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CUSTOMER RELATION MANAGEMENT PRACTICES AND ORGANIZATIONAL PERFORMANCE: A STUDY OF MOBILE TELECOMMUNICATION FIRMS IN ANAMBRA STATE

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Abstract

This study examined the influence of Customer Relationship Management (CRM) practices on the performance of mobile telecommunication firms in Anambra State, Nigeria. The study was driven by persistent performance challenges in the sector, including network inconsistency, weak customer engagement, inadequate complaint resolution, and declining customer trust, all of which continue to undermine organizational performance despite heightened competition among operators. Customer knowledge as a dimension of CRM was evaluated to determine its effect on firm performance, with customer retention serving as a key performance indicator. Anchored on the Commitment–Trust Theory of Relationship Marketing, the study emphasizes that sustained organizational performance is a product of trust, commitment, and value-driven interactions between firms and customers. Evidence from contemporary empirical literature shows that effective CRM practices significantly enhance customer satisfaction, loyalty, retention, and overall firm performance. Customer knowledge strengthens personalization and predictive decision-making; customer interaction improves communication and responsiveness; service

quality drives reliability and customer satisfaction. The study concludes that mobile telecommunication firms in Anambra State can improve performance and gain competitive advantage by adopting integrated, technology-supported, and customer-centric CRM practices. The findings offer practical implications for telecom managers, regulators, and policymakers, and provide scholarly insight for future research on CRM, performance, and customer behavior in emerging markets.

Keywords: Customer Relationship Management, Organizational Performance, Customer Knowledge, Customer Retention, Telecommunication Firms.

Introduction

In today's competitive and consumer-driven marketplaces, customer relationship management, or CRM, has become a strategic cornerstone for businesses looking to achieve sustainable performance. Customer Relationship Management has changed globally from a transactional strategy to a relationship-oriented attitude that emphasizes client retention and value co-creation (Payne & Frow, 2017). Telecommunications companies today have more options to gather, evaluate, and use client data for strategic decision-making because to technical developments including big data analytics, artificial intelligence, and mobile connection (Rahimi & Gunlu, 2023). Effective CRM is essential for keeping consumers and boosting business performance in areas like Nigeria, where top carriers like MTN, Airtel, Glo, and 9mobile compete fiercely. According to the Nigerian Communications Commission (NCC) (2024), companies who invest in customer-centric innovations see greater market stability and profitability, even while subscriber numbers vary owing to network migration.

The performance of a business is influenced by a number of interconnected aspects of customer relationship management. Customer knowledge, which entails gathering and evaluating information on consumer preferences, actions, and expectations in order to customize goods and services, is one important component (Nguyen, Simkin, & Canhoto 2022). By enabling businesses to provide contextually relevant solutions, address problems quickly, and anticipate customer attrition, utilizing customer knowledge in telephony improves customer retention.

Organizational performance shows how well businesses accomplish their goals in terms of market expansion, profitability, and customer satisfaction. Performance in service-based sectors like telecoms is becoming more and more dependent on customer-related measures like lifetime value, loyalty, and retention rather than just financial ones (Kotler & Keller, 2022). By encouraging repeat business, lowering attrition, and boosting good word-of-mouth, CRM strategies directly support these results, which increase market share and profitability (Amegavie, Mensah & Kwame, 2019).

Despite industry maturity and technological advancements, Anambra State's telecommunications sector nevertheless faces ongoing difficulties in efficiently managing and keeping clients. Many consumers continue to express discontent with service quality, delayed complaint response, and inconsistent communication channels despite businesses' adoption of digital tools and service automation to improve customer experience. If these issues persist, these telecommunications sectors will might face off due to inability to satisfy their customers, this study therefore looks at

the influence of customer relationship management practices on the performance of mobile telecommunication firms in Anambra State. Specifically, the study examines:

The effect of customer knowledge on customer retention in mobile telecommunication firms in Anambra State, Nigeria

Research Question

To what extent does customer knowledge affect customer retention in mobile telecommunication firms in Anambra State, Nigeria?

Research Hypotheses

$H_0$1: Customer knowledge has no significant effect on customer retention in mobile telecommunication firms in Anambra State.

