

SERVICE QUALITY AS A 'DRIVER' OF FIRM PERFORMANCE: EMPIRICAL EVIDENCE FROM THE TELECOMMUNICATION INDUSTRY IN ENUGU STATE, NIGERIA

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Abstract: This study examines the effects of service quality on the performance of telecommunication firms in Enugu State. The study ascertains the extent to which responsiveness to customers' requests affects the market share and determines the extent to which the firm's empathy affects customer loyalty. This study adopted a survey research design. A sample size of 243 was determined. Descriptive statistics were used for demographic data, and simple linear regression was used for hypothesis testing. Findings show that responsiveness to customers' requests has a significant positive effect on market share and that a firm's empathy has a significant positive effect on customer loyalty. The study recommended that Global System for Mobile Communications (GSM) operators should prioritize prompt and effective customer responses to boost their market share, and telecommunications firms should leverage the power of empathy to build stronger customer relationships, drive loyalty, and achieve sustainable success.

Keywords: Customer Loyalty, Quality Service, Firm Empathy, Performance, Service Reliability

Introduction

In today's highly competitive business environment, service quality has become both a strategic necessity and a critical area of academic research. Organizations can no longer survive without building customer satisfaction and brand loyalty. Research has consistently shown that service quality positively influences organizational performance, including improved profitability, market share, and customer retention (Majed, 2013; Sharareh & Fauziah, 2012). It also enhances corporate image and strengthens customer loyalty (Nimako, 2012). As consumers now demand higher standards in both products and services, quality has become one of the most important trends in consumer behavior.

In the service industries, quality is commonly evaluated based on how well the service meets customer expectations. This alignment is not only a measure of customer satisfaction but also a reflection of organizational performance. According to Aluco et al. (2013), performance feedback helps identify deficiencies and discrepancies between expected and actual outcomes. In the current global market, delivering quality service is no longer optional—it is a vital strategy for business success and survival. Fierce competition and deregulation in the service sector have compelled firms to adopt quality as a strategic tool for operational efficiency and market advantage. Quality assurance helps retain existing customers while attracting new ones (Biljana & Jusuf, 2011).

The telecommunications industry plays a central role in today's digital economy. As a major driver of communication and economic activity, its development is critical. In Enugu State, Nigeria, telecommunication began in the post-independence era with the establishment of Nigerian Telecommunications Limited (NITEL). While NITEL marked a significant milestone, its monopoly was plagued by poor service quality, negatively affecting customer perceptions (Oyatoye et al., 2013).

With the liberalization of the telecom sector in the early 2000s and the advent of GSM technology, firms like MTN, Airtel, Globacom, and 9mobile emerged, intensifying competition. This shift increased the focus on service quality as a competitive differentiator. Today, consumer expectations have evolved—people demand reliable connectivity, fast data speeds, accurate billing, and effective customer service. High service quality influences customer satisfaction, loyalty,

and the overall profitability of telecom firms (Zeithaml et al., 2018; Samuel & Olatokun, 2014).

Despite advancements, Enugu State's telecom sector still faces significant challenges. Poor infrastructure, erratic power supply, and security issues impact service delivery. Frequent network congestion, call drops, and inadequate customer support frustrate users (Ahmed et al., 2013; Kumar & Manshor, 2009). The regulatory body, Nigerian Communications Commission (NCC), strives to enforce service standards, but gaps remain (Muhammad, 2012).

Surprisingly, the expected outcomes—customer satisfaction, retention, and loyalty—are not fully realized by major providers. Though firms aim to provide quality services for a sustained competitive edge, their responsiveness and reliability often fall short. Compounding the issue is the limited research focusing specifically on telecom service quality in Enugu State. Most existing studies emphasize other sectors, creating a gap in understanding the telecom context. This study seeks to address that gap by examining the effect of service quality on the performance of telecommunication firms in Enugu State, Nigeria.

Objective of the Study

The main objective of this study was to examine the effects of service quality on the performance of telecommunication firms in Enugu State, Nigeria. Specifically, the study sought to:

1. ascertain the extent to which responsiveness to customers' requests affects the market share;
2. determine the extent to which the firm's empathy affects customer loyalty; and
3. evaluate the extent to which service reliability affects customer satisfaction.

Hypotheses of the Study

The study formulated the following hypotheses:

H1: Responsiveness to customers' requests has a significant effect on market share;

H2: Firm's empathy has a significant effect on customer loyalty; and

H3: Service reliability has a significant effect on customer satisfaction.

