Vol 7. No. 5 – December, 2014
African Journal of Computing & ICT

www.ajocict.net

Telecommunication Services Provision in Nigeria- Consumers' Perspectives on Information Provision, Advertising and Representation of Services

N.O. Samuel
Africa Regional Centre for Information Science
University of Ibadan
Ibadan, Nigeria
samnoah2001@yahoo.com

W. Olatokun
Africa Regional Centre for Information Science
University of Ibadan, Nigeria and
Information Studies Programme
University of Kwazulu-Natal, South Africa
woleabbeyolatokun@yahoo.co.uk

ABSTRACT

This study examined mobile telecommunication users' perception of service providers, with regard to information provision as well as advertising and representation of services. The study was conducted in Ibadan – a Nigerian municipality. The objective was to determine whether information provision and advertising and representation of services will significantly impact the perception of the telecom users. Using convenience sampling technique, 626 respondents were selected among the consumers of four telecommunications service providers - MTN, GLO, AIRTEL, and ETISALAT. Data was collected with a 5-point Likert scaled structured questionnaire developed from the Nigerian Communications Commission's (NCC) consumer code of practice regulation for telecom operators in the country. Descriptive statistics was used to group the observations. Findings showed that subscribers of MTN and GLO perceived their respective providers negatively with regard to providing required information as well as the representation of their products in advertising. It was recommended that NCC should be more proactive in gathering primary data from the users in order to be able to understand the situation and level of compliance with their various regulatory documents. Service providers were also advised to ensure that consumers' desires are met in order to continue to be in their good books.

Keywords: Advertising, Code of Practice, Consumer perception, Provision of Information, Telecom Service Providers

African Journal of Computing & ICT Reference Format:
N.O. Samuel & W. Olatokun (2014). Telecommunication Services Provision in Nigeria: Consumers' Perspectives on Information Provision, Advertising and Representation of Services. Afr J. of Comp & ICTs. Vol 7, No. 5. Pp 63-76.

1. INTRODUCTION

The world's current population is estimated at about 6.9 billion people [30]. Out of this figure, about 6.8 billion have been verified to own a mobile phone [10][19]. This is a staggering 98 percent of the human race. The mobile phone has been said to be the fastest diffusing innovation of all time, taking just a few years to reach the furthest part of the world [7][24]. Mobile phones have out-diffused virtually every prior technology including; bicycles, radios, television sets, wallets, and wristwatches, and has done so in twenty-five years [24][11]. At the moment, China, India, United States, Indonesia, Brazil, Russia, Japan, Pakistan, Germany and Nigeria are reported to be the top 10 countries in the world with over 100 million mobile subscriptions [19]. Out of the global 6.8 billion subscribers' figure, the total corresponding to the developed world is estimated to be 1.6 billion while the remaining 5.2 billion plus, belong to the developing economy.

Of the figure corresponding to the developing world, subscribers on the African Continent are estimated to be 545 million. Nigeria with an estimated population of 162.5 million according to The World Bank [30], is reported to have an active mobile subscribers base estimated at about 106.9 million out of the total subscribers of 143 million people [21]. Nigerian active mobile subscribers hence represent about 65.8 percent of the entire population. Furthermore, Nigerian subscribers also constitute about 19 percent of the total mobile telecom subscribers on the African Continent, a feat that has earned the country the first on the African continent and the 10th place in the entire world. Mobile telecommunications service provision in Nigeria is currently shared among four companies that include; MTN, GLO, AIRTEL, and ETISALAT.

Statistics showed that among the subscribers of mobile service in Nigeria, MTN subscribers top the list with over 47 million subscribers constituting about 43.3 percent of the total GSM subscribers in the country. GLO is the second with subscribers' base of over 24 million which represent about 22 percent of the total market share and it is followed by AIRTEL with over 23 million constituting about 21.1 percent of the total market share. ETISALAT currently has the least subscribers of about 14 million plus, representing about 13.6 percent of the total market share [21].

Despite the fact that mobile telecommunications consumers in Nigeria have been ranked among the top ten consumers of mobile services in the World according to mobiThinking [19], Nigerian mobile subscribers still groan under the poor performance in service delivery by the four telecommunications service providers in the Country. For example with over US$ 5.750 billion investment recently ploughed into network expansion projects by operators in the market, Nigerians are yet to feel the impact in terms of improvements in network quality with drop calls, unsolicited text messages, sudden tariff deductions and incoherent voice transmission still prevalent in the industry [34]. In an article by Famutimi [5], it was reported that the Director of Public Affairs of the Nigerian Communications Commission; the regulatory authority overseeing the telecommunications sector, asserts that the service providers are seriously lagging in meeting the required performance index set by the commission and further encourage the consumers to take service providers to court on account of flouting required regulations. The advice given by the Director according to the article, came as a result of a poll it conducted on its consumer portal; *www.consumer.ncc.gov.ng*, which indicated that 81.52 per cent of consumers it surveyed in February 2014 were dissatisfied with the services rendered by their operators. It should be of note that primary studies of this type that obtain the opinions of the consumers will provide effective views and hence help in the decision making processes of both operators and regulatory bodies.

Hence, the kernel of our study is to assess from the consumers' perspectives, two variables from the regulatory framework provided by NCC which stipulated the general consumer code of practice that the telecommunications service providers must adhere to, and subsequently find any differences; based on these variables, in the assessment of the consumers of the four mobile service providers in Nigeria. The two variables are: *provision of information to consumers* and *advertising and representation of services*. Provision of information to consumers gives the minimum requirements for the telecom operators as far as service description, contracts information, pricing information and so on are concerned. Advertizing and representation of services, on the other hand, stipulates the directives for product representation in adverts, unsolicited telemarketing and the likes. Therefore, our objective in this study is to examine:

i. Nigerian telecom consumers' perception of service providers in terms of their provision of information to consumers
ii. Nigerian telecom consumers' perception of service providers in terms of their advertisement and representation of services.
iii. The differences in the perception of MTN, GLO, AIRTEL and ETISALAT consumers in terms of provision of information
iv. The differences in the perception of MTN, GLO, AIRTEL and ETISALAT consumers in terms of advertisement and representation of services

To provide answers to the stated objectives, the following research questions guided the study:
1: What is the perception of Nigerian telecom service consumers about service providers in terms of provision of information?
2: What is the perception of Nigerian telecom service consumers about service providers in terms of advertisement and representation of services?
3: What is the difference in the perception of MTN, GLO, AIRTEL and ETISALAT's consumers in terms of provision of information?
4: What is the difference in the perception of MTN, GLO, AIRTEL and ETISALAT's consumers in terms of advertisement and representation of services?

