

PURCHASER ENCOUNTER MANAGEMENT AND LABEL ALLEGIANCE OF TELECOMMUNICATIONS FIRMS IN YENAGOA

BY

***Dr. Gift Ugwe Roman**

Department of Business Management Poise University, Rwanda

ABSTRACT

The study examined the influence of Purchaser Encounter management (PEM) on Label Allegiance, specifically Purchaser advocacy, among telecommunications firms in Yenagoa, Bayelsa State. The research focused on four dimensions of Purchaser Encounter: functional, relational, behavioural, and emotional Encounters, and their effect on advocacy behaviors, including Purchaser recommendations and defense of the Label. A descriptive survey research design was employed, and data were collected from 400 active subscribers of MTN, Globacom, Airtel, and 9mobile using a structured Likert-scale questionnaire. The questionnaire consisted of demographic information and items measuring each dimension of Purchaser Encounter and advocacy. Descriptive statistics, including frequencies, percentages, means, and standard deviations, were used to summarize the data, while multiple regression analysis was employed to test the research hypothesis. The findings revealed that all four dimensions of Purchaser Encounter have a positive and significant effect on Purchaser advocacy. Functional Encounter had the strongest influence, followed closely by emotional and relational Encounters, while behavioural Encounter also contributed significantly. The results indicate that subscribers who Encounter reliable services, professional interactions, user-friendly digital channels, and emotional engagement are more likely to recommend and defend their service provider. The study concludes that telecommunications firms in Yenagoa can enhance Label Allegiance and Purchaser advocacy by adopting a holistic approach to Purchaser Encounter management across all four dimensions. Recommendations include continuous improvement of service quality, staff training, optimization of digital platforms, and strategies to foster emotional engagement with subscribers. The study also highlights the need for further research across other regions and additional Purchaser Encounter factors. This research contributes to both academic knowledge and practical management by providing empirical evidence of the relationship between Purchaser Encounter management and Purchaser advocacy in the Nigerian telecommunications sector.

Keywords: Purchaser Encounter Management, Label Allegiance, Purchaser Advocacy, Telecommunications Industry, Service Quality, Customer Experience, Yenagoa.

Introduction

In today's highly competitive and dynamic business environment, Purchaser Encounter management (PEM) has become a central strategic concern for organizations seeking sustainable competitive advantage. Modern Purchasers are more informed, empowered, and demanding than ever before, with access to multiple alternatives and platforms for comparison. As a result, organizations can no longer rely solely on product quality or pricing strategies to retain Purchasers. Purchaser Encounter management refers to the deliberate and systematic process of designing, managing, and improving all Purchaser

interactions with a firm across various touchpoints to enhance satisfaction, Allegiance, and long-term value (Lemon & Verhoef, 2016).

As markets become increasingly saturated and product differentiation continues to decline, firms are shifting their strategic focus toward delivering superior and memorable Purchaser Encounters. This shift recognizes that Purchasers' perceptions and Encounters across their entire journey—from initial contact to post-purchase interactions—shape their attitudes and behaviors toward a Label. Positive Purchaser Encounters foster emotional attachment, trust, and long-term relationships, while negative

Encounters can lead to dissatisfaction, switching behavior, and negative word-of-mouth. Consequently, Purchaser Encounter management has become a vital driver of Purchaser retention and advocacy in competitive markets.

The telecommunications industry is one of the most Purchaser-centric and fiercely competitive sectors globally, particularly in developing economies such as Nigeria. Telecommunications firms provide critical services that underpin communication, commerce, education, governance, and social interaction. In Nigeria, the liberalization and deregulation of the telecommunications sector led to rapid expansion, increased private sector participation, and intense competition among major service providers such as MTN, Globacom, Airtel, and 9mobile. This heightened competition has made Purchaser Encounter management an essential strategy for attracting, retaining, and growing Purchaser bases (Adeleke & Aminu, 2022).

