

## ENHANCING CUSTOMER LOYALTY IN GLOBAL SYSTEM FOR MOBILE COMMUNICATION: THE ROLE OF RELATIONSHIP MARKETING TACTICS

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### ABSTRACT

*This study examined how customer perceptions of relationship marketing tactics—namely brand image, service quality, customer trust, promotion/value offered, and price perception—influence loyalty to GSM service providers among university students. A cross-sectional survey design was adopted, and data were collected from 710 undergraduate and postgraduate GSM service users at the University of Ibadan, selected through convenience sampling. The participants, aged 18 to 57 years (mean age = 22.4), included 4.9% married and 44.1% female respondents. Analysis revealed that price perception ( $F(1, 677) = 14.51$ , partial  $\eta^2 = 0.02$ ), brand image ( $F(1, 677) = 38.52$ , partial  $\eta^2 = 0.05$ ), service quality ( $F(1, 675) = 21.95$ , partial  $\eta^2 = 0.03$ ), and promotion ( $F(1, 675) = 23.67$ , partial  $\eta^2 = 0.03$ ) each had significant effects on customer loyalty. Additionally, a significant interaction effect was observed among brand image, promotion, and customer trust ( $F(1, 677) = 6.09$ , partial  $\eta^2 = 0.01$ ). The findings underscore the critical role of relationship marketing tactics in fostering customer loyalty among GSM subscribers. To enhance customer retention, GSM service providers should prioritize improvements in these key areas.*

**Keywords:** Relationship marketing tactics, GSM service subscribers, Customer loyalty

## INTRODUCTION

The telecommunications industry, particularly the Global System for Mobile Communication (GSM), has experienced rapid advancements and increasing competition over the past few decades (Koi-Akrofi, Koi-Akrofi, & Welbeck, 2013). As global mobile penetration continues to rise, service providers face the dual challenge of not only acquiring new customers but also retaining existing ones (Coyles & Gokey, 2005). In this highly competitive environment, customer loyalty has emerged as a key differentiator, with loyal customers being less likely to switch to competitors and more likely to engage in repeat transactions (Ndubisi, 2007).

This study focuses on university students in Nigeria, who are active and prominent users of GSM services. This group is particularly important due to their unique characteristics: they are tech-savvy, highly engaged with mobile communication, and have access to various service options, making them more likely to switch providers if their needs and expectations are unmet. Understanding the factors that drive customer loyalty within this demographic is crucial for service providers seeking to design effective marketing and customer retention strategies.

Customer loyalty in the GSM sector is no longer determined solely by service availability or competitive pricing. Increasingly, it is influenced by the effectiveness of relationship marketing tactics designed to build strong, long-term relationships between service providers and their customers. Among university students, several of these tactics are likely to play a vital role in shaping loyalty to GSM providers. As suggested by Peng and Wang (2006), five key components of relationship marketing tactics—customer trust, brand image, service quality, promotion/value offered, and price perception—are examined in this study.

Despite the recognized importance of these marketing tactics, limited research has been conducted on how they influence customer loyalty in Nigeria's higher education context, particularly among university students—a dynamic and highly engaged segment of GSM users. This gap in the literature is especially notable given that students represent a large and influential market within the Nigerian telecommunications sector.

A related study by Borishade, Ogunnaike, Kehinde, and Aka (2022), titled *"Relationship Marketing and Loyalty of Mobile Phone Customers"*, differs from the present research in two significant ways. First, their study surveyed academic and non-academic staff from a Nigerian university, with a sample size of 225 respondents, while the current study surveyed 710 undergraduate and postgraduate students, based on the premise that students represent a crucial segment of mobile service consumers. Second, and more importantly, their study examined four relationship marketing variables—trust, communication, commitment, and conflict handling—whereas this study investigates five variables: trust, brand image, service quality, promotion/value offered, and price perception.

Therefore, this research aims to examine the role of these five relationship marketing tactics in enhancing customer loyalty among students at the University of Ibadan. By focusing on this specific customer segment, the study seeks to offer valuable insights into their needs and preferences, thereby contributing to a deeper understanding of how relationship marketing can drive loyalty in Nigeria's GSM market.