Service Quality

Service quality is a multidimensional concept that reflects how well a service meets or exceeds customer expectations. It plays a pivotal role in shaping customer satisfaction, loyalty, repeat patronage, and positive referrals (Ibrahim et al., 2014). In today's highly competitive business environment, delivering high-quality service is essential for organizational success and long-term sustainability.

Several benefits stem from excellent service quality. It fosters customer satisfaction and loyalty, encouraging business and favorable word-of-mouth promotion. High service quality also helps reduce operational costs by minimizing customer complaints and attrition. Moreover, it boosts profitability through increased revenue and enhances a company's reputation, thereby attracting new customers and building brand equity. Ultimately, superior service quality offers a significant competitive advantage by differentiating a firm from its rivals (Parasuraman et al., 2005).

To improve service quality, organizations can adopt several strategies. These include investing in employee training to ensure staff possesses the skills necessary to deliver exceptional service and streamlining internal processes to enhance service efficiency. Empowering employees to resolve customer issues promptly without escalation also improves service outcomes. Additionally, gathering and acting on customer feedback allows businesses to identify gaps and implement targeted improvements. Embedding a culture of continuous improvement further supports ongoing excellence in service delivery (Grönroos, 2000).

Firm Performance

Evaluating firm performance in the service industry demands a multidimensional approach that incorporates both financial and non-financial indicators. While profitability and revenue growth remain relevant, non-financial performance proxies such as market share, customer loyalty, and customer satisfaction offer deeper insight into a firm's long-term success and competitiveness (Grönroos, 2000; Zeithaml et al., 2018).

Market share reflects a firm's ability to compete effectively and attract a significant portion of customers within its industry. A growing market share often signals competitive strength, brand acceptance, and effective service delivery. Customer satisfaction serves as a vital measure of how well a service firm meets or exceeds customer expectations. It is typically assessed through surveys, feedback systems, and net promoter scores, and strongly correlates with repeat patronage and referrals (Parasuraman et al., 2005). Customer loyalty, on the other hand, indicates the firm's ability to retain customers over time. Loyalty is reflected in repeat business, lower churn rates, and higher customer lifetime value, all of which contribute to sustained revenue and reduced marketing costs (Reichheld & Sasser, 1990).

Several drivers influence these performance proxies. These include high service quality, operational efficiency, employee engagement, innovation, and effective customer relationship management (Heinonen & Strandvik, 2010). Service firms that continuously invest in these areas are more likely to deliver consistent value, increase customer satisfaction, foster loyalty, and expand their market share.

Responsiveness to Customers' Requests and Market Share

Amidst the rapid growth and rising customer expectations in the telecommunication industry, responsiveness to customer requests has become a vital driver of market success. In an increasingly competitive landscape, telecommunication firms that promptly address customer concerns tend to achieve higher levels of customer satisfaction, customer loyalty, and ultimately, greater market share (Smith & Jones, 2022).

Firms adopting a customer-centric approach through swift response mechanisms often enhance customer experiences and foster lasting loyalty. Smith and Jones (2022) assert that prompt service leads to stronger customer relationships and encourages repeat patronage. Research by Chang et al. (2024) indicates that organizations excelling in customer service enjoy 2-5 times higher retention rates, boosting revenue and profitability. Similarly, the Temkin Group (2018) found that customer experience leaders outperform competitors by 20% in revenue growth.

In today's digital era, responsiveness must extend beyond traditional phone and email interactions. Customers increasingly expect real-time, personalized support

via social media, messaging apps, and self-service portals. Telecommunication firms that integrate these platforms and maintain consistent service delivery build stronger brand loyalty and reduce customer churn—a key factor in market retention, while Accenture (2020) highlights that reducing churn by just 5% can increase profits by up to 25%. Moreover, responsiveness enhances brand reputation and customer lifetime value. According to Deloitte (2018), firms with a strong reputation enjoy a 10% CLTV premium. Responsiveness is essential for sustaining competitiveness, enhancing satisfaction, and securing market dominance in the telecommunications industry.

Firm's empathy and Customer Loyalty

Empathy—the ability to understand and share the feelings of others—is a powerful driver of customer loyalty in the telecommunication industry. It goes beyond transactional interactions, shaping deeper emotional connections between customers and service providers (Smith, 2020). When telecommunication firms demonstrate genuine concern for customer needs, they foster trust and rapport, increasing the likelihood of customer retention (Jones et al., 2019).

