
ADVERTISING MESSAGES AND PEOPLE'S PATRONAGE OF GSM FIRMS IN EBONYI STATE

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Abstract

This study focused on advertising messages and people's patronage of GSM Firms in Ebonyi State. The study emerged from the backdrop of increasing complaints about poor GSM services in Nigeria, and the assumption that advertising could help in shaping perceptions and choice of GSM networks among active users and subscribers. The study was aimed at making an empirical contribution to existing understanding of the level of influence advertising has on people behaviour in the telecommunication industry. Three specific objectives with three corresponding research questions and three null hypotheses guided the study. The population of study comprised 3,242,500 of adult men and women based on the 2021 Nigerian National Population census figures projection. The breakdown has: Ebonyi South 1,222,100, Ebonyi North 1,056,200, and Ebonyi Central 964,200 as at March 21, 2021). The sample size of the study comprised 400 men and women adults which were determined through Taro Yamane formula while multi-stage sampling method in which institutions were randomly selected and research instruments purposively administered to the respondents. Results were analyzed using percentage frequency and Chi-square test. Overall results show that GSM adverts are highly preferred by people, secondly, to a high extent do advertisement of message influence people preference of GSM services. Finding also shows that that people of Ebonyi State often patronize GSM firms. Based on the findings the study recommended that GSM advertisement messages should be factual, accurate and realistic since such messages affect perception and preference for GSM patronage.

Keywords: *Advertising, Messages, Patronage, GSM Firms*

Background to the Study

The globalization of the telecommunications industry has led to the widespread adoption of GSM (Global System for Mobile Communications) services worldwide. In Nigeria, GSM has experienced significant growth and has become an integral part of daily life for millions of people. One of the key drivers of this growth is effective advertising campaigns that communicate the benefits and features of GSM services. Advertising campaigns raise awareness about the availability and benefits of GSM services (Assael, 2018). They familiarize potential customers with the brand, build recognition, and encourage trial usage. Advertising messages highlight the unique selling points of GSM services, such as affordability, network coverage, call quality, data speed, and value-added services. These messages influence customers' perception of the value they will receive from the service. Effective allows GSM companies to establish and promote their brand identity, positioning themselves as reliable, innovative, customer-centric, and socially responsible (Aaker, 2019). Through advertising, GSM companies differentiate themselves from competitors, emphasizing their strengths and advantages, convincing potential customers to choose their services over others.

The introduction of phone booth system in the late 1990s on some major streets in the country gave little respite to telephone users as it affords them the opportunity to make calls even though they had to leave their houses to where the booths are. However, the deregulation of Nigeria's telecommunication sector in 2001 was a major landmark in the telecom industry. This marked a turning point in the industry and broke the monopoly hitherto enjoyed by the defunct Nigeria Telecommunications Limited (NITEL) paving way for service providers like MTN, Vodafone which had now metamorphosed over the years to AIRTEL, GLO and ETISALAT into the market. This phenomenon witnessed an increase in the number of GSM subscribers and gave rise to the four major players (MTN, GLO, AIRTEL and ETISALAT) to dominate the market and also gave Nigerians access GSM services.

According to Ajiboye, Ajiboye, Adu and Wajuade (2017) there were about 800,000 subscribers base for a country that had over a 100 million people when the pioneer GSM networks began operation in Nigeria. However, within the first seven years of GSM operation in Nigeria, the number increased from less than a million subscribers' base to over 60 million in 2008 and by 2012, the number of active lines had reached 90 million. However by 2013 the number of active subscriber base was over 113 million (NCC: GSM subscribers now over 113 million, 2013) and by October, 2014, the number has hit 130 million subscriber base (Arens, 2019). With the number of subscribers growing at a geometrical rate giving the level at which service providers strive to dominate the market, the number of active lines may well be above 140 million by the end of 2015.

The push and pull in the telecom industry and the desire to assert dominance over rivalry brands compelled operators to review their billing system from per minute to per second billing system and charges per short messages (SMS) from what used to be 15 naira per page of a text message to 4 naira today. Also, the high cost of acquiring a mobile line from what used to be about 10,000 naira to as low as a 100 naira in most cases.

The scrambling for subscribers in the market place equally led to development of products to meet their different needs. Service providers have within their years of operations in Nigeria developed different products to meet specific needs of their teeming subscribers and charged different tariff for these plans. For example MTN developed product like super saver, family and friends among other prepaid packages. GLO for instance has infinito, G-bam, Bounce among others. ETISALAT on the other hand has the easy click, easy starter and the easy life packages while AIRTEL has the 2good plan and AIRTEL come alive package. All these variety of products are in attempt to lure subscribers to the brand given the lowest possible call tariff as advertised (Babaita, 2010).