## **LITERATURE REVIEW**

### **Customer Trust and Loyalty**

Trust is a crucial element of commitment; therefore, building trust is essential to achieving customer loyalty (Sirdeshmukh, Singh, & Sabol, 2002). Alongside customer satisfaction and switching barriers, trust has been identified as a key factor in customer retention (Ranaweera & Prabhu, 2003). It is one of the most critical components for fostering long-term relationships and enhancing customer loyalty. Morgan and Hunt (1994) hypothesized that trust is a vital factor influencing commitment and relationship continuity, with brand trust ultimately leading to brand loyalty. Chaudhuri and Holbrook (2001) found that brand trust is directly related to both customer loyalty and purchasing behavior. According to Dothan (2011), trust is central to developing relationships between organizations and customers, existing when one party has confidence in an exchange partner's reliability and integrity. Research by Ndubisi (2007) further highlights that trust significantly influences customer loyalty in the telecommunications sector, as customers are less likely to switch providers when they believe their current provider is dependable.

Aydin and Özer (2005) also identified trust as a major contributor to customer loyalty. Building trust among telecommunications subscribers can influence their decision to remain loyal to network providers. Trust helps individuals manage uncertainty regarding the motives, intentions, and future actions of those on whom they depend (Kramer, 1999). Ndubisi (2007) affirmed that trust is a critical factor in fostering loyalty and that there is a significant, positive relationship between trust and loyalty. Building customer confidence and providing high-quality service lead to increased trust, which ultimately encourages customer loyalty.

### **Brand Image and Loyalty**

Brand image plays a crucial role in shaping customer perceptions and driving loyalty. In the telecommunications sector, a strong brand image can foster an emotional connection with customers, making them less inclined to switch providers (Aaker, 1991). According to Chahal and Bala (2012), brand image positively influences customer loyalty by enhancing satisfaction and trust in the service provider.

Research has shown that brand image has a positive effect on customer loyalty and commitment (Ogba & Tan, 2009; Aaker, 1996). It helps telecom providers differentiate their services and products from competitors in the minds of both potential and existing customers. Park, Jaworski, and McInnis (1988) emphasized that organizations with a positive market image are more likely to achieve greater market presence, competitive advantage, and market share. Koo (2003) also noted that a strong brand image promotes brand loyalty, enhances brand equity, and ultimately influences purchasing behavior. Similarly, Sondoh et al. (2007) concluded that a positive brand image significantly impacts customer loyalty.

### **Service Quality and Loyalty**

Service quality is a significant determinant of customer loyalty in the GSM sector. Parasuraman, Zeithaml, and Berry (1988) developed the SERVQUAL model, which identifies key service quality dimensions such as reliability, responsiveness, and assurance. High service quality leads to customer satisfaction, which, in turn, fosters loyalty (Lovelock & Wirtz, 2011). In telecommunications, factors such as network reliability and customer service are critical

components of service quality that influence customer retention (Kim et al., 2004). According to Ehigie (2006), excellence in service quality is essential for achieving customer loyalty—the primary goal of most business organizations—due to the benefits of customer retention.

Researchers such as Leisen and Vance (2001), Zeithaml (2000), and Urbaczewski et al. (2003), as cited by Global Systems One (2008), have emphasized the vital role of service quality in helping telecommunication providers build and maintain a loyal, profitable customer base. Anderson, Fornell, and Lehmann (1994) stated that service quality is a major factor for business profitability and customer satisfaction. Agyei and Kilika (2013) found a significant relationship between service quality and customer loyalty. Similarly, Boohene and Agyapong (2011), in a study of the telecommunications industry in Ghana, reported a strong positive correlation between service quality and customer loyalty.

Offering quality service and value also helps foster customer loyalty (Atalik & Arslan, 2009). Steenkamp (1989) concluded that delivering quality service is a key driver of customer retention, leading to increased market share. Fornell (1992) also observed that companies can retain customers by offering services that enhance satisfaction. Ahmad et al. (2010) echoed this, asserting that better service quality increases customer retention intentions. Additionally, a study by Lai, Griffin, and Babin (2009) identified several determinants of loyalty, including service quality, perceived value, and corporate image.

### **Promotion/Value Offered and Loyalty**

Beyond service quality, promotion plays a vital role in attracting new customers and retaining existing ones. It serves to increase awareness of a company and its products or services (Root, 1994). Promotional offers and perceived value are critical tools for enhancing customer loyalty. In the GSM industry, promotions such as discounted data packages and loyalty rewards have proven effective in retaining customers (Kotler & Keller, 2016). Kim, Park, and Jeong (2004) found that promotions enhance customer satisfaction by offering additional value, which, in turn, strengthens customer loyalty.