The remainder of this paper is organized as follows: the next section presents the review of related literature. The methodological procedures adopted in the execution of the study were then presented followed by the results and discussion. The conclusions and recommendations finalized the paper.

2. PREVIOUS STUDIES

According to Levin and Gaeth [17], provision of product information and the way products are represented in advertising go a long way to shape the buyers' perspectives. This definitely is not only in the telecommunication sector but across several other industry sectors. Studies have explored the provision of product information to consumers and some have made conclusions on producers' intentions as far as product information provision to consumers is concerned. According to Nelson [20], the producer in his advertising is not interested directly in providing information for consumers but in selling more of his product. He further stated that the advertising message says anything the seller of a brand wishes and this practice is only subject to a few constraints. Exploring the cognitive effect of deceptive advertising, Olson and Dover [23] defined deceptive advertising as one that creates a false or incorrect belief about the product.

African Journal of Computing & ICT

www.ajocict.net

With regard to creating incorrect belief, a few studies have also explored the way advertising messages are framed or presented and its effects on the consumers (Dunegan, 1996; McCuster and Carnevale, 1995; Shelley and Omer, 1996 as cited by [18]). In their study, Martin and Marshall [18] while investigating the most appropriate message framing to present to consumers, established that consumers are often influenced by the framing of advert messages either negative framing or positive framing.

Chandy *et al* [2] examined the effects of advertising cues on consumer behaviour in new versus established markets. The conclusion from their study is that the same advertising cue can have different effects on consumer behaviour depending on whether the market is old or new. Cason and Gangadharan [1] documented the market failure that arises from incomplete information. To buttress the influence of product information on consumer behaviour, Kozup *et al* [15] while studying the influence of health claims and nutrition information on consumers' evaluations of packaged food reported that when favorable nutrition information or health claims are presented, consumers have more favorable attitudes toward the product. A similar study was conducted by Drichoutis *et al* [4] which examined consumers' use of nutritional labels and the authors stated that nutritional information affects purchasing behavior because it influences valuations and perceptions of the product. This makes it imperative for proper consideration of what type of product information is made available to consumers [3]. Garella and Petrakis [6] studied the deployment of policy supporting minimum quality standards for some products and concluded that it is appropriate to use minimum quality standards in industries where consumers cannot precisely ascertain the quality of goods giving example of the pharmaceuticals or products with chemical components.

Advertising messages have been reported to be conveyed through diverse media other than the traditionally known media and there is constant increase in these channels which has given rise to what is popularly known as mobile marketing. Apart from the content or the framing of the message being passed across, consumers are also reacting to the frequency and channels with which these adverts messages are conveyed. For example, Shannon [28] reported that the telephone; an example of a mobile device, has been called "a uniquely invasive technology" because it essentially allows solicitors to invade people's privacy with little or no restrictions. Mobile marketing is now a veritable way through which most products are introduced to the consumers and studies have been carried out on this channel [8][16]. The telecommunication revolution has made Short Message Service (SMS) a common advertising platform (Bamba and Barnes, 2007 cited by [25].

It has been reported that for marketers, SMS advertising provides several advantages, such as cost effectiveness, ubiquity, immediacy, and targeted message delivery (Rettie and Brum, 2001 as cited by [25]. Muk, (2007), Grant and O'Donohoe [8], and Xu, (2006/2007) as cited by Phau and Teah [25] were however reported to have said that 79% of online consumers find receiving mobile advertising through their phones irritating and intrusive. To curb this intrusion of privacy, some western countries already have in place what is referred to as a 'national do not call list' [29][33].

Despite the importance of information provision and advertising practices of service providers to the consumers of telecommunication services, specific studies on how telecommunication subscribers view information provision and advertising practices of the service providers are currently low as a number of studies in the sector have mainly focus on issues such as consumers' satisfaction with mobile services, loyalty to brands, service quality, price or call rates, customer care centre service and a number of other factors [14][31][13][9][22][32][26].

3. METHOD

3.1 Research Design and Selection of Respondents

Survey design was adopted. The study was carried out among GSM consumers in Ibadan, a Nigerian municipality. The population of interest was the consumers of the four mobile telecommunications service providers (MTN, GLO, AIRTEL, ETISALAT) in the city. Convenience sampling, a non-probabilistic sampling technique was adopted in the selection of respondents because of the possibility of having access to a large number of mobile subscribers within the study location. In all, 626 respondents were sampled.

3.2 Operationalisation of Variables, Instrumentation and Data Analyses

Two main variables were measured in this study. These were: *provision of information to consumers* and *advertisement and representation of services.* These variables were measured using other sub-variables contained in the research instrument. The sub-variables in turn made up of items that elicited specific information from the respondents. These items were measured on the five-point Likert scale ranging from *strongly disagree* to *strongly agree.* A structured questionnaire, comprising all the constructs treated under each of the variables, was used in the collection of the required data. The questionnaire was divided into Parts A and B. Part A collected demographic information about the respondents as well as the telecommunication service providers used. Part B made up of two sections. Section 1 collected data on the first variable which was *provision of information to consumers* while section 2 collected data on the second variable which was *advertising and representation of services*. The content of the different parts of the questionnaire are described as follows:

- **a) Part A:** Demographic profile of the respondents were collected and these include; sex, age, educational qualification, network service provider(s) used, and the primary network service provider used by respondents.

b) Part B: The part B of the instrument collected data using the 5-point likert scale format. This part is divided into two sections and each sections elicited different responses as discussed below.

i. Section 1 - This section elicited data on one of the two variables in the study which is *provision of information to consumers.* The sub-categories of variables here include;

- *Service contracts information:* A service contract according to the Nigerian Communications Commission is an agreement the consumer and the service provider enters into in the process of transaction.
- *Description of services:* This has to do with instructions and guidelines provided by the Nigerian Communications Commission with regard to clear and unambiguous way service providers should make information about service provisioning available to the subscribers
- *Pricing information*: This is the assessment of the service providers based on the provision of clear and plain pricing information for customers.
- *Product warranties and maintenance:* This measured whether service providers make product warranty information available to subscribers if such is available for a product or service purchased and also the clarity of the language used for such information.
- *Fault repair and service interruption:* This is a measure of how service providers make available to consumers, avenue through which information regarding fault repairs and service interruption can be reported.
- *Access to emergency services:* The Nigerian Communications Commission stipulated that service providers should make available avenues through which emergency reports can be made.