Literature Review

Customer Relationship Management

Customer Relationship Management (CRM) is one of the most widely discussed strategic tools in modern business practice, playing a central role in how organizations build, manage, and sustain interactions with customers. According to Buttle and Maklan (2019), CRM is defined as "the core business strategy that integrates internal processes and functions, and external networks, to create and deliver value to targeted customers at a profit." This definition highlights CRM as a holistic approach, not merely a software application, but a philosophy that shapes how companies understand and serve their customers.

Akanbi and Obafemi (2024) explain that CRM goes beyond software systems to include activities like personalized marketing, complaint handling, customer engagement, and loyalty management. Their research on publishing companies in Nigeria found that CRM's role in building loyalty is central to improving organizational performance, showing that businesses that manage relationships strategically tend to retain customers longer and gain more repeat patronage. Dwivedi, Choudhary, Dixit, Sahiba, and Naik (2024) also emphasize that CRM should be seen as a dynamic practice that combines tools, processes, and people to build trust, improve customer satisfaction, and encourage loyalty. Their findings in the Indian tourism sector showed that effective CRM strategies help organizations convert one-time buyers into loyal repeat customers, underlining CRM's critical contribution to customer retention.

Performance

Performance is a foundational concept in business and management research, often viewed as the ultimate indicator of an organization's success or failure in achieving its goals. According to Otley (2016), performance can be understood as the degree to which an organization achieves its strategic objectives efficiently and effectively. This means that both the outcomes and the processes matter. Otley argues that organizations must look beyond profit margins and include non-financial indicators such as customer satisfaction, operational efficiency, innovation, and employee engagement when evaluating their overall performance.

Duwailah-Al (2018) explains that performance in service sectors such as telecommunications depends not only on financial outcomes but also on how well firms build capabilities, leverage technology, and develop a customer-focused culture. In his study of Kuwait's mobile telecom

industry, he found that cultural resources such as a strong learning orientation and customer focus have an even greater effect on business performance than infrastructural resources alone.

In a related vein, Soltani, Zareie, SharifiMilani, and Navimipour (2018) argue that contemporary performance metrics should reflect a balance between profitability and the creation of customer value. They emphasize that effectively managing customer knowledge and integrating technology plays a vital role in boosting organizational performance by improving customer satisfaction and retention.

Customer Knowledge

Customer knowledge is a vital strategic resource in today's data-driven business environment. It refers to the information a firm collect, analyzes, and uses about its customers to build stronger relationships, personalize interactions, and create sustainable competitive advantage. According to Gebert, Geib, Kolbe, and Brenner (2003), who laid a foundation for later scholars, customer knowledge is "the combination of experience, value, and information that a company possesses about its customers." This concept has evolved over time to reflect new digital realities and the growing importance of data analytics.

More recent studies have deepened this view. Choi, Hecht, and Martin (2019) explain that customer knowledge management (CKM) is the systematic process of acquiring, sharing, and applying knowledge about customers to enhance business performance. They argue that customer knowledge goes beyond static data like demographics; it includes dynamic insights such as purchasing behavior, preferences, feedback, and expectations.

In the context of customer relationship management (CRM), Zareie, et al. (2018) highlight that customer knowledge is the backbone of successful CRM initiatives. Their study in Iran found that firms that invest in effective customer knowledge management are better able to customize products and services, which boosts satisfaction and loyalty key drivers of competitive advantage.

Customer knowledge is more than just data it is the actionable insight that empowers companies to build long-term, profitable relationships with their customers. When organizations treat customer knowledge as a strategic asset and embed it into their CRM processes, they are more likely to

sustain competitive advantage in today's complex and rapidly changing markets (Choi et al., 2019; Dwivedi et al., 2021; Zareie et al., 2018).

Customer Retention

Customer retention is one of the most vital goals for modern businesses, especially in competitive and service-oriented industries such as mobile telecommunications. Simply put, customer retention refers to an organization's ability to keep its customers over time and encourage repeat patronage rather than losing them to competitors (Kotler & Keller, 2016). Retention goes beyond attracting new customers; it focuses on building long-term relationships that increase customer lifetime value and generate sustainable profits.

According to Nguyen and Mutum (2012), customer retention is the process by which companies engage existing customers and strengthen their loyalty so that they continue buying a company's products or services. This definition highlights that retention is not automatic; it requires deliberate strategies such as excellent service delivery, personalized communication, and effective complaint handling. Zareie et al, (2018) argue that customer retention is an outcome of successful Customer Relationship Management (CRM) practices. Their study in Iran's telecom sector showed that companies that invest in managing customer knowledge, service quality, and customer trust tend to have higher retention rates. They stress that retention is built through consistent value delivery that meets or exceeds customer expectations.