### **Price Perception and Loyalty**

Price perception refers to how customers evaluate the fairness of prices charged by service providers (Monroe, 1990). In the GSM sector, price is a critical factor influencing customer loyalty, particularly in price-sensitive markets. Varki and Colgate (2001) found that customers are more likely to remain loyal when they perceive pricing as fair and reflective of service quality. Kollmann (2000) emphasized that the success of telecommunications providers depends on both continued service usage and strategic pricing approaches. This implies that while service quality is important, it may not be sufficient on its own; competitive and attractive pricing is equally essential for gaining and maintaining market share.

This leads to an important question: Can pricing strategies promote customer loyalty in the Nigerian telecommunications market? Research by Martin-Consuegra, Molina, and Esteban (2007) indicates that perceived price fairness significantly influences customer satisfaction, which, in turn, enhances loyalty. Similarly, Bolton and Drew (1991) reported that pricing plays a significant role in determining the loyalty of mobile service subscribers. This link between pricing and loyalty is further supported by Athanassopoulos (2000) and Varki and Colgate (2001), who found that satisfaction with pricing positively affects overall customer satisfaction.

Taking the above into consideration, this study's research hypothesis is that relationship marketing tactics—namely customer trust, price perception, brand image, service quality, and promotion—will have significant main and interaction effects on customer loyalty.

## **METHOD**

### **Design and Participants**

This cross-sectional study involved 710 students (397 males, or 55.9%; and 313 females, or 44.1%) selected from the University of Ibadan in Nigeria. Of the participants, 549 (77.3%) were undergraduates and 169 (22.7%) were postgraduates. Their ages ranged from 18 to 57 years ( $M = 22.43$ ,  $SD = 4.86$ ). The majority of participants (675, or 95.1%) were single, while 35 (4.9%) were married. In terms of primary GSM line usage, 483 (68.0%) used MTN, 83 (11.7%) used Globacom, 56 (7.9%) used Airtel, and 88 (12.4%) used Etisalat.

### **Measures**

#### Brand Image

Brand image was assessed using a 3-item self-report scale adapted and modified by Aydin and Özer (2005), drawing on the work of Grönroos (2000) and Raval and Grönroos (1996). Items were rated on a five-point Likert scale ranging from "1" (Strongly Disagree) to "5" (Strongly Agree). The scale had a Cronbach's alpha reliability of 0.80 in prior studies and yielded a reliability coefficient of 0.72 in the current study. Respondents scoring at or above the mean were classified as having a favorable brand perception, while those scoring below the mean were considered to have an unfavorable perception.

#### Service Quality

Service quality was measured using a six-item self-report scale adapted from Peng and Wang (2006), based on earlier frameworks developed by Grönroos (2000) and Parasuraman, Berry, and Zeithaml (1988). Responses were recorded on a five-point Likert scale from "1" (Strongly Disagree) to "5" (Strongly Agree). Higher scores indicated better perceived service quality. The scale demonstrated good psychometric properties, with Cronbach's alpha values ranging from 0.79 to 0.86 in previous studies, and a reliability coefficient of 0.75 in this study.

#### Promotion/Value Offered

Promotion/value offered was measured using a self-report scale adapted by Peng and Wang (2006) from the original scale by Parasuraman, Berry, and Zeithaml (1988). Items were rated on a five-point Likert scale from "1" (Strongly Disagree) to "5" (Strongly Agree). Previous reliability coefficients ranged from 0.79 to 0.82, and in this study, a Cronbach's alpha of 0.70 was obtained, indicating acceptable internal consistency. Higher scores reflected more favorable perceptions of promotional value.

#### Price Perception

Price perception was assessed using a 5-item self-report scale adapted from Cheng, Lai, and Yeung (2008), who modified the original scale developed by Peng and Wang (2006). Items were rated on a five-point Likert scale from "1" (Strongly Disagree) to "5" (Strongly Agree). Prior

studies reported Cronbach's alpha values between 0.77 and 0.87. In this study, the reliability coefficient was 0.73, indicating good internal consistency. Higher scores represented more favorable price perceptions.

#### Customer Trust

Customer trust was measured using the 6-item General Trust Scale developed by Yamagishi and Yamagishi (1994). Items were rated on a five-point Likert scale from "1" (Strongly Disagree) to "5" (Strongly Agree). The scale has previously demonstrated internal reliability with coefficients between 0.70 and 0.78 (Yamagishi & Yamagishi, 1994), and its predictive validity has been confirmed in multiple studies (Yamagishi, Kikuchi, & Kosugi, 1999). In this study, the Cronbach's alpha was 0.76, indicating acceptable reliability. Higher scores indicated greater trust, while lower scores reflected lower levels of trust.