Beside the downward review of call tariff and development of GSM packages, service providers equally employ other marketing communication strategies such promotion and advertising to lure subscribers. Some give bonuses on recharge,

free SMS, and data and as well advertise their products and services using different advertising platforms like mass media (television, radio, newspaper/magazine), internet, outdoor, mobile advert, bill board, Interactive Voice Recorder (IVR) and on campus show (for people) to reach targets.

Despite the laudable feat in the telecommunication sector, the quality of service delivery by network providers has remained questionable given their inability to deliver a hitch-free service that is devoid of complain by subscribers. These complaints range from occasional network failure, card recharging problems, checking of balance difficulty, wrongful deduction of credit among others. The persistent network failure resulted to the NCC in January 2008 ordering some service providers to offer compensation to all subscribers who were active in their network (Babaita, 2010).

Even though service providers were made to pay compensation, these problems which hitherto have continue to hinder smooth operation of GSM in Nigeria are yet to be resolved. Coincidentally, the youths are active users of GSM services who are always willing to take advantage of the competitive market situation. Apart from making calls or sending text messages, most of them download applications that enable them to interact on any of the social media platform. However, the persistent network problem associated with GSM services leaves them in a dilemma of the network to choose. Most often than not, they are left with no option but to subscribe to more than one GSM network as this gives them the opportunity to explore, analyse and compare services of the different networks before making their choice. Therefore, given the persistent complaints about poor service quality of GSM in Nigeria and the assumption that advertising could help in shaping perception and choices of GSM networks among users, created the need to study the relationship between advertising and preference of GSM services among tertiary institutions people in Ebonyi state. The aim is to know the level of influence advertising has on the choices of GSM network they use.

Statement of the Problem

Every advertising message need to speak the consumer's language, and provide convincing evidence of product's attributes. This is because people may express

skepticism towards the product if it fails to meet their expectations as advertised. Given the frequency at which GSM service providers advertise their products and services, subscribers have occasionally express doubt over the services offered. This is because they often complain of occasional network failure among GSM networks in the country when trying to use the services. At some point, subscribers experience persistent problems like drop calls, call set up, connection problem and inability to sometimes recharge the mobile line. When this happens, it often leaves subscribers in dilemma of choice of service providers. People of tertiary institutions are mainly youths who are active users of GSM services. Apart from calls, they surf the internet, sometimes chat with friends or download materials for assignments using the services of any of the GSM networks. They may be discouraged to continue patronizing a service provider when they experience any of the service shortcomings. The service providers therefore tend to influence consumers' perceptions and choices through frequent advertisement.

Objectives of the Study

Specifically, the study sought to:

1. Determine people's decision of GSM advert messages in Ebonyi State
2. Ascertain the extent to which advertisement of message influence people preference of GSM services
3. Ascertain the extent to which people patronize GSM firms in Ebonyi state

Research Questions

To achieve the objectives of the study, the study aims at providing answers to the following research questions:

1. What is the people decision of GSM advert messages in Ebonyi State?
2. To what extent has advertisement of message influence people preference of GSM services?
3. To what extent do people of Ebonyi State patronize GSM firms?

Research Hypotheses

The following hypotheses were formulated and tested at 0.05 level of significance:
Ho₁. There is no significant influence on people decision of GSM advert messages

in Ebonyi State

Ho₂. There is no significant influence on the extent to which advertisement of message influence people preference of GSM services

Ho₃. There is no significant influence on the extent to which people of Ebonyi State often patronize GSM firms

Significance of the Study

The central focus of most studies on mobile phone service providers is that researchers focused more on factors that influence the choice of service provider by consumers without emphasis on the influence of advertising. These studies give attention to promotional elements like price, service quality, and service availability. On the other hand, most studies on advertising research centre on consumers' attitude (Van der Wald, Rebello and Brown 2009) or the language use in advertising (Dada, 2010). Unfortunately, the influence of advertising in most of these studies has, is not clearly stated. This study is significant in that it explores the influence of advertising on consumers' perception and preference of GSM services among subscribers. Its findings will also assist service providers in Nigeria to know how subscribers perceive their brand, thereby enabling them to improve where necessary. Furthermore, the study contributes to the quantitative understanding of the association that exists between advertising and consumer behaviour in the telecommunication industry in Nigeria.