The items under each of the above sections were culled from the Nigerian Communications Commission's consumer code of service regulation; a document on which this study is based. Each of the items in the different sections were directly taken from this document and phrased in ways that subscribers were able to relate with.

ii. Section 2 - This section elicited data on the second variable in the study which is *advertisement and representation of services.* The items under each of the sections were also culled from the Nigerian Communications Commission's regulatory document on which the study is based. Below is a brief discussion of the sub-categories of variables under this section:

- *Availability of services:* The Nigerian Communications Commission stipulated that in advertising a product or service offered, service providers must state if there is any technical or geographical limitations that may hinder the availability of such service.
- *Advertising of packaged services:* It is expected that if a service provider represents in advertising materials that a service is provided as part of a package, the provider must ensure that it supply all components of the service package.
- *Unsolicited telemarketing:* Unsolicited telemarketing has to do with direct-to-phone marketing used by the service providers as well as their partners.

The instrument comprised five items for the *demographic* variables, 20 items under the *provision of information to subscribers* and 10 items under the *advertising and representation of services* variable. In all, there were a total of 35 items.

The instrument passed content validation by three experts in social informatics research. After data collection, items reliability were tested using computed Cronbach's alpha value (Cronbach's alpha = 0.893). Data was collected within a period of two months between August and September 2013 by the researchers with the support of 4 research assistants. In all, the study earmarked a sample size of 700 out of which 626 (89.4 %) were certified to be valid for analysis. From the remaining 74 copies of the questionnaire, seven were not properly filled by the participants while the remaining 67 were not returned. The data used in the analysis was therefore based on the properly filled 626 copies (MTN=287; GLO=123; ETISALAT=119; and AIRTEL=97) of the questionnaire.

Using Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) software, frequency distribution was ran on all variables while the variables used to measure *provision of information to consumers* and *advertising and representation of services* were re-coded as (1=strongly disagree + 2=disagree) = (1=disagree), (4= agree + 5= strongly agree) = (2=agree), and (3= undecided) = (3= Undecided) to provide a summarized perception of the respondents which were then presented in tables and charts.

4. RESULTS

4.1 Demographic Characteristics of the Respondents

a) Participants' Sex: Figure 1 presents the distribution of the respondents based on their sex.

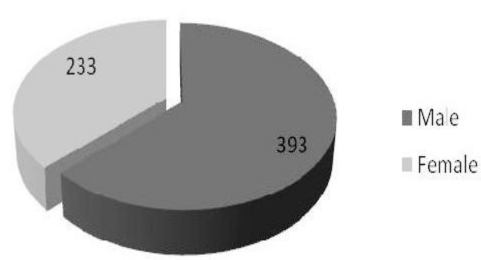

Figure 1 – Sex Distribution of the Respondents

Vol 7. No. 5 – December, 2014
African Journal of Computing & ICT

www.ajocict.net

The sex distribution is represented in Figure 1 which shows a clear distinction between the two categories of the study's participants.

b) **Participants' age group:** Participants in the study were grouped into four age groups and these are: 15 – 24; 25 – 34; 35 – 44 and 45 – above. Table 1 shows the distribution of these age groups.

Table 1 - Respondents' Age Distribution

		Frequency	Percent
Valid	15-24	257	36.7
	25-34	236	33.7
	35-44	103	14.7
	45-above	30	4.3
	Total	626	89.4
Missing	System	74	10.6
Total		700	100.0

From Table 1, respondents within the age range 15 – 24 have the largest representation with a total number of 257(41.1 valid percent), while the age group 45 – above has the least participants with 30 (4.8 valid percent) .

4.2 Participants' academic qualifications: The academic level of the respondents is presented in Figure 2.

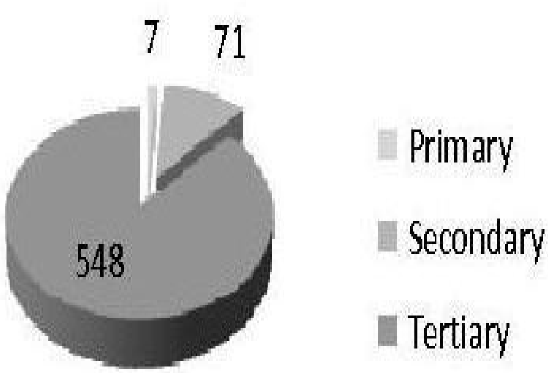

Figure 2 – Respondents' Educational Qualification

Figure 2 shows that majority of the participants were educated to the tertiary level with eighty-eight percent of them belonging to the tertiary category while just 7% of them stopped the education cadre at the primary school level.

4.3 Service Providers Used and Preferred

The respondents were asked to specify the service provider(s) used and the one preferred. Under the service provider used, respondents were able to select up to four service providers and then specify which one was being used as the primary line under the item for primary network used.

a) **Subscribers with Multiple Lines:** Figure 3 shows the distribution of the number of network subscribed to by individuals who participated in the study.

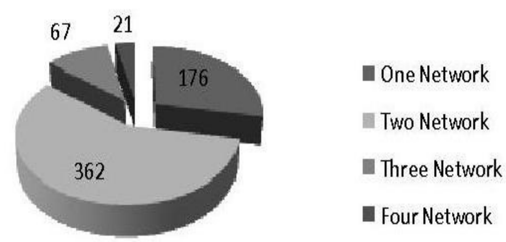

Figure 3 – Numbers of Mobile Service Operators Used by Respondents

From Figure 3, the respondents participants who were customers of two service providers topped the list with a total of 362 (57.8%). A breakdown of this statistics is shown in Table 2.

Table 2 - NUMBER OF NETWORK USED VERSUS PRIMARY NETWORK USED

Count

			PRIMARY NETWORK USED				
			MTN	GLO	ETISALAT	AIRTEL	Total
NUMBERS OF NETWORK USED	1	Count	66	38	29	43	176
		% of Total	10.5	6.1	4.6	6.9	28.1
	2	Count	174	73	72	43	362
		% of Total	27.8	11.7	11.5	6.9	57.8
	3	Count	41	7	11	8	67
		% of Total	6.4	1.1	1.8	1.3	10.7
	4	Count	6	5	7	3	21
		% of Total	1.0	0.8	1.1	0.5	3.4
Total		Count	287	123	119	97	626
		% of Total	45.8	19.6	19.0	15.5	100.0

From Table 2, MTN subscribers topped the list across those who subscribe to multiple networks. One hundred and seventy four (27.8%) of the 362 respondents who subscribed to two networks reported that their primary line is MTN. Of the 287 respondents who reported MTN to be their primary line, only 66(10.5%) of them make use of only MTN without subscribing to other service providers.