#### Customer Loyalty

Customer loyalty was measured using a 6-item self-report scale adapted by Aydin and Özer (2005), based on the work of Wulf, Odekerken-Schröder, and Iacobucci (2001), and Morgan and Hunt (1994). Items were rated on a five-point Likert scale ranging from "1" (Strongly Disagree) to "5" (Strongly Agree). The scale had a Cronbach's alpha of 0.90 in previous research and yielded a reliability coefficient of 0.82 in this study. Higher scores indicated greater customer loyalty.

### **Procedure**

The heads of six selected halls of residence were informed of the study's purpose, and permission was obtained after assurances were given that the study posed no physical or psychological risk to participants or the university. Participants provided informed consent and were assured that their physical, psychological, and academic well-being would not be affected. No personal identifiers were collected, and confidentiality was maintained. Questionnaires were distributed to available students in the halls at the time of the study, and participation was voluntary. Of the 780 questionnaires distributed, 731 were returned, yielding a response rate of 93.7%. A total of 710 fully completed questionnaires were included in the final analysis. Data collection lasted 19 working days.

### **Data Analysis**

The independent variables—customer trust, brand image, service quality, promotion/value offered, and price perception—were each categorized as High (2) or Low (1). A 2×2×2×2×2 factorial ANOVA was conducted to examine the main and interaction effects of these five independent variables on customer loyalty. Post hoc analysis using Bonferroni multiple comparisons was performed to determine whether observed differences in customer loyalty were statistically significant.

## **RESULTS**

### **Hypotheses Testing**

Hypotheses were analysed with 2x2x2x2x2 ANOVA. This is because, there are five independent variables with 2 levels each (low and high) and one dependent variable on continuous form.

**Table 1: Summary of 2X2X2X2X2 ANOVA Showing Effects of Service Quality, Price Perception, Brand Image, Promotion, and Customer Trust on Customer Loyalty**

Source	SS	df	MS	F	P	Effect Size
Service Quality (A)	298.69	1	298.69	21.95	< .001	.03
Price Perception (B)	197.42	1	197.42	14.51	< .001	.02
Brand Image (C)	524.21	1	524.21	38.52	< .001	.05
Promotion (D)	322.13	1	322.13	23.67	< .001	.03
Customer Trust (E)	377.88	1	377.88	27.76	< .001	.04
A * B	146.61	1	146.61	8.84	< .01	.01
A * C	7.77	1	7.77	0.57	> .05	N/A
A * D	11.87	1	11.87	0.87	> .05	N/A
A * E	9.24	1	9.24	0.68	> .05	N/A
B * C	4.49	1	4.49	0.33	> .05	N/A
B * D	0.23	1	0.23	0.02	> .05	N/A
B * E	6.78	1	6.78	0.50	> .05	N/A
C * D	16.38	1	16.38	1.20	> .05	N/A
C * E	15.71	1	15.71	1.15	> .05	N/A
D * E	3.34	1	3.34	0.25	> .05	N/A
A * B * C	16.52	1	16.52	1.21	> .05	N/A
A * B * D	9.73	1	9.73	0.72	> .05	N/A
A * B * E	0.08	1	0.08	0.01	> .05	N/A
A * C * D	23.52	1	23.52	1.73	> .05	N/A
A * C * E	19.71	1	19.71	1.45	> .05	N/A
A * D * E	0.04	1	0.04	0.00	> .05	N/A
B * C * D	1.08	1	1.08	0.08	> .05	N/A
B * C * E	24.03	1	24.03	1.77	> .05	N/A
B * D * E	12.76	1	12.76	0.94	> .05	N/A
C * D * E	89.39	1	89.39	6.09	< .05	.01
A * B * C * D	6.00	1	6.00	0.44	> .05	N/A
A * B * C * E	18.08	1	18.08	1.33	> .05	NA
A * B * D * E	5.81	1	5.81	0.43	> .05	N/A
A * C * D * E	0.02	1	0.02	0.00	> .05	N/A
B * C * D * E	1.21	1	1.21	0.08	> .05	N/A
A * B * C * D * E	0.82	1	0.82	0.06	> .05	N/A
Error	9214.23	677	13.61			
Total	16462.34	708				

**N/A = Not Applicable**

The hypothesis which stated that relationship marketing tactics (customer trust, Price perception, brand image, service quality, and promotion) will have significant main and interaction effect on customer loyalty was achieved using 2X2X2X2X2 ANOVA. The results of this analysis presented in Table 1 indicated that, service quality had a significant main effect on customer

loyalty among GSM networks subscribers {F (1, 677) = 21.95; P < .05} and with effect size of (3.0%). However, observation of the mean scores further revealed that GSM subscribers who scored high ( $\bar{x} = 20.47$ ) on service quality were significantly more loyal to their GSM networks than GSM subscribers who scored low ( $\bar{x} = 16.18$ ) on service quality.