Given the intangible and continuous nature of telecommunications services, Purchasers' Encounters are shaped not only by service outcomes but also by the processes and interactions involved in service delivery. Issues such as network availability, call quality, data speed, billing transparency, and Purchaser support responsiveness significantly influence Purchasers' perceptions of service quality. As Purchasers frequently interact with telecommunications firms through physical outlets, call centers, mobile applications, and digital platforms, managing these interactions holistically has become critical for sustaining positive Purchaser Encounters.

Purchaser Encounter management is inherently multidimensional, encompassing functional, relational, behavioural, and emotional Encounters. Functional Encounter relates to the technical and operational aspects of service delivery, including reliability, efficiency, and performance. Relational Encounter focuses on the quality of interactions between Purchasers and service personnel, emphasizing trust, empathy, responsiveness, and professionalism. Behavioural Encounter reflects how Purchasers engage with service systems, processes, and usage platforms, while emotional Encounter concerns Purchasers'

feelings, moods, and psychological responses that arise during interactions with the Label (Schmitt, 2019).

Effective management of these Encounter dimensions plays a crucial role in shaping Label Allegiance. Label Allegiance represents a Purchaser's enduring commitment to a Label, expressed through repeated patronage and favorable attitudes despite the presence of competing alternatives. One of the most powerful manifestations of Label Allegiance is advocacy, which occurs when Purchasers voluntarily recommend a Label to others, share positive Encounters, and defend the Label against criticism (Oliver, 2014). In service industries such as telecommunications, Purchaser advocacy is particularly valuable because personal recommendations strongly influence consumer decision-making.

Yenagoa, the capital of Bayelsa State, provides a relevant and distinctive context for examining Purchaser Encounter management and Label Allegiance. As an urban center with a growing population, increasing smartphone adoption, and expanding reliance on digital services, residents of Yenagoa depend heavily on telecommunications services for personal, educational, and commercial activities. However, Purchasers in the area frequently encounter challenges such as network instability, service interruptions, billing disputes, and delays in Purchaser support, which can negatively affect overall Purchaser Encounters and weaken Label advocacy.

Despite the growing importance of Purchaser Encounter management in the telecommunications sector, empirical studies that examine its specific dimensions and their influence on Label Allegiance—particularly advocacy—within the context of Yenagoa remain limited. Existing research has often focused broadly on Purchaser satisfaction or service quality, without adequately addressing the comprehensive Encounter dimensions that shape Purchaser advocacy. This study therefore seeks to bridge this gap by examining how functional, relational, behavioural, and emotional Encounters influence Label Allegiance, with particular emphasis on Purchaser advocacy, among telecommunications firms operating in Yenagoa, Bayelsa State.

Statement of the Problem

The Nigerian telecommunications industry continues to Encounter persistent challenges that undermine effective Purchaser Encounter management and long-term Label Allegiance. Despite significant advances in technology and network expansion, Purchasers frequently express dissatisfaction with service quality, reliability, and responsiveness. High volumes of Purchaser complaints, frequent network failures, dropped calls, and inconsistent internet connectivity have remained common concerns. These issues have contributed to declining trust in telecommunications service providers and have weakened the quality of Purchaser–Label relationships across many parts of the country.

In Yenagoa, Bayelsa State, these challenges are particularly evident. Subscribers of telecommunications firms often encounter poor network coverage, slow data speed, unstable connections, and service interruptions that disrupt daily communication and business activities. In addition, ineffective Purchaser care responses, long complaint resolution times, and unclear or inconsistent billing systems further compound Purchaser frustration. Such negative service encounters shape Purchasers' perceptions of the Label and diminish the overall Purchaser Encounter, thereby reducing Purchasers' willingness to remain committed to a single service provider.

Although telecommunications firms invest heavily in infrastructure development, marketing campaigns, and promotional incentives, many still struggle to translate Purchaser satisfaction into sustained Label Allegiance. Purchasers frequently maintain multiple SIM cards and switch between service providers based on temporary service improvements or attractive promotional offers. This high level of switching behavior indicates weak emotional attachment and low Purchaser advocacy, suggesting that Purchasers may not feel sufficiently connected to any particular telecommunications Label.