African Journal of Computing & ICT

www.ajocict.net

b) Primary Network Used by Respondents: Figure 4 shows the distribution of the participants based on the primary network used.

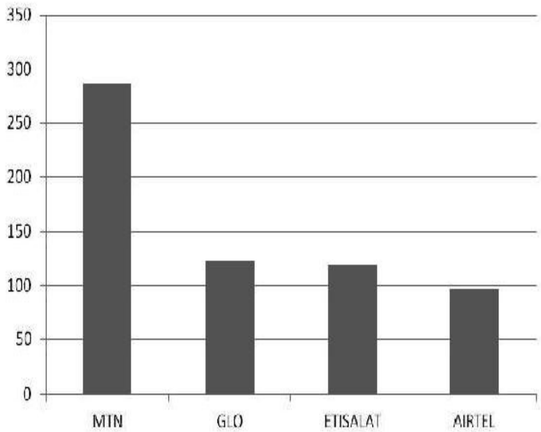

Figure 4 – Primary Network Used by Subscribers

MTN subscribers were ahead of others as shown in Figure 4 and Table 3. Subscribers who reported that MTN is their primary line were 287(45.8%), those who said it is GLO were 123(19.6%), subscribers who subscribed to Etisalat as their primary lines were 119(19.0%) whle those whose primary line is Airtel were 97(15.5%).

4.4 Research Questions
This section presents the results based on the four research questions this study sought to find answers to. The questions and the responses from the study's participants are presented in the following sub-sections:

a) Consumers' Perception of Service Providers in Terms of Provision of Information: The first question this study sought to find answer to was the perception of Nigerian telecom service consumers about service providers in terms of provision of information. Table 4 provides the frequency distribution of the responses.

African Journal of Computing & ICT

www.ajocict.net

Table 4: AGGREGATED RESPONSES FOR PROVISION OF INFORMATION TO SUBSCRIBERS					
		AGREE		DISAGREE	
SERVICE CONTRACT INFORMATION		*Count*	*% of Total*	*Count*	*% of Total*
Item 1	My service provider usually make available to me a copy of the agreement for the provision of services whenever I make a request for it	192	30.7	300	47.9
Item 2	The language used in such agreement, including the technical details, is usually plain and clear.	193	30.8	280	44.7
DESCRIPTION OF SERVICES					
Item 1	Before subscribing for any service, my service provider usually provide me with a complete description of such service in clear and plain language, without unnecessary technical terms	263	42.0	287	45.8
Item 2	My service provider usually supplies information on the service quality levels offered	240	38.3	259	41.4
Item 3	My service provider usually supplies information on the waiting time for initial connection.	250	39.9	244	39.0
Item 4	My service provider supplies information on any area(s) covered by any service offered.	203	32.4	301	48.1
Item 5	My service provider supplies specific information regarding any compensation, refund or other arrangements, which may apply if contracted quality service levels are not met	147	23.5	363	58.0
Item 6	Where services are packaged with one or more other services or products, my service provider supplies me with a description of each service or product	224	35.8	289	46.2
Item 7	Where services are subject to upgrade or migration options, I am usually provided with clear and complete information regarding the upgrade or migration terms, including any changes in service performance	245	39.1	298	47.6
PRICING INFORMATION					
Item 1	Before a contract for service is entered into, service provider usually inform me of the applicable rates or charges	244	39.0	330	52.7
Item 2	Before a contract for service is entered into, my service provider usually inform me of what the charges include	236	37.7	274	43.8
Item 3	Before a contract for service is entered into, my service provider usually inform me of each part or element of an applicable charge, and the method of its calculation.	185	29.6	281	44.9
Item 4	Before a contract for service is entered into, my service provider usually inform me of the frequency of the charge or other circumstances that give rise to the charge.	202	32.3	307	49.0
PRODUCT WARRANTIES AND MAINTENANCE					
Item 1	Before entering into a contract to provide services, my service provider usually inform me of any warranty relating to products supplied for use in connection with the service.	233	37.2	286	45.7
Item 2	My service provider usually provides specific information regarding any maintenance services offered.	241	38.5	265	42.3
FAULT REPAIR AND SERVICE INTERRUPTION					
Item 1	My service provider makes available avenue through wish I can report faults 24 hours a day.	361	57.7	191	30.5
Item 2	My service provider usually give an advance warning of anticipated service interruptions or planned outages, including details of the interruption or outage	345	55.1	193	30.8
Item 3	Fault repair is usually carried out at reasonable time by my service provider	376	60.1	166	26.5
ACCESS TO EMERGENCY SERVICES					
Item 1	My service provider provides avenue for reaching emergency services	184	29.4	299	47.8
Item 2	My service provider makes it possible to call emergency services free of charge.	156	24.9	329	52.6

Table 4 provides a clear overview of the overall perceptions of the consumers with regard to the provision of information by the mobile telecommunications service providers. From the table, those who adjudged service providers to have failed in their provision of Service Contract Information, Description of Services, Pricing Information, Product Warranties and Maintenance, and Access to Emergency Services were distinctly more than those who perceived the service providers to have done well. The result however showed that the majority of the respondents perceived the service providers to be up to the task in terms of Fault Repair and Service Interruption.

b) **Consumers' Perception of Service Providers in Terms of Advertisement and Representation of Services:** Table 5 shows the aggregated responses of the respondents in relation to their perception of service providers' advertisement and representation of services.

Table 5: AGGREGATED RESPONSES FOR ADVERTISING AND REPRESENTATION OF SERVICES

		AGREE		DISAGREE	
AVAILABILITY OF SERVICES		*Count*	*% of Total*	*Count*	*% of Total*
Item 1	Advertising materials that promote the availability of a service usually indicate any geographical limitation.	182	29.1	337	53.8
Item 2	Advertising materials that promote the availability of a service usually indicate technical limitations that mainly affect the performance of the service.	148	23.6	348	55.6
Item 3	My service provider usually makes it clear in any advertising materials which promote a service offer any limitations in the offer which restrict it to a particular group of people.	172	27.5	316	50.5
Item 4	My service provider usually makes it clear in any advertising materials which promote a service offer, any limitations in the offer which restrict it to a particular period of time.	187	29.9	309	49.4
ADVERTISING OF PACKAGED SERVICES					
Item 1	Whenever my service provider represents in advertising materials that a service is provided as part of a package, it usually supply all components of the service package.	356	56.9	120	19.2
Item 2	My service provider usually include in advertising package if unable to supply any part of the package	233	37.2	189	30.2
UNSOLICITED TELEMARKETING					
Item 1	My service provider regularly sends me unwanted messages/calls	478	76.4	104	16.6
Item 2	I am provided with an option to opt-out or continue receiving the unwanted messages/calls	188	30.0	319	51.0
Item 3	Unwanted messages/calls relating to products or services offered usually give the full details of such services/products	190	30.4	317	50.6
Item 4	I do not mind receiving unwanted messages/calls from my service provider	115	18.4	414	66.1