Price perception had a significant main effect on customer loyalty among GSM subscribers {F (1, 677) = 14.51; P < .05} and with effect size of (2.0%). Observation of the mean scores indicated further that GSM service subscribers who scored high ( $\bar{x} = 20.40$ ) on price perception were significantly more loyal to their GSM networks than GSM service subscribers who scored low ( $\bar{x} = 15.98$ ) on price perception.

Results from Table 1 also showed that brand image had a significant main effect on customer loyalty among GSM subscribers {F (1, 677) = 38.52; P < .05} and with effect size of (5.0%). Observation of the mean scores indicated further that, GSM service subscribers who scored high ( $\bar{x} = 21.61$ ) on brand image were significantly more loyal to their GSM networks than GSM service subscribers who scored low ( $\bar{x} = 15.97$ ) on brand image.

Promotion had a significant main effect on customer loyalty among GSM subscribers {F (1, 677) = 23.67; P < .05} and with effect size of (3.0%). Observation of the mean scores showed further that, GSM service subscribers who scored high ( $\bar{x} = 20.23$ ) on promotion were significantly more loyal to their GSM networks than GSM service subscribers who scored low ( $\bar{x} = 16.12$ ) on promotion.

Customer trust had a significant main effect on customer loyalty among GSM service subscribers {F (1, 677) = 27.76; P < .05} and with effect size of (4.0%). Further analysis revealed that GSM service subscribers who scored high ( $\bar{x} = 20.29$ ) on customer trust were significantly more loyal to their GSM networks than customers or subscribers who scored low ( $\bar{x} = 16.31$ ) on customer trust.

Regarding interaction influence, service quality and price perception had a significant interaction effect on customer loyalty among GSM services subscribers {F (1, 677) = 8.84; P < .05} and with effect size of (1.0%). This result indicated that, service quality and price perception combine were relevant factors that impacted customers' decision to remain loyal to their GSM networks.

**Table 2: Bonferroni Multiple Comparisons Table Showing Interaction Effects of Service Quality and Price Perception on Customer Loyalty**

Service Quality	Price Perception	Mean	Std. Error	Mean Difference			
				1	2	3	4
1. Low	Low	16.23	.259	-			
2. Low	High	17.73	.294	1.50**	-		
3.High	Low	17.89	.304	1.66**	0.16	-	
4. High	High	19.40	.240	3.17**	1.67**	1.51**	-

\*P<.05,\*\*P<.01

Results from Table 2 showed that only the interaction effect of high service quality low price perception and low service quality high price perception was not significantly different ( $\bar{x}$  difference = 0.16; p > .05). The result inferred that though, subscribers with high service quality low price perception and subscribers with low service quality high



price perception were loyal to their mobile services, there was no significant difference regarding those who were more loyal. All other interaction levels between service quality and price perception were significant.

**Figure 1: Graphical Representation of Interaction Effects of Service Quality and Price Perception on Customer Loyalty**



However, service quality and brand image {F (1, 677) = .57; P > .05}, service quality and promotion/value offered {F (1, 677) = .87; P > .05}, Service quality and customer trust {F (1, 677) = .68; P > .05}, Price perception and brand image {F (1, 677) = .33; P > .05}, Price perception and promotion {F (1, 677) = .33; P > .05}, Price perception and customer trust {F (1, 677) = .02; P > .05}, Brand image and promotion {F (1, 677) = .05; P > .50} did not have significant interaction effects on customer loyalty among GSM services subscribers.

On the other hand, brand image, promotion and customer trust had a significant interaction effect on customer loyalty among GSM services subscribers {F (1, 677) = 6.09; P < .05} and with effect size of (1.0%). This result indicated that, brand image, promotion and customer trust combine were relevant factors that impacted customers' **decision to remain** loyal to their GSM networks.