Scope of the Study

The study focused on Advertising Messages and People's Patronage of GSM Firms in Ebonyi State. The content scope covered: empirical reviewed, theoretical framework and conceptual framework. The study was restricted to people of Ebonyi State.

Review of Related Literature

Advertising Concept

In today's contemporary society there are different brands in the market. These brands are not just from the domestic market but also from the globalizing market of the world (Aren, 2019). The proliferation of brands has given rise to competition in the marketplace and every brand that worth its name has to strive

to remain top on consumers shop list. For a brand to succeed, it has to possess attributes that should meet consumers' need. With consistent competition from other brands, coupled with the need to satisfy consumers' needs, the challenge facing marketers is how to develop strategies that will keep their brands top on consumer's mind. Advertising therefore becomes one of the tools for achieving marketing objectives. This is because it creates awareness about the existence of a brand in the market and also rein enforces consumers' satisfaction (Beneke, 2010). Thus this chapter attempts to review relevant literatures for the study. Advertising is now part of daily life. Every day different types of advertisements are seen on television, radio, newspapers, magazines, billboards, internet and other media. Whether we like it or not, advertising affects us consciously or unconsciously. Advertising is in the business of persuasion and building positive attitudes towards a brand. It is aimed at creating favourable psychological impression (Brester and Schroeder, 2018). Advertising promotes the product by creating awareness and interest of the consumers, and also reinforces customer's satisfaction level of the product already purchased.

Advertising is a form of structured and applied communication that employed both verbal and non verbal elements that are composed to fill specific space and time determined by sponsor. Clow and Back (2018) note that effective communication through advertisement leads the consumers toward the purchasing of brand. Of concern to advertiser is whether the advertisement or commercial conveys the meaning intended. This is because the receiver of the message is viewed as active participant in the communication process whose ability and motivation to attend, comprehend and evaluate messages are high (Chao, Wuhrrer and Werani, 2015). If the consumer or audience gets the message and it is understood by them just the way it is intended by the advertiser, such message will be regarded as successful. And understanding of such message may lead to consumer's preference and subsequent purchase of the brand (Clow and Back, 2018).

Marketing activity such as advertising affects both internal and external behavior of the consumer. Consumers' perceptions are influenced through exposure to advertising messages. If the advertisement can grab the consumer's attention, such

advertisement could be recognized by them, and they may likely retain the message (Grannel, 2019). Advertising is involving because it requires consumer's attention before a buying decision is made. Thus, advertisers should ensure that they put into consideration the demographic and psychographic compositions of the consumers if they are to make head way in achieving their overall marketing objectives.

Advertising Influences on People

The purpose of advertising is to make potential buyers respond more favourably to the firm's offering. Advertising provides information, creates and modifies consumers' desire and provide reasons for preferring a particular product (Hellier and Kotler 2018). The captivating and persuasive nature of advertising creates want through passive compulsion so that the consumer will buy the product. Advertising also helps society by improving competition, lowering prices, encouraging more product choices, supporting the media and providing information. It goes beyond mere selling of products or ideas but can shape social trends and attitude in a way.

However, the issue of advertising effect and how to measure it is one of the controversial things in the world of advertisement. The questions people always ask is, why would companies continue to spend billions of naira on advertising if advertising does not play an important role in their businesses? Such questions though commonsensical but should be answered in a scientific manner so as to justify in concrete terms the huge sum of money being spent by corporate organizations.

The central goal of any given advertisement is to persuade customers by changing and modifying their attitudes towards the product (Solomon, 2002). Put differently, firms advertise in order to boost sales, an outcome that can be achieved by persuading consumers of the superiority of their brands and by creating awareness about the existence of such product (Draganska and Klapper, 2011). Before a consumer can consider a brand, he must be aware of the existence of such brand hence a consumer's choice is limited to the set of brand he is aware of (Draganska and Klapper, 2011) and this awareness is a function of the demography of the consumer and his exposure to the advertisement (Sovinsky

Goeree, 2008).

Brand Awareness over Advertisement

Consumers patronise familiar and well known brands (Heilaman and Carrie, 2010). This is because of the information consumers have about a product through advertising and the strength of association they have with information about the product. The knowledge consumer has about a brand can be an underlying factor that influences their purchase decision within the consideration set (Eisend, 2020). Brand awareness as the amount of information consumer has about a brand. Awareness has been found to be necessary for advertising effectiveness. This is because when consumers who are unfamiliar with a product category have to choose between a well-known and unknown brand, they are more likely to choose the well-known brand.