As shown in Table 5, the service providers were perceived to be lagging in meeting the basic requirements set up by the NCC. The consumers disagreed with the notion that the service providers have done well in explaining the intricacies behind the products offered in any advertising materials presented. Of strong import here is the view of the respondents with regard to unsolicited telemarketing. About seventy-six percent of the respondents agreed that they have often been inundated with unsolicited telemarketing and further declared that they would prefer to have an option which can enable them to opt out of such unsolicited telemarketing. However, those who adjudged the service providers to be meeting their needs in terms of providing all the required services when a bundled product is offered were more than those who perceived otherwise.

c) **Differences in the Perception of MTN, GLO, AIRTEL and ETISALAT's Consumers in Terms of Provision of Information:** The first research question presented the aggregated perception of the four mobile service providers under study as shown in Table 4. In this section, we provide the perception of the consumers of the four service providers in relation to the provision of information by their service providers.

www.ajocict.net

Table 6: DISAGGREGATED DISTRIBUTION OF RESPONSES ON THE PROVISION OF INFORMATION BASED ON MOBILE SERVICES PROVIDERS

VARIABLE	MTN		GLO		ETISALAT		AIRTEL	
	Agree (Count / % of total)	Disagree (Count / % of total)	Agree (Count / % of total)	Disagree (Count / % of total)	Agree (Count / % of total)	Disagree (Count / % of total)	Agree (Count / % of total)	Disagree (Count / % of total)
SERVICE CONTRACTS INFORMATION								
Item 1	72 (11.5%)	164 (26.2%)	36 (5.8%)	56 (8.9%)	46 (7.3%)	41 (6.5%)	38 (6.1%)	39 (6.2%)
Item 2	67 (10.7%)	153 (24.4%)	30 (4.8%)	64 (10.2%)	56 (8.9%)	30 (4.8%)	40 (6.4%)	33 (5.3%)
DESCRIPTION OF SERVICES								
Item 1	83 (13.3%)	165 (26.4%)	30 (4.8%)	77 (12.3%)	88 (14.1%)	21 (3.4%)	62 (9.9%)	24 (3.8%)
Item 2	98 (15.7%)	139 (22.2%)	39 (6.2%)	61 (9.7%)	59 (9.4%)	31 (5.0%)	44 (7.0%)	28 (4.5%)
Item 3	90 (14.4%)	141 (22.5%)	51 (8.1%)	45 (7.2%)	73 (11.7%)	17 (2.7%)	36 (5.8%)	41 (6.5%)
Item 4	94 (15.0%)	143 (22.8%)	20 (3.2%)	73 (11.7%)	57 (9.1%)	38 (6.1%)	32 (5.1%)	47 (7.5%)
Item 5	66 (10.5%)	176 (28.1%)	27 (4.3%)	81 (12.9%)	30 (4.8%)	56 (8.9%)	24 (3.8%)	50 (8.0%))
Item 6	91 (14.5%)	147 (23.5%)	38 (6.1%)	65 (10.4%)	55 (8.8%)	35 (5.6%)	40 (6.4%)	42 (6.7%)
Item 7	112 (17.9%)	143 (22.8%)	38 (6.1%)	67 (10.7%)	58 (9.3%)	41 (6.5%)	37 (5.9%)	47 (7.5%)
PRICING INFORMATION								
Item 1	60 (9.6%)	207 (33.1%)	18 (2.9%)	88 (14.1%)	91 (14.5%)	21 (3.4%)	75 (12.0%)	14 (2.2%)
Item 2	97 (15.5%)	134 (21.4%)	41 (6.5%)	64 (10.2%)	71 (11.3%)	29 (4.6%)	27 (4.3%)	47 (7.5%)
Item 3	71 (11.3%)	139 (22.2%)	34 (5.4%)	65 (10.4%)	51 (8.1%)	38 (6.1%)	29 (4.6%))	39 (6.2%)
Item 4	83 (13.3%)	149 (23.8%)	38 (6.1%)	71 (11.3%)	40 (6.4%)	50 (8.0%)	41 (6.5%)	37 (5.9%)
PRODUCT WARRANTIES AND MAINTENANCE								
Item 1	86 (13.7%)	149 (23.8%)	61 (9.7%)	44 (7.0%)	40 (6.4%)	59 (9.4%)	46 (7.3%)	34 (5.4%)
Item 2	89 (14.2%)	137 (21.9%)	54 (8.6%)	51 (8.1%)	54 (8.6%)	47 (7.5%)	44 (7.0%)	30 (4.8%)
FAULT REPAIR AND SERVICE INTERRUPTION								
Item 1	140 (22.4%)	113 (18.1%)	70 (11.2%)	36 (5.8%)	93 (14.9%)	20 (3.2%)	58 (9.3%)	22 (3.5%)
Item 2	131 (20.9%)	111 (17.7%)	74 (11.8%)	33 (5.3%)	81 (12.9%)	26 (4.2%)	59 (9.4%)	23 (3.7%)
Item 3	136 (21.7%)	106 (16.9%)	81 (12.9%)	24 (3.8%)	89 (14.2%)	20 (3.2%)	70 (11.2%)	16 (2.6%)
ACCESS TO EMERGENCY SERVICES								
Item 1	105 (16.8%)	108 (17.3%)	42 (6.7%)	55 (8.8%)	20 (3.2%)	84 (13.4%)	17 (2.7%)	52 (8.3%)
Item 2	88 (14.1%)	124 (19.8%)	39 (6.2%)	59 (9.4%)	11 (1.8%)	90 (14.4%)	18 (2.9%)	56 (8.9%)

Note: *Refer to Table 5 for items definition*

African Journal of Computing & ICT

www.ajocict.net

Table 6 provides the differences in the perceptions of the consumers of the four service providers. With regard to Service Contract Information, a huge number of participants who were MTN consumers perceived it as not meeting their demands. Closely followed are GLO consumers who were also of the view that the service provider has not been up to the task as far as Service Contract Information was concerned. However, ETISALAT consumers perceived the company to be doing well in this regard just as the case with AIRTEL consumers who also adjudged the service provider to be up and doing in terms of Service Contracts Information. Apart from Fault Repair and Service Interruption where consumers adjudged MTN and GLO as doing moderately well, the two service providers were generally perceived as not meeting the set requirements as shown in the responses by their consumers. Generally, based on the responses to each items under the six variables in the table, consumers of ETISALAT and AIRTEL have positive perception of their service providers in relation to the provision of information unlike those of MTN and GLO.

d) **Differences in the Perception of MTN, GLO, AIRTEL and ETISALAT's Consumers in Terms of Advertisement and Representation of Services:** The responses of the customers of the four network service providers based on providers' advertisement and representation of services is shown in Table 7.