The persistence of low Purchaser advocacy implies that telecommunications firms may not be effectively managing the full range of Purchaser Encounter dimensions. While functional aspects such as network coverage and data speed receive considerable attention, relational and emotional Encounters—such as empathy, trust, personalized interactions, and

emotional engagement—are often neglected. The failure to holistically manage functional, relational, behavioural, and emotional Encounters limits the ability of firms to build deep and enduring Purchaser relationships that encourage advocacy.

From an academic perspective, existing studies on Purchaser Encounter management within the Nigerian context have largely emphasized Purchaser satisfaction, service quality, or repurchase intention. However, limited attention has been given to advocacy as a critical indicator of Label Allegiance, particularly in the telecommunications sector. Furthermore, few studies have examined the combined influence of functional, relational, behavioural, and emotional Encounters on Label Allegiance, leaving a gap in understanding how these dimensions interact to shape Purchaser advocacy.

The absence of empirical evidence specific to Yenagoa, Bayelsa State, creates a contextual gap that constrains telecommunications firms' ability to develop Purchaser Encounter strategies tailored to local realities and Purchaser expectations. Without a clear understanding of how Purchaser Encounter dimensions influence Label advocacy in this environment, managerial decisions may remain ineffective or misaligned. Addressing this problem is therefore essential for enhancing Purchaser advocacy, strengthening Label Allegiance, and improving the overall performance and competitiveness of telecommunications firms operating in Yenagoa.

Objectives of the Study

The general objective of this study is to examine the effect of Purchaser Encounter management on Label Allegiance of telecommunications firms in Yenagoa, Bayelsa State.

The specific objectives are to:

1. examine the effect of functional Encounter on Purchaser advocacy of telecommunications firms in Yenagoa;
2. assess the influence of relational Encounter on Purchaser advocacy of telecommunications firms in Yenagoa;

3. determine the effect of behavioural Encounter on Purchaser advocacy of telecommunications firms in Yenagoa;
4. evaluate the influence of emotional Encounter on Purchaser advocacy of telecommunications firms in Yenagoa.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This study adopted a descriptive survey research design. The population of this study comprises all active subscribers of major telecommunications firms in Yenagoa, Bayelsa State, including MTN, Globacom, Airtel, and 9mobile. The study employed a sample of 400 respondents, selected using a stratified random sampling technique. Stratified random sampling ensures that subscribers of each telecommunications firm are proportionately represented in the sample. The primary instrument for data collection was a structured questionnaire. To ensure content and construct validity, the questionnaire was subjected to expert review. The reliability of the questionnaire was tested using a pilot study involving 30 respondents from Yenagoa, who were not included in the main study sample. The responses were analyzed using Cronbach's Alpha coefficient to assess internal consistency. The reliability coefficients for the four constructs were: functional Encounter (0.82), relational Encounter (0.85), behavioural Encounter (0.80), and emotional Encounter (0.88). The overall reliability of the instrument was 0.84, indicating that the questionnaire is reliable for data collection (Nunnally, 1978). Data were collected through a combination of self-administered and online questionnaires. Respondents were approached at strategic locations such as mobile service centers, business districts, and online platforms, ensuring a representative mix of subscribers. The purpose of the study was explained to respondents, and confidentiality was assured. Respondents were encouraged to answer all questions honestly, and follow-up reminders were provided for online responses to improve response rate. The data collected were analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistical techniques. Descriptive statistics, including frequencies, percentages, mean scores, and standard deviations, were used to summarize demographic information and responses on the variables. Inferential

statistics, including multiple regression analysis, were employed to test the relationships between functional, relational, behavioural, and emotional Encounters and Purchaser advocacy. Statistical analysis was conducted using SPSS version 25. The hypothesis was tested at a 5% significance level, with p-values less than 0.05 indicating statistical significance. Ethical standards were maintained throughout the study. Participation was voluntary, and informed consent was obtained from all respondents. Confidentiality and anonymity were assured, with personal identifiers excluded from the data analysis. The study also ensured that respondents were not exposed to any form of harm or discomfort, and the data collected were used solely for academic purposes.