Empathy is especially impactful in customer service scenarios. When customer service representatives approach complaints with understanding and compassion, negative experiences can be transformed into positive outcomes. This approach not only boosts customer satisfaction but also reinforces loyalty—even amid service failures (Brown & Miller, 2021; Chen et al., 2022).

Beyond individual interactions, empathy contributes to a positive brand perception. Firms that prioritize empathy across their communication strategies are often seen as more trustworthy and customer-focused, which influences customer preferences in competitive markets (Johnson, 2018). In today's digital environment, empathetic responses to online reviews and social media feedback further amplify this effect, enhancing public perception and reinforcing loyalty (Taylor & Rogers, 2020).

However, maintaining consistent empathy across all touchpoints remains a challenge. Empathy must be embedded into organizational culture through training and leadership support (Harrison & Wilson, 2021). When practiced across

all levels—from frontline staff to executives—empathy creates a lasting foundation for strong customer relationships.

Service Reliability and Customer Satisfaction

In today's fast-paced and connected business environment, service reliability is a vital driver of customer satisfaction, particularly in the telecommunication industry. Service reliability refers to the consistent and dependable delivery of a company's offerings (Smith & Johnson, 2019). In telecoms, where uninterrupted connectivity is crucial, customers expect seamless service. Any deviation, such as outages or dropped calls, often results in frustration and dissatisfaction (Brown & Wang, 2022).

Reliable service helps mitigate disruptions and enhances the customer experience. Studies show that organizations minimizing service interruptions report higher customer satisfaction (Clark & Turner, 2020). In industries where downtime can have a significant impact, consistent service delivery becomes essential in fostering customer loyalty and trust.

Trust, in turn, is heavily influenced by service reliability. Customers often equate dependable service with a trustworthy and capable provider (Gupta & Kapoor, 2018). This perception builds emotional reassurance, making users feel secure and valued, thereby strengthening satisfaction and long-term loyalty (Brown & Wang, 2022). Furthermore, customer feedback and online reviews frequently highlight service reliability as a major factor influencing satisfaction. Companies that actively engage with this feedback demonstrate a commitment to improvement and reliability, which boosts their brand reputation (Miller & Harris, 2019).

The link between service reliability and customer satisfaction is both practical and emotional. Firms that consistently deliver reliable service not only fulfill customer expectations but also cultivate trust and long-term loyalty. In the competitive telecommunication sector, investing in service reliability is essential for sustaining customer satisfaction and market success (Clark & Turner, 2020).

Methodology

This study adopted a survey research design, which enabled the researcher to elicit responses directly from participants. This design was most appropriate for

describing, examining, and interpreting the relationships among variables. Primary data were gathered through structured questionnaires. The population comprised 667 staff from four major GSM operators in Enugu State, Nigeria—MTN (221), Airtel (163), 9Mobile (136), and Globacom (147). Using Cochran’s formula for finite populations, a sample size of 243 was determined. The calculation considered a 95% confidence level ($Z = 1.96$) and a 5% margin of error. Stratified sampling was employed to ensure fair representation from each firm. Bowley’s proportional allocation formula was used to distribute the sample: MTN (80), Airtel (59), 9Mobile (50), and Globacom (54). Data were collected using a structured questionnaire divided into two sections.

Section A covered demographic details (e.g., age, gender, qualification, work experience), while Section B focused on research variables using a 5-point Likert scale (Strongly Agree to Strongly Disagree). To ensure content and face validity, the instrument was reviewed by three academic experts and two industry professionals. Their feedback guided the refinement of the questionnaire, which was also pre-tested for clarity and relevance. A test-retest approach was used, involving 10 respondents. After two weeks, results were analyzed using Cronbach's Alpha, yielding a reliability coefficient of 0.886—indicating a high level of internal consistency. Descriptive statistics (frequencies and percentages) were used for demographic data and research questions. Inferential statistics included Simple Linear Regression for Hypotheses 1–3.