VARIABLE	Table 7: DISAGGREGATED DISTRIBUTION OF RESPONSES ON ADVERTISING AND REPRESENTATION OF SERVICES BASED ON MOBILE SERVICES PROVIDERS							
	MTN		GLO		ETISALAT		AIRTEL	
	Agree (Count / % of total)	Disagree (Count / % of total)	Agree (Count / % of total)	Disagree (Count / % of total)	Agree (Count / % of total)	Disagree (Count / % of total)	Agree (Count / % of total)	Disagree (Count / % of total)
AVAILABILITY OF SERVICES								
Item 1	83 (13.3%)	155 (24.8%)	34 (5.4%)	72 (11.5%)	44 (7.0%)	56 (8.9%)	21 (3.4%)	54 (8.6%)
Item 2	71 (11.3%)	165 (26.4%)	25 (4.0%)	70 (11.2%)	30 (4.8%)	65 (10.4%)	22 (3.5%)	48 (7.7%)
Item 3	87 (13.9%)	143 (22.8%)	29 (4.6%)	67 (10.7%)	27 (4.3%)	68 (10.9%)	29 (4.6%)	38 (6.1%)
Item 4	95 (15.2%)	136 (21.7%)	32 (5.1%)	66 (10.5%)	33 (5.3%)	63 (10.1%)	27 (4.3%)	44 (7.0%)
ADVERTISING OF PACKAGED SERVICES								
Item 1	148 (23.6%)	70 (11.2%)	65 (10.4%)	26 (4.2%)	87 (13.9%)	11 (1.8%)	56 (8.9%)	13 (2.1%)
Item 2	98 (15.7%)	93 (14.9%)	43 (6.9%)	40 (6.4%)	50 (8.0%)	31 (5.0%)	42 (6.7%)	25 (4.0%)
UNSOLICITED TELEMARKETING								
Item 1	214 (34.2%)	55 (8.8%)	97 (15.5%)	17 (2.7%)	92 (14.7%)	20 (3.2%)	75 (12.0%)	12 (1.9%)
Item 2	95 (15.2%)	141 (22.5%)	35 (5.6%)	63 (10.1%)	32 (5.1%)	70 (11.2%)	26 (4.2%)	45 (7.2%)
Item 3	94 (15.0%)	146 (23.3%)	32 (5.1%)	66 (10.5%)	36 (5.8%)	59 (9.4%)	28 (4.5%)	46 (7.3%)
Item 4	54 (8.6%)	197 (31.5%)	20 (3.2%)	80 (12.8%)	20 (3.2%)	80 (12.8%)	21 (3.4%)	57 (9.1%)

Note: *Refer to Table 5 for items definition*

As shown in Table 7, all the four service providers were largely perceived negatively by the customers with regard to availability of services and unsolicited telemarketing. The respondents were of the view that all the four service providers lagged in relation to providing detailed information on service availability and inundating with unsolicited telemarketing. However, the service providers were perceived to have performed moderately well with regard to fulfilling their promises with packaged services.

5. DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

This study has revealed Nigerian mobile telecommunication's consumers view of service providers with regard to *provision of information* as well as *advertisement and representation of services.* The overall result showed that consumers of MTN and GLO had more negative perception about their service providers compared with those of ETISALAT and AIRTEL. In this section, we discuss the findings in relation to the two broad variables studied. In relation to the provision of information to subscribers, findings revealed that the consumers adjudged the service providers to have done little with regard to service contract information as a large number of the respondents disagreed with the notion that service providers make available to them adequate information as at when required and that such information was devoid of any technical jargons. Also, findings revealed that the service providers had not met their obligations with regard to description of services as many disagreed with the notion that the service providers had done well in giving proper description of the various services they provide. This is especially true for participants who were subscribers of MTN and GLO. The need to provide proper information to consumers cannot be jettisoned just like deGeyter [3] puts it that accurate information demystifies, creates less resistance, puts more responsibility on customers, allows for greater input and feedback, leads to less confusion and ultimately leads to less worry.

Additionally, appropriate description of service being offered can engender trust in the heart of the consumers. According to Turel and Serenko [31], the degrees of perceived quality and perceived value are key factors affecting a person's satisfaction with mobile services. Satisfaction in turn, is reported to influence the extent of loyalty. A consumer can equate providing adequate information to enjoying quality service and can also view service provider as placing proper value on him/her by providing such adequate information. Therefore, if service providers continue with their current performance, the loyalty of their customers will surely dwindle and this can lead to changing from one service provider to the other. According to the conclusion of Khan [12], improving customer satisfaction will definitely lead to customer loyalty and it is certain that by the referring of loyal customers, a firm can also attract more customers. With the result of the study showing fewer customers who subscribed to only one service provider and more customers subscribing to two or more service providers, it can be inferred that this action is due to want of reliable and quality service. Service providers hence need to work hard to address this issue.

Furthermore, the perception of the respondents with regard to service providers' performance in relation to pricing information was also negative. According to the outcome, it was revealed that service providers were yet to meet up with the subscribers' information need as far as pricing information is concerned. A larger percentage of the participants who were mainly subscribers of MTN and GLO reported in the negative, indicating that these service providers are yet to meet the set benchmark as far as pricing information provision is concerned. Since price is a significant factor in the choice processes of the consumers according to Olatokun and Nwonne [22], service providers must strive as much as possible to provide adequate pricing information. Being aware of what the charges for a particular service subscribed to includes and the method of calculating such charges will allow consumers to make adequate plan and know whether to put in for a service or not. Another performance index is provision of product warranties and maintenance information to subscribers. The service providers were also rated low by the consumers in this regard as many respondents reported that service providers had not been meeting up with their expectations with regard to provision of adequate information about product warranties and maintenance services offered.