Brand image on the other hand is the perceptions of a brand by consumers which is reflected by the associations of the brand they held in their memory. According to Dobni and Zinkhaml (1990), brand image is the subjective judgment of consumers' perception on a brand whether it is sensational or emotional which indicates the particular belief consumer holds about a product. Vani, Ganesh and Panchanatham (2010), also note that brand image is the most important intangible asset of an organization which gives a mark of distinction over a competitive brand and provides a certain level of consumers' satisfaction which guarantee and increase purchase intentions. Thus, in contrast brand awareness is the information consumer has about a brand made available to them through advertising. Whereas the meaning consumer deduce through association with the brand from the brand image. This could also represent a concept in branding called brand equity.

GSM Services

Though GSM is relatively a new development in Nigeria but the history of telecommunication is even older than Nigeria itself. This is because, Nigeria, which is recognised as one of the dominant key players in the African telecommunication market established its first telecommunication facilities in 1886 (Ajiboye, Ajiboye, Ade and Wojuade, 2017). The democratisation or

liberalization of the sector, no doubt, has brought more investors to the telecommunication industry and this according to Keller, (2020), has made information sharing easier for many Nigerians and households. While many people tie the development of competitive telecommunication environment in Nigeria to the successful liberalization programme, others consider the revolution as an inevitable global phenomenon. Although liberalization can establish the primacy of market forces, induce a more competitive market, equity and justice among economic agents but an increase of mobile phone usage worldwide has intensified the level of competition among operators. Globally, according to Mehta (2010), there are five key factors that are responsible for the success of mobile telecommunication and this includes: the enabling convergence with other wireless technologies; the development of mobile centric applications; the evolving mobile business model; the mobile terminal enhancements and variety; the industry partnerships and co-operations and interoperability and intergenerational roaming between various platforms. All these have made mobile communication as one of the hottest markets in today's economy and made mobile communication the most explosive development that has ever happened to the telecommunication industry. The liberalization of Nigeria's telecommunication industry started in the early 1990s and accelerated in 2000, after the return of democratic dispensation. Since, then, there has been an influx of direct foreign investment, especially in the mobile services segment of the telecommunication sector (Pyramid Research, 2010). This has replaced the law of jungle with the law of competition as key players are now relying on market forces for sustainability and made Nigeria one of the most attractive and the biggest mobile market (in terms of subscription) in Africa.

GSM Prepaid Plans and Advertisements

The increase in subscribers base over the past one decade in the Nigeria telecommunication sector shows that is prospect in the market. As a result, service providers have continued to strive in order to have share of the market. To this end, they develop products and use catchy words to attract consumer to their brand. For instance, the four major players (MTN, GLO, AIRTEL and ETISALAT) have over the years developed prepaid plans to take care of subscribers' needs.

MTN

The prepaid plans developed by MTN within its years of operation in Nigeria include “family and friends”, “super saver”, “MTN pulse” among others. The “MTN Pulse” tariff plan for instance has been specially designed to help satisfy subscribers’ need and make them stand out in the world. With MTN Pulse, subscribers will be on the cutting edge of modern telecommunications and can enjoy a world of fun, creativity and freedom (Obeku 2019). There are no hidden charges or access fees in this plan. The first minute call for the day on the MTN Pulse tariff plan will be charged at 58k/second while subsequent calls from the second minute on the MTN Pulse tariff plan will be charged 10k/second provided the caller and receiver are on the MTN Pulse Plan. On the hand, calls to other MTN numbers not on MTN Pulse tariff plan will be charged at 30k/second while calls to other networks are charged 35k per second.

The MTN Super Saver plan enables subscriber to enjoy call rates at 17 kobo per second on all MTN – MTN calls after the 1st minute of call for the day at 40k per second on the Super Saver plan and 35 kobo per second for calls to other networks. Also subscribers can call US, China, Canada and UK landline at 20 kobo per second from the very first minute and UK Mobile at 42k kobo per second. On the Super Saver plan, subscribers can enjoy free voice calls from 12:30am – 04:30am everyday including weekends with a minimum balance of NGN100.00.

The MTN Family and Friends allows subscribers to register 10 numbers on their family and friends list and enjoy a discounted rate of 10kobo/second when they call any of this number from the very first second. On the family and friends plan, subscribers can enjoy free voice calls from 12:30am – 04:30am everyday including weekends with a minimum balance of NGN100.00.



Sample of MTN Advert (Source: techopera.com).