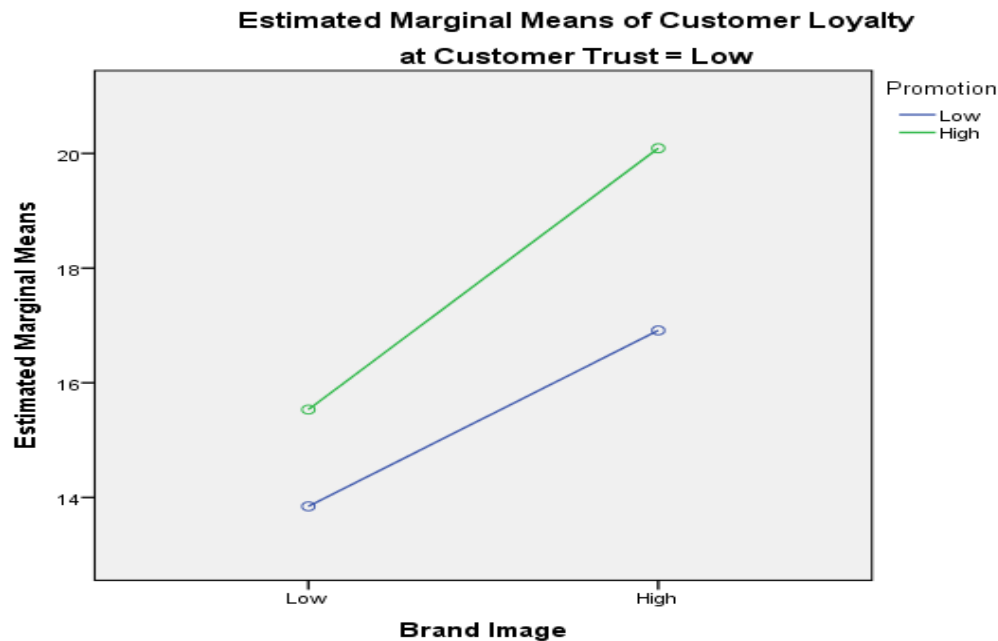
**Table 3: Bonferroni Multiple Comparisons Table Showing Interaction Effects of Brand Image, Promotion and Customer Trust on Customer Loyalty**

Brand Image	Promotion	Customer Trust	Mean	Std. Error	Mean Difference							
					1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
1. Low	Low	Low	14.76	.30	-							
2. Low	Low	High	16.69	.32	1.93**	-						
3. Low	High	Low	16.49	.32	1.73**	0.20	-					
4. Low	High	High	18.42	.30	3.66**	1.73**	1.93**	-				
5.High	Low	Low	17.21	.33	2.45**	0.52	0.72	1.21	-			
6. High	Low	High	19.14	.32	4.38**	2.45**	2.65**	0.72	1.93**	-		
7. High	High	Low	18.94	.31	4.18**	2.25**	2.45**	0.52	1.73**	0.20	-	
8. High	High	High	20.87	.26	6.11**	4.18**	4.38**	2.45**	3.66**	1.73**	1.93**	-