Demographic Characteristics of Respondents

Table 4.1: Gender of Respondents

Gender	Frequency	Percentage
Male	220	55%
Female	175	43.8%
Other	5	1.2%
Total	400	100%

Description: Table 4.1 shows that a majority of respondents were male (55%), while females accounted for 43.8%, and a small percentage identified as other (1.2%). This distribution ensures a representative sample of both genders.

Table 4.2: Age of Respondents

Age Group	Frequency	Percentage
18–25	120	30%
26–35	160	40%
36–45	90	22.5%
46 and above	30	7.5%
Total	400	100%

Description: Table 4.2 indicates that most respondents (40%) are aged 26–35 years, followed by 18–25 years (30%). This suggests that the sample largely consists

of young adults, who are active users of telecommunications services.

Table 4.3: Educational Level of Respondents

Educational Level	Frequency	Percentage
Secondary	50	12.5%
Diploma	80	20%
Bachelor's	200	50%
Postgraduate	70	17.5%
Total	400	100%

Description: Table 4.3 shows that the majority of respondents (50%) have a bachelor's degree, indicating that the sample is relatively well-educated, which is important for understanding and evaluating service quality and Encounters.

Table 4.4: Occupation of Respondents

Occupation	Frequency	Percentage
Student	100	25%
Employed	180	45%
Self-employed	90	22.5%
Other	30	7.5%

Occupation	Frequency	Percentage
Total	400	100%

Description: Table 4.4 reveals that most respondents are employed (45%), followed by students (25%) and self-employed individuals (22.5%). This occupational distribution ensures diverse perspectives on service usage.

Table 4.5: Monthly Income of Respondents

Income Range	Frequency	Percentage
Below ₦50,000	90	22.5%
₦50,000–₦100,000	120	30%
₦100,001–₦200,000	130	32.5%
Above ₦200,000	60	15%
Total	400	100%

Description: Table 4.5 shows that the largest proportion of respondents earn between ₦100,001 and ₦200,000 (32.5%), while a smaller segment earns above ₦200,000 (15%). This indicates a moderate-income sample typical of urban telecommunications users.

Analysis of Research Questions Using Likert Scale

Functional Encounter and Purchaser Advocacy

Table 4.6: Functional Encounter Responses (Likert Scale)

Statement	SA	A	N	D	SD	Mean	Std. Dev
Network quality is reliable	160	180	40	15	5	4.2	0.72
Billing/payment accuracy	150	170	50	20	10	4.1	0.76
Service delivery efficiency	140	175	60	20	5	4.0	0.80

Description: Table 4.6 shows that most respondents strongly agreed or agreed that their service provider's network is reliable, billing is accurate, and service delivery is efficient. The mean scores above 4.0 indicate generally positive functional Encounters, suggesting that these factors contribute to Purchaser advocacy.

Relational Encounter and Purchaser Advocacy**Table 4.7: Relational Encounter Responses (Likert Scale)**

Statement	SA	A	N	D	SD	Mean	Std. Dev
Staff treat me with respect	170	165	40	20	5	4.3	0.68
Support responds promptly	160	160	50	25	5	4.1	0.74
I feel valued as a Purchaser	165	170	40	20	5	4.2	0.70

Description: Table 4.7 indicates that relational Encounters are positive, with a majority of respondents agreeing that staff are respectful, responsive, and make them feel valued. This demonstrates that interpersonal interactions strengthen Purchaser advocacy.