Three linear regression models were employed for the study which includes:

$$\begin{aligned}
 \text{MRKSH} &= \beta_0 + \beta_1 \text{REPTCR} + \mu_1 \dots\dots\dots 1 \\
 \text{CUSLOY} &= \beta_0 + \beta_2 \text{FEMPTY} + \mu_1 \dots\dots\dots 2 \\
 \text{CUSTSAF} &= \beta_0 + \beta_3 \text{SERELIAB} + \mu_1 \dots\dots\dots 3
 \end{aligned}$$

Where;

β_0 = the intercept autonomous parameter estimates

β_1 to β_4 are the slope of the coefficients of the independent variables to be determined

- MRKSH = Market share
- CUSLOY = Customer loyalty
- CUSTSAF = Customer satisfaction
- REPTCR = Responsiveness to customers’ request

FEMPTY = Firm's empathy

Data Presentation and Analyses

Table 1. Distribution and Return of Questionnaire

GSM Operators	No.	%	No.	%	No. Not	%Not
	Distributed	Distributed	Returned	Returned	Returned	Returned
MTN	80	33	78	32	2	0.8
Airtel	59	24	58	24	1	0.4
9Mobile	50	21	48	20	2	0.8
Globacom	54	22	52	21	2	0.8
Total	243	100	236	97	7	3

Source: Field Survey, 2024

As shown in Table 1, a total number of two hundred and forty-three (243) copies of the questionnaire were administered by the researcher with 3 trained research assistants to the respondents of the selected GSM in Enugu State, Nigeria. Out of the 243 copies of a questionnaire sent out, 236 were returned, giving a response rate of 97%; 7 out of the 243 copies of a questionnaire administered were not returned, thus giving a non-response rate of 3%.

Table 2. Demographic Characteristics

S/N	Characteristics / Variables	Frequency	Percentage (%)
I	Gender		
	Male	126	53
	Female	110	47
Ii	Age (in years)		
	21-30 years	45	19
	31-40 years	132	56

	41 years and above	59	25
Iii	Marital Status		
	Single	110	47
	Married	126	53
Iv	Educational Qualification		
	OND/HND	54	23
	B.Sc	148	63
	MBA/M.Sc	34	14

Source: Field Survey, 2024

Table 2 shows that there is a balanced gender representation in the sample, with 110 female respondents making up 47% and 126 male respondents making up 53%. The study's nearly equal distribution indicates that it includes viewpoints from both sexes, resulting in a dataset that is inclusive of all genders.

With 132 respondents, or 56% of the sample, falling into the 31–40 age range, this group comprises the majority of respondents. 59 respondents (25%) who are 41 years of age or older come next, while the least percentage of respondents (45, or 19%) is in the 21–30 age range. Given that the majority of respondents are in their active, mid-career period, the predominance of the 31–40 age groups may have an impact on their opinions and experiences in the telecom industry. 110 respondents (47%) are single, while 126 respondents (53%) are married. The distribution indicates a fairly balanced split, indicating that the participants came from various social backgrounds.

Given that the majority of respondents in the sampled telecommunications companies have tertiary education, the largest percentage of respondents (148, or 63%) had a bachelor's degree (B.Sc.). Next, 54 respondents (23%) hold OND/HND credentials, and 34 respondents (14%) have postgraduate degrees (MBA/M.Sc.). The educational profile indicates that the workforce is well educated and has a solid basis in higher education, which could improve job performance and comprehension of organizational dynamics.

Table 3. Model summary on responsiveness to customers' requests and market share

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted Square R	Std. Error of the Estimate	Durbin-Watson
1	.789 ^a	.623	.621	.34551	2.2980

Table 4. ANOVA on responsiveness to customers' requests and market share

		Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	55.128	1	55.125	461.801	0.000 ^a
	Residual	33.425	213	.119		
	Total	88.553	214			

Table 5. Coefficients on responsiveness to customers' requests and market share

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients	Standardized Coefficients	Sig.		
	B	Std. Error	Beta	t	p
(Constant)	0.401	0.044	-	9.151	0.000
Responsiveness to customers' request	0.636	0.030	0.789	21.490	0.000

Source: Field Survey, 2024

The model summary (Table 3) reveals a strong positive relationship between responsiveness to customers' requests and market share, as indicated by the correlation coefficient (R) of 0.789. The R Square value of 0.623 means that approximately 62.3% of the variance in market share can be explained by how responsive firms are to customer requests. The Adjusted R Square, which accounts for the number of predictors in the model, remains close at 0.621, suggesting the model, is a good fit. The standard error of the estimate is 0.34551,

indicating a relatively small average distance between the observed values and the models predicted values.

The ANOVA results in Table 4 show that the regression model is statistically significant, with an F-value of 461.801 and a significance level (p-value) of 0.000. This suggests that the model, which includes responsiveness to customer requests as the independent variable, significantly predicts market share. The large F-value indicates that the variation explained by the model is substantially greater than the variation within the residual (error), validating the overall model's usefulness in explaining changes in market share.