GLO

The following prepaid plans are developed by GLO for its teaming subscribers. They are GLO “Infinito”, “GLO Gista” “G-Bam” among others. The GLO Infinito which is now the default plans on GLO network that is the landing profile for all new customers enables subscribers to make GLO-GLO calls at 20k per second and GLO to other networks at 30k per second. Subscribers can also call to 10 family and friends numbers at 10k per second. The GLO G-Bam tariff plans gives subscribers 5 megabyte data free browsing everyday but attracts a daily rental fee of N5 while GLO-GLO call and GLO to other network call is 18k per second. The tariff plans also allows subscribers to call 5 special family and friends number at 5k per second.

On the GLO Gista tariff plan subscribers can make the first minute call at 40k per second while subsequent calls for GLO-GLO and GLO to other networks is charged at 15k and 30k per second respectively.



AIRTEL

The AIRTEL “2good” plan is a revolutionary new plan that allows subscribers to make local and international calls to USA, Canada, UK (fixed lines), China and India after the first call is charged at 60k/sec of every day. 2Good comes with 3 benefits which the customer can enjoy:

- i. 20k/sec rate to all national/domestic destinations with a 60k/sec 1st minute daily rate.
- ii. 20k/sec rate to USA, Canada, UK (fixed lines), China and India with 60k/sec 1st minute daily rate.
- iii. free monthly on net SMS upon customer's 1st minimum N100 recharge of every month.
- iv. 10% for every Easy/Wazobia recharge of N50.00 and above.



Sample of AIRTEL advert (Source: www.airtel.com).

Given the manner at which GSM service providers advertise their products, and the different tariff plans designed for different categories of customers, subscribers need to carefully think of which network to choose from with all things being equal.

Empirical

Vivekanathan, (2017) conducted a study on the influence of advertisement on consumer brand preference of soft drinks market in Manmunnai Northern Division. Four soft drinks brands-coca-cola, fanta, elephant and ole were considered using three variables of advertising-information, communication and comprehension. The aim is to know what influence advertising has on consumers' preference. According to the data that was analysed under the variables, coca-cola seemed to have the highest influence in all the three variables. The study concluded that advertising have influence on brand preference. However, Chakraborty, Hossain, Azad and Islam (2016) while analyzing the effect of sales promotion and advertising on consumer purchase behaviour find out that sales promotion and advertising position a product or service strongly on consumer's mind in order to encourage repeated purchase of the product. It also found out that in relation to sales promotion, advertising makes consumer less price sensitive.

This finding encourages the rethinking of the assumption that advertising has such a powerful influence on consumer behaviour. The study concluded that advertising is not necessarily powerful enough to differentiate brands even though it has been found to contribute to other important aspect such as providing publicity and protecting an already established brand. Therefore organizations are moving their funds away from advertising to sales promotion, public relations and direct marketing.

Draganska, and Kappler, (2018) conducted research on the Choice set heterogeneity and the role of advertising: an analysis with micro and macro data. The obtained data from the survey supported the motion that brand preference exists in the food drink industry and that advertising efforts can affect product preferences. Of more than 12 different food drinks brands which featured in this study, bournvita topped the brand preference table both in the food drink industry in general and in Cadbury's food drink brands in particular implying that it still remains the favorite food drink consumers and enjoys undisputed loyalty among the largest percentage of the respondents. According to the respondents, advertising and quality are the major factors responsible for the success of bournvita. Very few subjects cited other reasons such as price, packaging and availability for their choice of the brand. The implication of this is that price and other variables seem not to count much to the consumers as long as the quality of a product is maintained and the brand is also supported by heavy advertising reminding and persuading consumers to continue to buy. The study concluded that advertising has a major influence on consumers' preference for bournvita and it has, in no small measure, contributed to its success.

Theoretical Framework

The Source Credibility Theory

The source credibility theory was adopted to give this study a perspective. This theory was propounded by Hovland, Janis and Kelley in 1953. It states that people are more likely to be persuaded by a communication message when the source of the information is credible. In order words, source credibility theory is the believability of the communicator by the recipient of the message. The theory is an approach that allows individuals to look at issues presented from their own

perspective. In this way, the source credibility theory deals with communication as value-laden, and takes into consideration the differences in opinions exhibited by individuals. A communicator's credibility. However, two elements commonly identified are perceived expertise and trustworthiness of the source. Initially, the source credibility model developed by Hovland, Janis and Kelley (1953) indicated the relevance of trustworthiness and expertise of the source in message dissemination. However, McGuire (1985) improved on it with his source attractiveness model which may be perceived through physical attractiveness, lifestyle and or personality, and how similar, familiar and likeable the consumer considers the source.