However, with regard to fault repair and service interruption, it can be inferred that service providers have done relatively well. From the results, majority of the respondents perceived the service providers to have done well in this regard. This view however negates that of Uzor and Chiejina [34] who were of the view that the rate of drop calls which is an example of service interruption, is rampant in the provision of telecommunications services in the Nigerian telecommunication sector. The perception of the respondents in regard to having access to emergency services was negative. Emergency service is a critical service that must be available at any point in time and service providers need not to be seen as lagging in this regard. Having an emergency service available is a good one for the consumers of mobile services and a good customer service indeed. The importance of a good customer care service was emphasized by Islam [9] when he reported that customer satisfaction of cell phones was significantly dependent upon customer care centre services.

Concerning advertising and representation of services, results also showed that the service providers are adjudged to still lag in providing accurate information about service availability. Although this was largely among the subscribers of MTN and GLO, ETISALAT and AIRTEL subscribers also shared similar views of their service providers not meeting the benchmark on providing service availability information. Saul [27] stressed the importance of providing accurate product information by concluding that accurate exchange of information makes things easier and saves resources both from the organization's and the customer's point of view.

Also, Levin and Gaeth, [17] ascertained that the labeling of a product attribute in positive or negative terms did affect consumers' evaluations. In this study, majority of the participants were of the view that the service providers had not been providing detailed information with regard to limitations to particular services which could be in form of geographical, technical, or any other. Accuracy of service availability information is something service providers must make a priority. There is no need purchasing a service or product that will be useless to the consumers under certain circumstances not expressly stated in the promotional materials for such product or service. The providers of telecommunications services in Nigeria therefore need to up their game and make sure that adequate information about location, technical or any other limitations go alongside any form of promotional material(s) for a product or service being offered as this will help the subscribers in their decision making.

In regard to advertising of packaged services, the participants adjudged the service providers to have done well as those who indicated that they provided all the components of an advertised packaged service were more than those who indicated otherwise. Living up to expectation in terms of what was promised is a way an organization can endear itself to its consumers. In relation to unsolicited telemarketing, many respondents agreed that they regularly receive unsolicited messages from their service providers. Rettie and Brum (2001) as cited by Phau and Teah [25] reported that SMS advertising provides several advantages, such as cost effectiveness, ubiquity, immediacy, and targeted message delivery. Muk (2007), Grant and O'Donohoe [8], and Xu (2006/2007) as cited by Phau and Teah [25] were however reported to have concluded that 79% of online consumers find receiving mobile advertising through their mobile phones irritating and intrusive. This study confirmed this as the respondents' indicated that if majority of them were given the chance, they would have opted-out of being sent such messages.

Unsolicited telemarketing has become a global phenomenon which regulatory agencies around the world have been looking for a way to curb. A number of countries have created what is called a 'do not call' list which excempt any number entered into such a list from any act of unsolicited telemarketing. Legal actions can be taken against organizations that violate this rule. The telecom regulatory authority of India has been championing this course for a while as reported by The Economic Times [29]. Findings from this study implies that the Nigerian Communications Commission may have to create a national 'do not call' list for the Nigerian environment to forestall the activities of the telecommunication service providers in line with bulging into people's privacy through sending of unrequested messages.

6. RECOMMENDATIONS

Our recommendations are addressed to the mobile telecommunications providers and the Nigerian Communications Commission that represents the government in the protection of telecom consumers' interest. First, the consumer code of practice regulation is a document that is provided by NCC; and this is just one of the agency's several regulatory documents. This study having pointed out the subscribers' perception of service providers in terms of provision of information as well as advertisement and representation of services, NCC will have to take more proactive actions in terms of monitoring and enforcing the content of the consumer code as a means of ensuring that consumers get value for their money. NCC should also carryout routine consumer studies on various regulations created in order to have primary data from consumers. This will help in evaluating existing policies and formulation of new ones. Second, adequate customer service is one way an organization can engender good feedback and thereby creating more customers while retaining the existing ones. As the competition becomes stiffen due to the fact that customers can now change their service providers without changing their mobile lines; thanks to mobile number portability, service providers will have to work on issues of concern to subscribers to retain existing customers as well as win new ones.

Based on our findings therefore, providers will have to do more in terms of the quality and the authenticity of the information provided for their customers as this aspect of their business is quite important to the teaming mobile telecom subscribers in the country. Specifically, since subscribers of MTN and GLO in this study were of the view that the two service providers have not been effective in meeting their needs as far as provision of information as well as advertising and representation of service is concerned, we will suggest that the companies should take critical look at this issue and proffer adequate solution. Being aware of the fact that business is kept going by the continue commitment of the consumers, it is important that any concern from the point of view of the consumers be resolved appropriately and on time too. While the subscribers of ETISALAT and AIRTEL seem to have fairly good perception about the service providers as far as provision of information as well as advertising and representation of service is concerned, it is suggested that the companies should improve on their current practices in order to sustain customer loyalty for a long time.

REFERENCES

[1] Cason, T. N., and Gangadharan, L., 2002. Environmental Labeling and Incomplete Consumer Information in Laboratory Markets. *Journal of Environmental Economics and Management* Volume 43: 113-134.

[2] Chandy, R. K., Tellis, G. J., Macinnis, D. J., and Thaivanich, P., 2001. What to say: When advertising appeals in evolving markets. *Journal of Marketing Research* Volume 38: 399-414.

[3] deGeyter, S., 2007. How little information can provide accurate expectation. Retrieved from http://www.searchengineguide.com/stoney-degeyter/how-little-info.php [Accessed on 20.6.2013].

[4] Drichoutis, A. C., Lazaridis, P., and Rodolfo M. Nayga, J., 2006. Consumers' use of nutritional labels: a review of research studies and issues. *Academy of Marketing Science Review* 1-22.

[5] Famutimi, T., 2014. Sue telecoms operators for unsolicited SMS, poor services – NCC. Retrieved from http://www.punchng.com/i-punch/sue-telecoms-operators-for-unsolicited-sms-poor-services-ncc/ [Accessed 6.2.2014]

[6] Garella, P. G., and Petrakis, E., 2008. Minimum Quality Standards and Consumers' Information. *Economic Theory* 36 (2): 283-302.

[7] Garreau, J., 2008. Our Cells, Ourselves. The Washington Post, 24 February, Retrieved from http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2008/02/22/AR2008022202283.html [Accessed 29.8.2014].

[8] Grant, I. and O'Donohoe, S., 2007. Why young consumers are not open to mobile marketing communication. *International Journal of Advertising* 26(2): 223 – 246.