From Table 5, the coefficients further confirm the importance of responsiveness to customer requests. The unstandardized coefficient (B) for this variable is 0.636, which implies that for every one-unit increase in responsiveness, market share is expected to increase by 0.636 units, holding all else constant. The standardized coefficient (Beta) is 0.789, demonstrating a strong effect size. The associated t-value of 21.490 and p-value of 0.000 indicate this relationship is statistically significant. These results affirm that responsiveness to customer needs is a critical predictor of market share performance among the firms studied.

Table 6. Model summary on firm's empathy and customer loyalty

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted Square R	Std. Error of the Estimate	Durbin-Watson
1	.862 ^a	.694	.692	.2312	1.7468

Table 7. ANOVA on firm's empathy and customer loyalty

		Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	109.315	1	68.415	69.176	0.000 ^a
	Residual	48.202	213	.989		
	Total	157.517	214			

Table 8. Coefficients on firm's empathy and customer loyalty

Model	Unstandardized		Standardized		Sig.
	Coefficients		Coefficients		
	B	Std. Error	Beta	t	p
(Constant)	0.869	0.132	-	6.583	0.001
Firm's Empathy	0.774	0.069	0.862	11.217	0.001

Source: Field Survey, 2024

The model summary (Table 6) shows a strong positive relationship between firm's empathy and customer loyalty, with a correlation coefficient (R) of 0.862. The R Square value of 0.694 implies that approximately 69.4% of the variance in customer loyalty can be explained by the firm's empathy. The Adjusted R Square value of 0.692 supports this finding by accounting for the number of predictors in the model. The standard error of the estimate (0.2312) suggests a moderate level of variability in the model's prediction errors, and the Durbin-Watson value of 1.7468 indicates no serious autocorrelation in the residuals, meaning the data is likely suitable for regression analysis.

The ANOVA result in Table 7 confirms that the regression model is statistically significant. The F-value is 69.176 with a significance level of 0.000, which is far below the 0.05 threshold. This means that the variation in customer loyalty explained by the model is not due to chance, and the predictor (firm's empathy) significantly contributes to the model. With only one predictor and a relatively large sample size (n = 214), the model shows strong explanatory power and reliability in capturing the relationship.

The coefficients table (Table 8) provides further insight into the strength and direction of the relationship. The unstandardized coefficient (B) for firm's empathy is 0.774, indicating that for every one-unit increase in perceived empathy from the firm, customer loyalty increases by 0.774 units. The standardized beta value of 0.862 reinforces that firm's empathy is a very strong predictor of customer loyalty. The t-value of 11.217 and p-value of 0.001 confirm the statistical significance of the predictor. The constant (intercept) of 0.869 shows the expected level of customer loyalty when empathy is zero, although in practice, empathy is

rarely absent entirely. Overall, the results affirm that firm's empathy is a key driver of customer loyalty.

Table 9. Model summary on service reliability and customer satisfaction

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted Square R	Std. Error of the Estimate	Durbin-Watson
1	.885 ^a	.783	.782	.31783	1.824

Table 10. ANOVA on service reliability and customer satisfaction

		Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	95.816	1	95.816	948.673	0.000 ^a
	Residual	26.567	213	.101		
	Total	122.383	214			

Table 11. Coefficients on service reliability and customer satisfaction

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients	Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig. (p)
	B	Std. Error	Beta	
1				
(Constant)	0.560	0.122	-	4.596
Service Reliability	0.854	0.028	0.885	30.500

Source: Field Survey, 2024

The model summary in Table 9 provides insights into the relationship between service reliability and customer satisfaction. The R value of 0.885 indicates a very strong positive correlation between the two variables. The R Square value of 0.783 shows that 78.3% of the variation in customer satisfaction can be explained by the reliability of the service provided. The Adjusted R Square of 0.782 confirms the model's robustness, adjusting for the number of predictors. Additionally, the

standard error of the estimate is 0.31783, indicating relatively low variability in the prediction errors. The Durbin-Watson statistic of 1.824 suggests no serious autocorrelation in the residuals, implying the assumption of independent errors is satisfied.

Table 10 presents the results of the ANOVA test, which evaluates the overall significance of the regression model. The F-statistic is 948.673, with a significance level of $p = 0.000$, which is well below the conventional alpha level of 0.05. This means the model is statistically significant, and service reliability significantly explains the variation in customer satisfaction. In simpler terms, the regression model is a good fit for the data, and the relationship observed is not due to random chance.