Methodology

Research Design

The design used for this study is survey research design. Survey design technique are used to gather contemporary data either by direct measurement or by solution from others. Survey is a form of descriptive research that studies both large and small population for the study. It studies a group of people, considered to be representative of the entire group.

Area of the Study

The study was conducted in Ebonyi State which is located at the South-East geopolitical zone of Nigeria. The state has thirteen local government areas. The State is known as the 'Salt of the Nation', named after its extensive, huge salt deposits located at the Okposi and Uburu Salt Lakes (Federal Republic of Nigeria, 2015). The State shares territorial boundaries in the north with Benue State, in the west with Enugu State, in the east with Cross River State and south with Abia State. Ebonyi State lies approximately within longitude 7°30' and 8° 30'E, with latitude 5° 40' and 6° 45'N. Ebonyi state has many radio stations operating in the state.

Population of the Study

The population of study comprised 3,242,500 of adult men and women based on the 2022 Nigerian national population census figures projection. The breakdown has: Ebonyi South 1,222,100, Ebonyi North 1,056,200, and Ebonyi Central 964,200 as at March 21, 2021).

Sample Size Determination

The sample size of the study comprised 400 men and women adults which were determined through Taro Yamane formula. Isiwu (2018) asserts that sample size determination is the act of choosing the number of observations or [replicates](#) to include in a [statistical sample](#). The sample size is an important feature of any empirical study in which the goal is to make [inferences](#) about a [population](#) from a sample.

The sample was determine using Taro Yamane Formula

Using Taro Yamane

$$n = \frac{N}{1 + N (e)^2}$$

Where n = Sample Size

N = Total Population

e = Sampling error or level of precision

5% was used as the level of precision.

$$\begin{aligned} n &= \frac{N}{1 + N(e)^2} \\ &= \frac{3,242,500}{1 + 3,242,500 (0.05)^2} \\ &= \frac{3,242,500}{1 + 3,242,500 (0.0025)} \\ &= \frac{3242500}{1 + 8,106.25} \\ &= \frac{3,242,500}{8107} \\ &= 399.96 \\ &= 400 \end{aligned}$$

Sampling Technique

Multi-stage sampling procedure was used in sampling one local government area from each of the three senatorial constituencies of the state and the actual respondents. The selected local government areas were: Onicha (Ebonyi South), Ezza North (Ebonyi Central) and Ebonyi (Ebonyi North).

Validity of Instrument

After construction and critical study of the questionnaire. It was passed to the experts for proper modifications of aspect of the questionnaire. The validity of measurement was established through content validity which was given to other researchers to ascertain whether the questionnaire item adequately cover the domain of the construct. The research instrument was also certified by researcher's supervisor and experts in entrepreneurship to ensure validity of questionnaire items.

Reliability of the Instrument

A reliability test was conducted on the instrument to determine how consistent the responses are. The validated instrument was trial tested with twenty two (22) adult particularly men and women in Enugu State which is not part of the study area to ensure its reliability. To ascertain the internal consistency of the instrument Cronbach's Alpha technique was used for its analysis. These gave an overall reliability score as 0.88. The result indicated that the instrument was reliable and therefore considered appropriate for use.

Method of Data Collection

Data was collected using the questionnaire which the researcher administered face to face to the respondents.

Method of Data Analysis

The data generated were analysed through the computation of percentage tables. The hypotheses of the study were tested using Pearson Chi-square test of independence.

Results

Research Questions one. What is the people decision of GSM advert messages in Ebonyi State?

Table 1: Responses of the respondents on people decision of GSM advert messages in Ebonyi State

Options	Frequency	Percentage
Highly preferred	311	84
Preferred	49	13
Not preferred	6	2
Highly Not Preferred	5	1
Total	371	100

From the table above, 311(84%) of the respondents opined that GSM advert messages highly preferred in Ebonyi State while just 11(3%) of the respondents claimed that GSM adverts messages are not preferred in Ebonyi State. Thus, the majority of the respondents (84%) were shows that GSM adverts are highly preferred by people.

Research Questions Two. To what extent does advertisement of message influence people preference of GSM services?