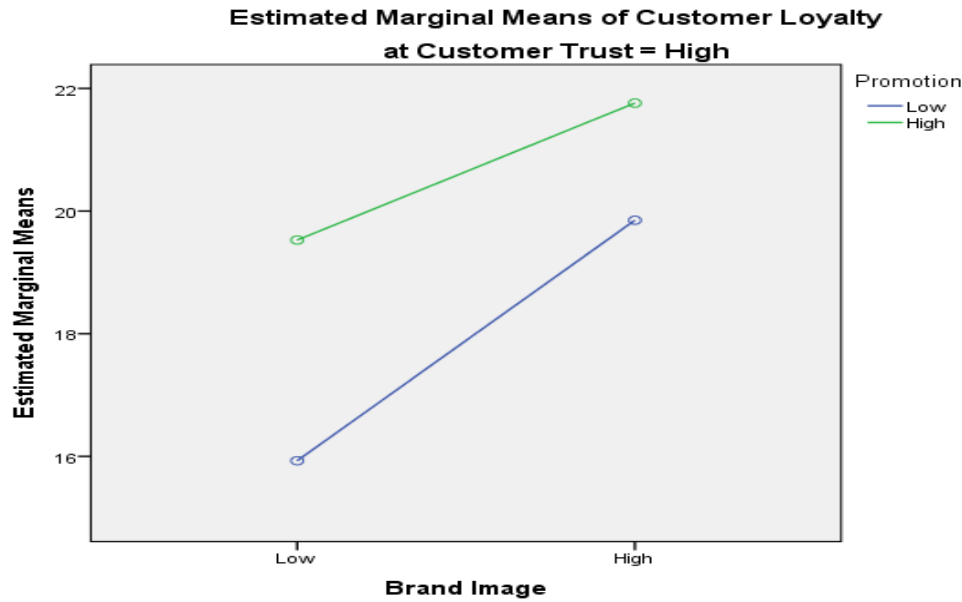
\*P<.05,\*\*P<.01

Results from Table 3 revealed for example that, the interaction effects of low brand image low promotion high customer trust and low brand image high promotion low customer trust ( $\bar{X}$  difference = 0.20;  $p > .05$ ), low brand image low promotion high customer trust and high brand image low promotion low customer trust ( $\bar{X}$  difference = 0.52;  $p > .05$ ) were not significantly different. The results concluded that although, subscribers with low brand image low promotion high customer trust and low brand image high promotion low customer trust, subscribers with low brand image low promotion high customer trust and high brand image low promotion low customer trust were loyal to their GSM networks, there was no significant difference regarding those who were more loyal. Moreover, Table 3 indicated, for instance, that there was a significant difference between the interaction effects of low brand image; low promotion; low customer trust and low brand image; low promotion; high customer trust ( $\bar{X}$  difference = 1.93;  $p < .05$ ). The result revealed further that, subscribers with low brand image; low promotion; high customer trust ( $\bar{X} = 16.69$ ) were more loyal to their mobile services than subscribers with low brand image; low promotion; low customer trust ( $\bar{X} = 14.76$ ).

**Figure 2: Graphical Representation of Interaction Effects of Brand Image, Promotion and Low customer Trust on Customer Loyalty**



**Figure 3: Graphical Representation of Interaction Effects of Brand Image, Promotion and High customer Trust on Customer Loyalty**



Furthermore, Table 1, showed that, service quality, price perception, brand image and customer trust did not have a significant interaction effect on customer loyalty among GSM services subscribers { $F(1, 677) = 1.33$ ;  $P > .05$ }. Likewise, service quality, price perception, promotion and customer trust did not have a significant interaction effect on customer loyalty among GSM services subscribers { $F(1, 677) = .43$ ;  $P > .05$ }. In like manner, service quality, brand image, promotion and customer trust did not have a significant interaction effect on customer loyalty among GSM services subscribers { $F(1, 677) = .00$ ;  $P > .05$ }. Price perception, brand image, promotion and customer trust did not have a significant interaction effect on customer loyalty among GSM services subscribers { $F(1, 677) = .08$ ;  $P > .05$ }. Finally, service quality, price perception, brand image, promotion and customer trust did not have a significant interaction effect on customer loyalty among GSM services subscribers { $F(1, 675) = .06$ ;  $P > .05$ }. Nevertheless, all the variables of concern in this research had significant main effects on customer loyalty; two pairs of the variables had significant interaction effect on customer loyalty among GSM network subscribers. Therefore, the hypothesis stated was supported.

## DISCUSSION

This research examined role of relationship-marketing tactics in enhancing customer loyalty of global system for mobile communication. From analyses of results the hypothesis stated was accepted.

The results showed that, service quality had a significant main effect on customer loyalty among GSM networks subscribers. Finding also revealed that, GSM subscribers who scored high on service quality were significantly more loyal to their GSM networks than GSM subscribers who scored low on service quality. The reason for this could be that many of the GSM subscribers were more quality-conscious subscribers. This finding confirmed the findings of Ndubisi (2007) that highlight that trust significantly influenced customer loyalty in

telecommunications, as customers are less likely to switch providers if they believe their current provider is dependable. Again, it corroborated Ehigie (2006) who opined that, excellence in service quality is a key to achieve customer loyalty which is the primary goal of business organisation, due to the advantages of customer retention. Ahmed et al. (2010) also reported that provision of better quality services increased the retention intentions of customers.

Perception was also found to have a significant main effect on customer loyalty among GSM subscribers. Further finding indicated that, GSM service subscribers who scored high on price perception were significantly more loyal to their GSM networks than GSM service subscribers who scored low on price perception. The reason for this may be that, high price perception implied superiority of services provided by the network providers which might have influenced customers to remain loyal to their GSM networks. This finding affirmed the finding of Bolton and Drew (1991) who found that price considerations significantly influenced the loyalty of mobile telecommunication subscribers. The finding of this research is also in line with the finding of Martin-Consuegra, Molina and Esteban (2007) who found that perceived price fairness influences customer satisfaction and leads to loyalty.

Brand image had a significant main effect on customer loyalty among GSM subscribers. The reason for this could be that, subscribers, who viewed the brand (i.e. GSM networks) as a means of self-definition and presentation to others, preferred to continue to utilize the networks. This finding corroborated the finding of Koo (2003) who found that, a positive brand image would lead to brand loyalty. This finding is also in line with the findings of Ogba and Tan (2009), of Aaker (1996), and of Sondoh et al. (2007) who reported that a positive brand image can influence customer loyalty.