Theoretical Framework

This study is anchored on the Commitment–Trust Theory of Relationship Marketing, developed by Morgan and Hunt (1994). The theory argues that successful relationship marketing is built upon two central constructs commitment and trust. When customers trust a firm and feel committed to the relationship, they are more likely to maintain long-term loyalty, engage positively with the firm, and resist switching to competitors. Customer knowledge contributes to trust-building by enabling firms to understand customer needs, personalize services, and respond promptly to complaints.

When customers perceive that a telecom provider understands them well, their trust and commitment naturally increase. This makes the theory highly relevant for examining customer retention in mobile telecommunication firms in Anambra State, where competition among service providers is intense.

Empirical review

Simeon and Dick (2025) investigated the relationship between cross-functional relationship management and marketing performance in mobile telecommunication firms in Nigeria. The study adopted a quantitative approach using a cross-sectional survey design with a census sampling technique. Data were collected through a 38-item questionnaire distributed to 28 executive directors across four mobile telecommunication companies: Globacom, MTN, Airtel, and 9mobile. The study employed univariate and bivariate analysis using the Pearson Product Moment Correlation (PPMC) and SPSS version 25.0 for statistical analysis. The study was anchored on the Social Network Theory. The variables studied included cross-functional relationship management (proxied by cooperation and shared values) as the independent variable and marketing performance (measured by employee commitment and customer retention) as the dependent variable. Findings revealed that cross-functional relationship management significantly enhances marketing performance, emphasizing that cooperation and shared values improve employee commitment and customer retention.

Gbolagade and Adeyemi (2024) examined the effect of customer relationship management (CRM) on customer satisfaction in Nigeria's fast food industry, using Sweet Sensation Confectioneries as a case study. The study aimed to assess how effective communication, complaint management, and customer commitment impact customer satisfaction. The research adopted a quantitative approach, collecting primary data via structured questionnaires administered to 158 respondents selected through convenience sampling. The study used descriptive statistics for analysis. Although no formal theory was explicitly stated, the study focused on CRM components like communication,

complaints handling, and commitment. Findings revealed that all three factors significantly influenced customer satisfaction.

Dananjoyo, Udin and Wibowo (2024) investigated the role of customer relationship management (CRM) in strengthening customer satisfaction (CS), with product innovation (PI) and customer value (CV) as mediating variables in the Indonesian building material retail sector. The study employed a quantitative research design, utilizing a purposive sampling technique to survey 170 customers of building material retailers in Indonesia. Data were collected through structured questionnaires and analyzed using Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) with the SmartPLS 3.0 software. The study was anchored on a conceptual framework linking CRM to PI, CV, and CS, although a specific theory was not explicitly stated. CRM, PI, CV, and CS were the major variables examined, each measured with multiple indicators. Results revealed that CRM significantly and positively impacts PI, CV, and CS. Furthermore, PI and CV significantly influence CS and mediate the relationship between CRM and CS.

Gil-Gomez, Guerola-Navarro, Oltra-Badenes, & Lozano-Quilis (2020) conducted a study titled "Customer Relationship Management: Digital Transformation and Sustainable Business Model Innovation" in Spain. The study aimed to build and validate a research model connecting CRM components namely sales, marketing, and service with sustainability outcomes across economic, environmental, and social dimensions. The research adopted a quantitative approach through model development grounded in literature review, though no specific sample size or statistical tool was stated. Theoretical underpinnings included Customer Knowledge Management (CKM), Innovation Orientation (IO), and sustainability theory. Key variables studied included CRM functionalities and sustainability performance indicators. The findings showed that CRM contributes significantly to both innovation and sustainable value creation in SMEs.

Herman, Sulhaini, and Farida (2020) explored the effect of electronic customer relationship management (e-CRM) on company performance, focusing on how e-CRM influences product innovativeness development in Indonesian SMEs. The objective was to develop a model linking e-CRM capabilities to marketing performance through innovation. The research used a quantitative design, surveying 150 SME owners/managers through structured questionnaires, and analyzed the data using Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) with AMOS 20.0. The study was grounded in Customer Knowledge Theory and Relational Capability Theory. Variables studied included e-CRM capability, product innovativeness, and marketing performance. Key findings showed that e-CRM positively impacts product innovation, which in turn enhances company performance.