[9] Islam, M. Z., 2011. Measuring Customer Satisfaction of Mobile Phone Users: A comparative study between Grameen Phone and Teletalk Based on Khulna City, Bangladesh. *European Journal of Business and Management* 3 (6): 20-30.

[10] ITU., 2013. Statistics. Retrieved from www.itu.int/en/ITU-D/Statistics [Accessed 19.6.2013].

[11] Kalba, K.., 2008. The Global Adoption and Diffusion of Mobile Phones. Retrieved from http://c96268.r68.cf3.rackcdn.com/Mobile_phone_adoption_2008.pdf [Accessed 19.6. 2013].

[12] Khan, I., 2012. Impact of Customers Satisfaction And Customers Retention on Customer Loyalty. *International Journal of Scientific & Technology Research Volume , 1* (2), 106-110.

[13] Khan, M. A., 2010. An Empirical Assessment of Service Quality of Cellular Mobile Telephone Operators in Pakistan. *Asian Social Science* 6 (10): 164-177.

[14] Kim, M.-K., Park, M.-C., and Jeong, D.-H., 2004. The effects of customer satisfaction and switching barrier on customer loyalty in Korean mobile telecommunication services. *Telecommunications Policy* 28 (2004): 145–159.

[15] Kozup, J. C., Creyer, E. H., and Burton, S., 2003 . Making Healthful Food Choices: The Influence of Health Claims and Nutrition Information on Consumers' Evaluations of Packaged Food Products and Restaurant Menu Items. *Journat of Martteting* Volume 67: 19-34.

[16] Leung, L., 2007. Unwillingness-to-communicate and college students' motives in SMS mobile messaging. *Telematics and Informatics* Volume 24: 115 – 129.

[17] Levin, I. P., and Gaeth, G. J., 1988. How Consumers Are Affected by the Framing of Attribute Information Before and After Consuming the Product. *Journal Of Consumer Research* Volume 15: 374-378.

[18] Martin, B., and Marshall, R., 1999. The interaction of message framing and felt involvement in the context of cell phone commercials. *European Journal of Marketing* 33 (1/2): 206-218.

[19] mobiThinking., 2013. Global mobile statistics 2013 Retrieved from http://mobithinking.com/mobile-marketing-tools/latest-mobile-stats [Accessed 19.6.2013].

[20] Nelson, P., 1974. Advertising as Information. *Journal of Political Economy* 82 (4): 729-754.

[21] Nigerian Communications Commission., 2012. Subscriber Data. Retrieved from http://www.ncc.gov.ng/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=125&Itemid=67 [Accessed 20.12.2012].

[22] Olatokun, W. and Nwonne, S., 2012. Determinants of Users' Choice of Mobile Service Providers in the Nigerian Telecommunications Market. *African Journal of Computing and ICTs* 5 (4): 19-32.

[23] Olson, J. C., and Dover, P. A., 1978. Cognitive Effects of Deceptive Advertising. *Journal of Marketing Research* 15 (1): 29-38.

[24] Perry, M. J., 2008. Fastest Global Diffusion in History: The Cell Phone. CARPE DIEM Retrieved from http://mjperry.blogspot.com/2008/02/fastest-global-diffusion-in-history.html [Accessed 19.6.2013].

[25] Phau, I., and Teah, M., 2008. Young consumers' motives for using SMS and perceptions towards SMS advertising Retrieved from http://www.anzmac.org/conference/2008/_Proceedings/PDF/S08_/Phau%20%26%20Teah_S5%20S4%20P3.pdf [Accessed 21.5.2013].

[26] Rahman, M. S., 2012. Service Quality, Corporate Image and Customer's Satisfaction Towards Customers Perception: An Exploratory Study on Telecom Customers in Bangladesh. *Business Intelligence Journal* 5 (1): 56-63.

[27] Saul, E., 2006. The importance of accurate, reliable and timely data Retrieved from

http://www.anz.com/documents/economics/The_Importance_of_Data.pdf [Accessed 20.6.2013].

[28] Shannon, M. E., 2001. Combating Unsolicited Sales Calls: The "Do-Not-Call" Approach to Solving the Telemarketing Problem. *Journal of Legislation* Volume 27: 381-389.

[29] The Economic Times., 2013. TRAI steps in to curb telemarketers' unwanted calls Retrieved from http://articles.economictimes.indiatimes.com/2013-05-27/news/39557641_1_telemarketers-telecom-resources-trai [Accessed 20.6. 2013].

[30] The World Bank., 2012. Population, total Retrieved from http://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SP.POP.TOTL, [Accessed 19.6.2013].

[31] Turel, O., and Serenko, A., 2006. Satisfaction with mobile services in Canada: An empirical investigation. *Telecommunications Policy* 30 (2006): 314-331.

[32] Uddin, M. B., and Akhter, B., 2012. Customer Satisfaction In Mobile Phone Services In Bangladesh: A Survey Research. *Management and Marketing* 10 (1): 20-36.

[33] U.S. General Services Administration., 2014. *Consumer action handbook.* Washington, DC: Federal Citizen Information Center.

[34] Uzor, B., and Chiejina, A., 2013. Quality of service: Posers for Nigeria's telcom industry. BUSINESSDAY Retrieved from http://businessdaynigeria.com/quality-service-posers-nigeria-s-telecom-industry-0 [Accessed 18.6.2013]

Authors Short Biographies

Noah Oluwafemi SAMUEL is a graduate of Communication Technology from Lagos State University. He obtained a master's degree in Information Science from the Africa Regional Centre for Information Science, University of Ibadan. His research interest lies in the intersection between people and technology. Specific areas are; Community Informatics, Technology Localization, Information and Communication Technologies for Development, and digital inclusion. Contact: Africa Regional Centre for Information Science, No. 6, Benue Road, University of Ibadan, Nigeria. Email: samnoah2001@yahoo.com

Dr Wole Michael OLATOKUN holds master and doctorate degrees in Information Science obtained from the University of Ibadan, Nigeria. He is currently an Associate Professor and Director of Africa Regional Centre for Information Science in the same institution and a honorary Senior Research Fellow at the Information Studies Programme, University of Kwazulu-Natal, South Africa. His research interests include: National ICT policy issues, Social Informatics, Knowledge Management, e-Governance, and Indigenous Knowledge. Contact: Africa Regional Centre for Information Science, No. 6, Benue Road, University of Ibadan, Nigeria. Email: **woleabbeyolatokun@yahoo.co.uk**