.

TECHNIQUES USED IN COMPETING

Based on the responses received from management on the communication strategies used to compete, all the 15 respondents representing 100% use pull strategy. This is where firm's communication is geared towards and emphasis is placed on advertising and later sales promotion at the consumer end to create demand. Their hope is that consumers will go to retailers or vendors to find their product or service, this will convince the retailer or vendor to stock the product which will stimulate wholesalers or agents to distribute their products or services which will result in orders being placed with service providers. This strategy can be implemented by providing quality cell phone services, providing weekly credit/SMS bonuses, advertisement on television, local radio and newspapers, and price (call rate) reductions. This will help firms attract and retain customers which will lead to more profit mobilization and growth. MTN, Vodafone and Airtel said they introduced innovative service in addition to the techniques above to attract more customers. It can therefore be deduced that, innovation is the order of the day in the industry to enhance effective competition as evidenced in the shares they hold in the industry.

VIII. SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

A. INTRODUCTION

This chapter presents the conclusions and recommendations of the study

B. SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

From the study it is revealed that competition has made service providers devise new strategies in order to become more effective in providing accurate services to meet customers' expectations. Despite the increasing nature of customers' expectations in the industry, it can be said in general that customers are satisfied with services delivered. This is evident in tables 5 and 6 of chapter four (4) respectively.

CUSTOMER EXPECTATIONS

The study revealed that, 24 of respondents who constitute the majority think management should provide quality cell phone service to enable customers have value for money. This is because of call failures. Again, the study has shown an improvement in service delivery as competition has intensified which is as a result of increase in innovation.

CUSTOMER SATISFACTION

It can be observed from the study that, 36 of the respondents/users were satisfied with the services rendered to them. On the other hand, 14 respondents were dissatisfied with the services of the providers.

CHALLENGES ENCOUNTERED BY SERVICE PROVIDERS IN THE INDUSTRY

It was also revealed from the study that cell phone service providers face the following challenges:

- ✓ Inadequate personnel-as people who are supposed to render services to customers in the organization are not enough, customers who call the organization cannot get quick services and the few staff available might be under pressure to serve them. This can lead to poor service delivery and hence, frustrations on both parties.
- ✓ Congestion in reaching telecommunication industries-when too many customers are on cell phone line of a particular cell network at the same time, it becomes difficult for users to reach their target recipients which leads to call failures. This is obvious during phone-in programs on TV and radio discussions.
- ✓ Non possession of ID cards-as telecommunication providers are mandated to register their customers so that calls made can be traced (caller identification) and taxes determined, some customers who come to register their cell phone numbers do not have appropriate identification card (e.g., voter ID and National Identification Card) which poses a lot of challenge.
- ✓ Telecommunication number portability-That is, switching to a different cell phone service with the same number. This may be due to dissatisfaction received by customers.
- ✓ Security-that is, criminal persons who know much about cell phone network (hackers) take advantage of getting access to user's information by way of diverting calls and gambling through text messages. This has been a worry to service providers in the industry since it discredits them.
- ✓ Legal issues-as the number of firms rise from two to five more stakeholders including the government have become more concerned and hence devising more laws (e.g., top time tax) which affect cost of service provision.

C. CONCLUSION

The impact of competition among telecommunication service providers in the industry has led to an improved service delivery bringing about some bit of customer satisfaction. In spite of this effect, competition has also brought some difficulties in accessing cell phone services. This is as a result of congestion, poor customer care, service delays, inadequate personnel and inability to sustain GPRS. Apart from this, the cell phone service industry is always growing through increasing subscriber numbers and thereby bringing about congestion (difficulty in accessing service). Competition should therefore be encouraged to increase the effectiveness of service providers through quality service delivery leading to revenue generation from the cell phone services which will ultimately make telecommunication companies gain more loyal and delighted customers.

D. RECOMMENDATIONS

Though the results from the study showed progress made across MTN and Vodafone services, significant shortfalls exist in the other telecommunication service providers. Some of the

major recommendations which will help bridge the gap and facilitate quality service delivery in the telecommunication service industry include:

- ✓ Firms in the industry should begin service delivery by thinking of the customer as a 'king'. This will enable firms understand customers needs and provide appropriate services to meet expectations. This will retain both existing and new customers to increase profit.
- ✓ Firms should consider monitoring the competitive environment in the industry by developing appropriate marketing information systems. This will help them to gather accurate information to develop effective strategies to achieve objectives. This will make firms meet customer expectations through effective service delivery and hence more sales and profit.
- ✓ Service providers in the industry should also consider innovations to supplement their existing services through modern technological systems. This will promote quality service delivery to meeting customers' expectations. For example, using advance technology to deal with weather that hamper telecommunication service network. When this happens the company will be able to stay in the industry without being outcompeted and also enhance quality service delivery.
- ✓ From the human Resource Development point of view more personnel are needed to reduce tensions and long waiting time in offices. This will also help improve service delivery leading to increased in market share and profitability.

Firms in the industry should reduce call rates so that customers will have value for money. These reduced tariffs will influence more subscribers to acquire their services which will increase market share and hence profit.

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