DATA PRESENTATION, ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATIONS

Table 1 Questionnaire Distribution and Collection

Table 4.1 Analysis of Questionnaire

Questionnaire	**Frequency**	**Percentage**
Questionnaire Returned	306	94.15
Questinnaire not Returned	19	5.85
Total Questionnaire Administered	**325**	**100**

Table 1 shows that a total number 325 questionnaires were administered to the respondents. Only 306 questionnaires representing 94.15% were duly filled and returned, while 19 questionnaires representing 5.85% were not returned.

Table 2 Distribution of Respondents based on Gender

Gender	**Frequency**	**Percentage**

Male	**169**	**55.2**
Female	**137**	**44.8**
Total	**306**	**100.0**

Source: Field Survey, 2025

The gender of the respondents is shown in table 2. The analysis of their responses shows that 55.2% of the respondents are male while 44.8% are female. This means that there are more males in the telecom firms than females

Table 3 Distribution of Respondents based on Age

Age	**Frequency**	**Percentage**
18-28	144	47.1
29-39	84	27.5
40-50	52	17.0
51+	26	8.5
Total	306	100.0

Source: Field Survey, 2025

Table 3 revealed that the study comprised mainly young and middle-aged adults. Specifically, 144 respondents (47.1%) were within the 18–28 years' age range, forming the largest group. This was followed by 84 respondents (27.5%) aged 29–39 years, 52 respondents (17.0%) aged 40–50 years, and 26 respondents (8.5%) who were 51 years and above. These results suggest that nearly half of the participants were young adults in their vibrate age, with fewer individuals in the older age categories.

Table 4 Distribution of Respondents based on Marital Status

Marital Status	**Frequency**	**Percentage**
Married	148	48.4
Single	143	46.7

Others	15	4.9
Total	**306**	**100.0**

Source: Field Survey, 2025

Table.4 on marital status showed a balanced representation of married and single individuals. A total of 148 respondents (48.4%) were married, while 143 respondents (46.7%) were single. Additionally, 15 respondents (4.9%) fell under the 'others' category, which includes widowed, separated, or divorced individuals. This distribution suggests that the sample included individuals with diverse family backgrounds.

Table 5 Distribution of Respondents based on Educational Qualification

Educational Qualification	Frequency	Percentage
SSCE/OND	80	26.1
HND/BSC	164	53.6
MSc/PhD	50	16.3
Others.	12	3.9
Total	**306**	**100.0**

Source: Field Survey, 2025

Table 5 revealed that respondents had varying levels of educational attainment. Eighty respondents (26.1%) possessed SSCE/OND, while 164 respondents (53.6%) had HND/BSc, representing the largest category. Furthermore, 50 respondents (16.3%) held MSc/PhD qualifications, and 12 respondents (3.9%) indicated having other educational credentials. This shows that more than half of the respondents were first-degree holders, indicating that the sample was relatively well educated.

Table 6 Distribution of Respondents Years of Service in the Organization

Years of Service in the Organization	Frequency	Percentage
Below 1 year	21	6.9

1-3 years	111	36.3
4-6 years	98	32.0
7 years and above.	76	24.8
Total	**306**	**100.0**

Source: Field Survey, 2025

Table 6 shows distribution of respondents' years of service revealed that 21 respondents (6.9%) had worked for less than one year, while 111 respondents (36.3%) had between 1–3 years of experience, making them the largest group. In addition, 98 respondents (32.0%) had 4–6 years of experience, and 76 respondents (24.8%) had worked for 7 years and above. This shows that most respondents had between 1 and 6 years of work experience, with a significant number having long-term experience in the organization

Data Analysis Based on Research Questions

Research Question: To What Extent Does Customer Knowledge Affect Customer Retention in Mobile Telecommunication Firms in Anambra State, Nigeria?