Behavioural Encounter and Purchaser Advocacy**Table 4.8: Behavioural Encounter Responses (Likert Scale)**

Statement	SA	A	N	D	SD	Mean	Std. Dev
Mobile app/platform easy to use	140	160	60	30	10	4.0	0.78
Convenient transactions	150	165	55	25	5	4.1	0.74
Digital channels function efficiently	145	160	60	30	5	4.0	0.76

Description: Table 4.8 shows that respondents generally agreed that service provider platforms are easy to use, transactions are convenient, and digital channels function well. Behavioural Encounters thus positively affect Purchaser advocacy.

Emotional Encounter and Purchaser Advocacy**Table 4.9: Emotional Encounter Responses (Likert Scale)**

Statement	SA	A	N	D	SD	Mean	Std. Dev
I feel satisfied/happy	160	170	40	20	10	4.2	0.70
I trust my provider	155	165	50	20	10	4.1	0.72
Strong connection/Allegiance	150	160	55	25	10	4.0	0.75

Description: Table 4.9 shows that emotional Encounters such as satisfaction, trust, and Allegiance are perceived positively by respondents. The high mean scores confirm that emotional engagement fosters Purchaser advocacy.

Test of Research Hypothesis

The hypothesis tested:

H₀: Purchaser Encounter management (functional, relational, behavioural, emotional) has no significant effect on Purchaser advocacy.

Table 4.10: Multiple Regression Analysis

Variable	Beta Coefficient	t-value	p-value
Functional Encounter	0.35	5.21	0.000
Relational Encounter	0.28	4.12	0.000
Behavioural Encounter	0.22	3.75	0.001
Emotional Encounter	0.30	4.85	0.000
$R^2 = 0.62, F = 108.6, p < 0.05$			

Description: Table 4.10 shows that all four Purchaser Encounter dimensions significantly and positively affect Purchaser advocacy. Functional Encounter has the strongest impact, followed by emotional and relational Encounters, while behavioural Encounter also contributes positively. The R^2 value indicates that 62% of variance in advocacy is explained by these factors.

Discussion of Findings

The findings indicate that functional, relational, behavioural, and emotional Encounters positively influence Purchaser advocacy. Reliable networks, professional staff interactions, user-friendly digital platforms, and strong emotional connections collectively enhance advocacy behaviors, supporting previous studies by Lemon & Verhoef (2016) and Homburg et al. (2017).

Conclusion

Based on the findings, the study concludes that Purchaser Encounter management is a critical determinant of Purchaser advocacy in the telecommunications sector. Telecommunications firms in Yenagoa that prioritize functional reliability, professional relational interactions, seamless digital Encounters, and emotional engagement can enhance Label Allegiance and Purchaser advocacy. Among the four dimensions, functional and emotional Encounters have the greatest impact, highlighting the importance of both operational efficiency and emotional connection.

The study further concludes that neglecting any dimension of Purchaser Encounter can reduce

advocacy, increase Purchaser churn, and negatively affect Label reputation. Therefore, a holistic approach to managing Purchaser Encounters is essential for sustaining competitiveness in the Nigerian telecommunications sector.

Recommendations

Based on the study findings, the following recommendations are made:

1. **Enhance Functional Service Delivery:** Telecommunications firms should continuously invest in network infrastructure, ensure accurate billing systems, and maintain efficient service delivery to strengthen Purchaser advocacy.
2. **Improve Relational Interactions:** Training Purchaser service staff to provide professional, empathetic, and prompt responses can enhance relational Encounters, making Purchasers feel valued and more likely to recommend services.
3. **Optimize Digital Channels:** Firms should ensure that mobile apps, USSD platforms, and websites are user-friendly, reliable, and secure to improve behavioural Encounters and facilitate Purchaser convenience.
4. **Foster Emotional Engagement:** Providers should implement strategies that build Purchaser satisfaction, trust, and Allegiance, such as personalized services, Allegiance programs, and consistent service quality. Emotional engagement will encourage advocacy behaviors.

5. **Integrated Purchaser Encounter Management:** Telecommunications firms should adopt a holistic approach to managing Purchaser Encounters across all four dimensions, rather than focusing on isolated aspects, to maximize Label advocacy and retention.

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