Table 2: Responses of the Respondents on the extent to which advertisement influence people preference of GSM services

Options	Frequency	Percentage
Very High Extent	190	51
High Extent	90	24
Low Extent	71	19
Very Low Extent	20	5
Total	371	100

Source: Field Survey 2021

From the table above, 190(51%) of the respondents opined that advertisement to a high extent influence people of Ebonyi State on preference of GSM service, 90(24%) were of the opinion that advertisement messages influence people to high extent while just 71(19%) of the respondents indicated low extent while 20(5%)

shows very low extent . Thus, the majority of the respondents (51%) and (24%) shows to a high extent advertisement of message influence people preference of GSM services.

Research Questions Three

To what extent do people of Ebonyi State often patronize GSM firms?

Table 3: Responses of the respondents on how often people of Ebonyi State patronize GSM firms

Options	Frequency	Percentage
Very Often	309	83
Often	52	22
Rarely	10	14
Not at all	0	0
Total	371	100

Source: Field Survey 2021

From the table above, 309(83%) of the respondents agreed that often do people of Ebonyi State patronize GSM firms, 52 (22%) of the respondents claimed otherwise. Hence, it is clear that, majority of respondents (83%) revealed that people of Ebonyi State often patronize GSM firms.

Hypotheses Testing

To test this hypothesis, If the calculated value is greater than the tabulated value, reject Ho: and accept Hi: (alternative hypothesis). Using chi-square (X^2).

$$X^2 = n \sum \frac{(oi - ei)^2}{ei}$$

Where x^2 = Chi-square distribution

oi = observed frequency

ei = Expected frequency

5% = level of significance (allowed error)

Hypothesis I

Ho1: There is no significant influence on people decision of GSM advert messages in Ebonyi State. The researcher used the data collected from responses to table

4.3.9 of the respondents.

$$\chi^2 = \frac{\sum I (oi - ei)^2}{e}$$

$$\begin{aligned} ei &= \frac{311 + 49 + 6 + 5}{4} \\ &= \frac{371}{4} \\ &= 92.75 \end{aligned}$$

Table 4: Calculated Value for Hypothesis two

Variable	O	E	O-E	(O-E) ²	$\frac{(O-E)^2}{E}$
Highly Influenced	311	93	218	47,524	511.01
Influence	49	93	-44	1,936	20.81
Not Influenced	6	93	-87	7,569	81.38
Highly Not Influenced	5	93	-88	7,744	83.26
Total	371	-	-	-	174.12

Source: Author's Calculation

χ^2 Calculated = 174

The degree of freedom $= (n - k) = 4 - 1 = 3$ Hence, the critical value on χ^2 table figure of degree of freedom (3) interest level of significance (0.05) is 5.991.

comparing results χ^2 (ei 174) 5.9

Decision Rule:

Since χ^2 calculated is 174 which is greater than χ^2 tabulated which are 5.991, we reject the null hypothesis and accept the alternative hypothesis which states there is significant influence on people decision of GSM advert messages in Ebonyi State.

Hypothesis II

H₀₂: There is no significant influence on the extent to which advertisement of message influence people preference of GSM services. The researcher used the data collected from responses to table 4.3.7 of the respondents.

$$\chi^2 = \frac{\sum (O_i - E_i)^2}{E_i}$$

$$\begin{aligned} E_i &= \frac{190+90+71+20}{4} \\ &= \frac{371}{4} \\ &= 92.75 \end{aligned}$$

Table 5: Calculated Value for Hypothesis One

Variable	O	E	O-E	(O-E) ²	(O-E) ² E
Very High Extent	190	92.75	97.25	9457.56	101.96
High Extent	90	92.75	-2.75	7.562	0.06
Low Extent	71	92.75	-21.75	473.05	5.10
Very High Extent	20	92.75	-72.75	5292.56	57.06
Total	371	-	-	-	41.05

Source: Author's Calculation

χ^2 Calculated = 104

The degree of freedom = (n-k) = 4-1=3 Hence, the critical value on χ^2 table figure of degree of freedom (3) interest level of significance (0.05) is 5.991.
comparing results χ^2 (ei 41.05) 5.9

Decision Rule:

Since χ^2 calculated is 41 which is greater than χ^2 tabulated which are 5.991, we reject the null hypothesis and accept the alternative hypothesis which states there is significant influence on the extent to which advertisement of message influence

people preference of GSM services.

Hypothesis 3

H₀₃: There is no significant influence on the extent to which people of Ebonyi State often patronize GSM firms.