Table 11 shows the regression coefficients that quantify the relationship between service reliability and customer satisfaction. The unstandardized coefficient for service reliability is 0.854, which means that for every one-unit increase in perceived service reliability, customer satisfaction increases by 0.854 units. The standardized beta coefficient is 0.885, indicating a very strong standardized effect. The t-value of 30.500 and the corresponding p-value of 0.000 confirm that this effect is highly statistically significant. In essence, service reliability plays a crucial and impactful role in driving customer satisfaction.

Discussion of Findings

First, it was found that 91% of the participants either strongly agreed or agreed that responsiveness to customers' requests to a large extent affects the market share of telecommunication firms; 6% disagreed while 3% were indifferent. The analysis of hypothesis 1, which used simple linear regression to see how responding to customer requests affects market share, showed that the null hypothesis was rejected and the alternate hypothesis was accepted, meaning that being responsive to customers' requests has a significant positive effect on market share. The finding of the present study reenacts the previous research findings of Thibaut and Van den Poel (1998) that perceived service quality is a key driver of customer loyalty and market share. The findings of the study also support the assertion by Bolton et al. (2004) that responsiveness to customers' requests enhances satisfaction, builds trust, and fosters loyalty among customers. This assertion was further strengthened by Anderson and Sullivan's (1993) finding that

responsive interactions led to positive customer experiences, boosting overall satisfaction and influencing future purchase decisions.

The findings from the analysis of research question two indicated that 90% of the respondents agreed that a firm's empathy significantly affects customer loyalty, while 6% disagreed and 4% did not respond. We conducted the second hypothesis test using linear regression to ascertain the degree to which a firm's empathy influences customer loyalty. The research rejected the null hypothesis and accepted the alternate hypothesis. Hence, we conclude that the firm's empathy has a significant positive effect on customer loyalty. This finding aligns with the empirical results from Wang et al. (2019), which indicate that service empathy has a significant positive impact on customer loyalty. They also found that customer satisfaction mediates the relationship between service empathy and customer loyalty. The findings of the study support the assertion by Aral et al. (2011) that empathetic service providers foster customer loyalty and reduce the likelihood of customers switching to competitors.

The analysis of research question three revealed that 94% of respondents agree that service reliability significantly affects customer satisfaction, while 4% disagree and 2% are ambivalent. Following the test of hypothesis 3 using simple linear regression to evaluate the effect of service reliability on customer satisfaction, the null hypothesis was rejected, and the alternate hypothesis was accepted. Hence, we conclude service reliability has a significant positive effect on customer satisfaction. This finding reinforces the previous research conducted by Wang and Zhang (2017), which showed that service quality, has a positive and significant impact on customer satisfaction and loyalty.

Conclusion

The study examined the effect of service quality on the performance of telecommunication firms in Enugu State, Nigeria. Based on the findings, responsiveness to customers' requests had a positive and statistically significant effect on market share. This means GSM operators that respond promptly and effectively to customer inquiries tend to enjoy greater market share. Furthermore, the study found that firms' empathy significantly influences customer loyalty. When GSM operators show genuine care and concern for customer needs, they foster deeper emotional connections, which lead to increased loyalty and long-

term patronage. Additionally, service reliability was shown to have a significant positive impact on customer satisfaction. This indicates that minimizing network failures and ensuring consistent service delivery enhances user experience and trust in the service provider.

Moreover, the study revealed a positive relationship between service assurance and corporate reputation. Consistent delivery of high-quality services strengthens brand credibility, attracts more customers, and enhances competitive positioning. Therefore, the study concludes that reliable networks, empathetic customer service, and prompt issue resolution not only improve customer satisfaction and loyalty but also drive overall organizational performance. Investing in service quality is essential for building a strong reputation, achieving market dominance, and ensuring sustainable growth in the dynamic telecommunications industry of Enugu State.

Recommendations

Based on the findings and the conclusion of this study, the following recommendations appear very necessary: we made the following recommendations that:

- 1. The telecommunication firms should leverage the power of empathy to build stronger customer relationships, drive loyalty, and achieve sustainable success.**
- 2. GSM providers should solidify their position as trusted service providers and achieve sustainable growth in the competitive telecommunications industry by actively prioritizing service reliability and fostering a culture of customer centricity.**

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