Similarly, promotion had a significant main effect on customer loyalty among GSM subscribers. The reason for this could be that promotion/value offered helped to furnish subscribers with more favorable information about the networks and thereby influenced the subscribers' decision to be loyal to the network. The finding of the study is line with Kotler & Keller (2016) who found that promotions, such as discounted data packages, and loyalty rewards are effective in retaining customers. Likewise, Kim, Park, and Jeong (2004) found that promotions increase customer satisfaction by providing additional value, further increasing customer loyalty.

In the same vein, customer trust had a significant main effect on customer loyalty among GSM service subscribers. The reason for this could be due in part to the subscribers' beliefs that the network operators will reliably deliver promised services. The finding corroborated Sirdeshmukh, Singh and Sabol (2002), who affirmed that building trust is necessary in order to achieve loyalty. The finding also lent credence to Ranaweera and Prabhu (2003) who report that trust is a strong predictor of loyalty. Again, the significance of trust in describing customer loyalty is supported by the work of Chaudhuri and Holbrook (2001). The finding further lent support to Ndubisi (2007) who found that trust is a very important factor that built loyalty and there is a significant and positive relationship between trust and loyalty. Building customer confidence and providing quality service lead the organization towards enhancing customer trust and loyal. These findings, that, relationship marketing tactics impacted customer loyalty significantly, are in line with the core assumption of the commitment-trust theory, which emphasizes that enduring relationships are founded on both relational elements like trust and transactional factors such as value, quality, and fairness.

Concerning interaction effects, service quality and price perception had a significant interaction effect on customer loyalty among GSM services subscribers. This result indicated that, service quality and price perception combination were relevant factors that impacted customers' decision to remain loyal to their GSM networks. The reason for this may be that, high price perception was adjudged by subscribers to depict high service quality which in turn influenced them their loyalty.. This finding corroborated the work of Agyei and Kilika (2013) which assessed the relationship between service quality and customer loyalty and found a significant relationship between the two variables. A study conducted by Boohene and Agyapong (2011) on telecommunication industry in Ghana, also indicated that there is a significant positive correlation between service quality and customer loyalty. The finding is also in with the SERVQUAL and equity theory, which stresses that, customers assess loyalty not in isolation but through a combination of factors such as, reliability and cost effectiveness.

Equally, brand image, promotion and customer trust had a significant interaction effect on customer loyalty among GSM services subscribers. Bbrand image, promotion and customer trust combine were relevant factors that impacted subscribers' decision to remain loyal to their GSM networks. The reason for this could be that the subscribers' belief that the network operators would reliably deliver promised services and influenced them to stay loyal irrespective of the perceived image of the networks and available promotional activities. This finding is similar to the finding of Lai, Griffin, and Babin (2009) who found that service quality, perceived value and corporate image as determinants of loyalty.

However, service quality and brand image did not have a significant interaction effect on customer loyalty among mobile service subscribers. The finding of the research is not in consonant with the findings of Aydin and Ozer (2005) which revealed that service quality and image are separate constructs that combine to determine the loyalty, with service quality exerting a stronger effect than corporate image. Conversely, Adjei and Denanyoh (2014) found that network coverage has a significant positive relationship with customer loyalty while corporate image and prompt customer service were found to have a less effect on customer loyalty.

Service quality and promotion did not have a significant interaction effect on customer loyalty among mobile service subscribers. This finding is a sharp contrast from the finding of Qadri and Khan (2014) who found that service quality significantly influenced firms and promote customer loyalty. The finding is also different from the findings that the decision to be loyal to a brand or switch to other brands is affected by a number of factors: service quality (Mittal & Lassar, 1996) and promotion (Evan, Moutinho, & Ranji, 1996).

## **CONCLUSION**

This study highlights the significant role that relationship marketing tactics (service quality, price perception, brand image, promotion, and customer trust) played in enhancing customer loyalty among GSM service subscribers. The findings reveal that each of these tactics individually contributes to loyalty, with service quality and price perception having a particularly strong influence. Furthermore, specific combinations, such as the interaction among brand image, promotion, and customer trust, also significantly affect loyalty. GSM service providers aiming to improve customer retention should prioritize these factors in their marketing strategies to promoting long-term customer relationships and loyalty. However, some interactions between these factors were found to have less impact, suggesting the need for further research into the complexities of customer loyalty in the telecommunications sector. Also, the study used

convenience sampling, which introduces potential bias and may limit the generalizability of the findings beyond the Nigerian context.

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