Table 7: Mean Scores on The Extent to Which Customer Knowledge Affect Customer Retention in Mobile Telecommunication Firms in Anambra State, Nigeria

S/N	Customer Knowled (CK) ITEMS	SA	A	N	D	SD	Mean	StD	Remark
1	My organization systematically collects and analyzes customer information to understand customer preferences and needs.	13	95	139	51	8	3.18	0.850	Significant
2	Data about customer behavior and usage patterns are used to improve service delivery.	11	93	151	40	11	3.17	0.833	Significant

3	Employees are provided with updated customer insights to enable personalized customer service	17	85	149	43	12	3.17	0.878	Significant
4	Customer information gathered from surveys and feedback is used to design targeted marketing and retention strategies.	10	99	137	50	10	3.16	0.852	Significant
5	The organization maintains a comprehensive and accurate customer database that supports retention strategies.	12	90	150	44	10	3.16	0.837	Significant
	Grand						**3.17**	**0.85**	Significant

Table 7 presents the respondents' views on how customer knowledge influences customer retention. The mean scores for all five items ranged from 3.16 to 3.18, which are all above the criterion mean of 3.00. This shows that respondents agreed that customer knowledge positively affects customer retention. Respondents indicated that their organizations collect and analyze customer information to understand customer needs (Mean = 3.18), and that customer behavior data is used to improve service delivery (Mean = 3.17). They also agreed that employees are equipped with updated customer insights to enhance personalized service (Mean = 3.17). In addition, customer feedback is used to design targeted retention strategies (Mean = 3.16), and the organizations maintain accurate customer databases that support retention efforts (Mean = 3.16). The grand mean of 3.17 clearly shows that customer knowledge affects customer retention to a significant extent in mobile telecommunication firms in Anambra State.

Coefficients[a]

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients	Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.

	B	Std. Error	Beta		
(Constant)	.210	.123		1.705	.089
Customer Knowled (CK) ITEMS	.281	.050	.287	5.639	.000

a. Dependent Variable: Customer Retention (CR) ITEMS

The coefficients table provides information on the individual contributions of each predictor:

Customer Knowledge (CK): B = 0.281, Beta = 0.287, t = 5.639, p < 0.001 This shows that customer knowledge has a positive and statistically significant effect on customer retention. The results of the regression analysis indicate that customer knowledge statistically significant positive effects on customer retention in mobile telecommunication firms in Anambra State.

Hypothesis Decision

The regression analysis (Table 4.13) shows that customer knowledge has a positive and significant effect on customer retention (B = 0.281, Beta = 0.287, t = 5.639, p < 0.001). Since the p-value is less than 0.05, the null hypothesis (H01) is rejected. This implies that customer knowledge significantly influences customer retention in mobile telecommunication firms in Anambra State.

Discussion of Findings

The regression results showed that customer knowledge has a positive and significant effect on customer retention (β = 0.287, p < 0.001), leading to the rejection of H01. This implies that information about customer preferences, behavior, and needs meaningfully enhances retention in mobile telecom firms in Anambra State.

This finding aligns with the broader relationship marketing literature. When firms systematically collect customer data and use it to tailor their services, they foster stronger relational bonds, which contribute to loyalty and retention (Ndubisi & Madu, 2023). Indeed, Herman et.al (2020) observed that customer-centered approaches using

information sharing are positively correlated with retention in the Nigerian telecom industry. Thus, in the context of Anambra State telecom firms, enhancing customer knowledge mechanisms (via analytics, databases, feedback) can be an effective retention strategy.

Summary of Findings

The study finds that Customer knowledge has a positive significant effect on customer retention in mobile telecommunication firms in Anambra State, Nigeria.

Conclusion

This study examined the effect of customer relationship management (CRM) practices on customer retention as a measure of performance among mobile telecommunication firms in Anambra State, Nigeria. The findings revealed that customer knowledge significantly influence the ability of telecom firms to retain their customers in a highly competitive service environment. Customer knowledge was shown to meaningfully enhance retention, indicating that firms that understand customer needs, preferences, and behavioral patterns are better positioned to provide personalized and relevant services. The study also establishes that CRM practices are critical drivers of customer retention and overall performance in mobile telecommunication firms. Organizations that invest in deepening customer knowledge are more likely to achieve sustained customer loyalty, competitive advantage, and long-term market stability within Nigeria's dynamic telecommunications industry.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of this study, the study recommends:

Strengthening of Customer Knowledge Systems: Mobile telecommunication firms should invest in advanced customer data analytics, regular feedback mechanisms, and structured customer profiling systems. This will enable firms to understand customer needs more accurately, personalize services, and proactively address issues that influence retention.

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