The researcher used the data collected from responses to table twelve (12) of the respondents.

$$\chi^2 = \frac{\sum (O_i - E_i)^2}{E_i}$$

$$\begin{aligned} E_i &= \frac{309 + 52 + 10}{3} \\ &= \frac{371}{3} \\ &= 124 \end{aligned}$$

Table 6: Calculated Value for Hypothesis Three

Variable	O	E	O-E	(O-E) ²	$\frac{(O-E)^2}{E}$
Yes	309	124	185	34225	276.01
No	52	124	-72	5184	41.80
Undecided	10	124	-114	12996	104.80
Total	371	-	-	-	140.87

Source: Author's Calculation

χ^2 Calculated = 140.87

The degree of freedom = (n-k) = 3-1=2 Hence, the critical value on χ^2 table figure of degree of freedom (2) interest level of significance (0.05) is 5.991.

comparing results χ^2 (ei 140.87) 5.9

Decision Rule:

Since χ^2 calculated is 140.87 which is greater than χ^2 tabulated which are 5.991, we reject the null hypothesis and accept the alternative hypothesis which states there is significant influence on the extent to which people of Ebonyi State often

patronize GSM firms

Result Findings

RQ1. People's Choice of GSM Messages

From the data analyzed, it was revealed that, 311(84%) of the respondents opined that GSM advert messages highly preferred in Ebonyi State while just 11(3%) of the respondents claimed that GSM adverts messages are not preferred in Ebonyi State. Thus, the majority of the respondents (84%) were shows that GSM adverts are highly preferred by people. The finding is line with Roy (2012) who observed that GSM advert play a crucial role in the promotion of people advertised. To Roy, GSM advert help people in reaching their wide audience.

RQ 2: Extent to which advertisement of message influence people preference of GSM services

Analysis in from the table above, 190(51%) of the respondents opined that advertisement to a high extent influence people of Ebonyi State on preference of GSM service, 90(24%) were of the opinion that advertisement messages influence people to high extent while just 71(19%) of the respondents indicated low extent while 20(5%) shows very low extent . Thus, the majority of the respondents (51%) and (24%) shows to a high extent advertisement of message influence people preference of GSM services. Also findings in table 1 shows that most of the respondents either completely agreed or agreed that advertising play a significant role in their GSM service patronage. Therefore, findings indicate that irrespective of the respondents and the GSM services they patronize, there is a high level of advertising influence on their preference for the network they use. The finding is line with Roy (2012) that based on the above findings one can conclude that advertising has a role to play in subscribers' choice of GSM network. This is because research finding on the level of advertising influence on subscribers' preferences for GSM tend to be high. This is an indication that messages in an advertisements are given consideration because it is based on this that subscribers can make an informed decision on the GSM service to patronize.

RQ 3: People Patronage of GSM

From the table above, 309(83%) of the respondents agreed that often do people of

Ebonyi State patronize GSM firms, 52 (22%) of the respondents claimed otherwise. Hence, it is clear that, majority of respondents (83%) revealed that people of Ebonyi State often patronize GSM firms. Finally, with most studies on consumer research centering on sales promotion, there is no doubt whatsoever that advertising help to shapes consumer's perceptions and preferences given the role it plays and the level of impact it has on respondents' choice of GSM service patronage. Thus, since advertising asserts such high level of influences on consumers' decisions; such influence may affect perceptions which in turn may determine the GSM services subscribers may eventually patronize.

The is in accordance with Solomon (2016), observed that GSM firm operation in the present society play a significant roles in developing organizational business.

Conclusion

Subscribers' complaints over poor quality service delivery from service providers in Nigeria telecommunication industry necessitated the need to study the influence of advertising on perceptions and preferences for GSM services using people of Ebonyi state tertiary institutions as case study. The revolution of the telecommunication sector in Nigeria in 2001 no doubt brought respite to most people who hitherto have no privilege of using telephony services. However, the inability of service providers to live up to their bidding by delivering a hitch free telephony service has remained worrisome among subscribers of GSM services in Nigeria. Notwithstanding, GSM service providers have continued to develop products and services and advertise same in order to lure subscribers to their brand. The frequency at which they providers advertise their products, couple with their inability of tackle problems of call drop, inability to sometime recharge and occasional network failure have often left subscribers frustrated, leaving them with no option than to look for alternative brand that will guarantee satisfaction.

Recommendations

Based on the above findings and conclusion, the following recommendations are made:

1. Advertising messages from service providers should be accurate, factual and realistic since such message could help shape subscriber's perceptions and preferences.

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2. Service providers should pay more attention to other extra advertorial intervening variable rather than constant review of call tariff in order to help improving service quality.
 3. The strong positive association between the level of advertising influence and preferences should be explored by service providers in order to provide qualitative services to subscribers

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