

# Media Activities and Telecommunications Consumers' Awareness of Their Rights

## A Study of Mobile Phone Users in Calabar, Nigeria

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**Abstract:** This study assessed how Nigerian Communications Commission's media activities helped to create meaningful positive awakening on the knowledge, attitude and perception (KAP) of telecoms users' rights among mobile phone users in Calabar, Nigeria. It adopted the descriptive survey research method and used Perception Theory and Uses and Gratifications Theory to lend theoretical support to it. Out of 400 copies of a questionnaire distributed, 385 were retrieved. Findings included that NCC's media activities on telecoms users' rights were intensive and helped to create positive awakening on the knowledge of telecoms users' rights in Calabar, thus leading them to exhibit positive attitude and perception towards the overall awareness campaign on their rights. It was recommended that NCC should carry out more independent studies in other localities across Nigeria with a view to ascertaining the extent of telecoms consumers' knowledge of their rights, particularly among rural dwellers.

**Keywords:** Awareness, media activities, mobile phone users, NCC, telecommunications.

## Introduction

At the initial deployment of the Global System for Mobile (GSM) network in Nigeria, telecoms users were excessively exploited by service providers. For example: a SIM card, which currently goes for almost nothing, was sold for as much as N50,000.00; billing for calls was made per minute; and incoming calls were billed. In recent times, mobile network users still faced some unsatisfactory practices in such areas as interconnection disconnection, unsolicited promotional messages, and mobile number non-portability.

Nigerian Communications Commission (NCC) controls and regulates the activities and operations of these telecoms service providers. Expectedly, adequate provisions exist in the Nigerian Communications Act 2003 and its subsidiary legislations regarding the promotion and protection of the rights and interests of consumers against unfair practices by telecoms service providers. In order to successfully do this, NCC had to periodically undertake some useful public enlightenment programmes, which include regular telecoms consumer parliaments, consumer outreach programmes, consumer town hall meetings, radio phone-in programmes, industry road shows, etc. All these activities are adequately publicised in the mass media.

Even with these enlightenment programmes, there is still uncertainty on whether these media activities by the NCC were properly planned and executed. If they were, the pertinent questions are: Were the NCC's media activities on telecoms users' rights effective enough to enable mobile phone users in Calabar to know and use their rights? What was the attitude of mobile phone users in Calabar to know and enforce their rights? What was the attitude of mobile phone users in Calabar towards the NCC's mass media activities on telecoms users' rights? What was their perception towards the media activities?

The following research questions were, therefore, formulated to guide this study:

- i) To what extent did mobile phone users in Calabar have awareness of their telecoms rights prior to NCC's mass media activities?
- ii) To what extent did the NCC's mass media activities on telecoms users' rights enable mobile phone users in Calabar to have knowledge of their rights?
- iii) What was the attitude of mobile phone users in Calabar towards the NCC's mass media activities on telecom users' rights?
- iv) What was the perception of mobile phone users in Calabar towards the NCC's mass media activities on telecom users' rights?

## Telecommunications Service Operation in Nigeria

The Nigerian Communications Act 2003 defines telecommunications as “any transmission, emission or receptor of signs, signals, writing, images, sounds or intelligence of any nature by wire, radio, visual or other electromagnetic systems”. This implies that telecommunications is a big network of different companies and involves television, radio, mobile phones, Internet and fixed telephones ([Tersoo, 2018](#)). Telecommunications is a vital engine of economic growth and an essential infrastructure that promotes the development of other sectors, like agriculture, education, industry, health, banking, defence, transportation and tourism ([Hassan, Niran & Oluseyi, 2009](#)).

The history of telecommunications operation in Nigeria started during the colonial era when telegraphic submarine cable lines were laid from London to Lagos in 1886. Thereafter, between 1893 and 1923, fixed phone service was provided to government offices in few locations. By 1952, there was an inner telephone line between Ibadan and Lagos, and, subsequently, to other parts of the country ([Tersoo, 2018](#); [Olaoluwa, 2019](#)). Also, along with the fixed phone lines was the introduction of telegraph, which helped in improving the phone service within the country, since all the external services were owned and controlled by a British company, Cable & Wireless Ltd.

Indeed, the establishment of telephone lines aided other forms of communication like radio, television and the Internet in Nigeria. For example, in 1933, the Nigerian telecoms industry witnessed the parallel development of radio in the country following the establishment of the first Radio Distribution System (RDS), which made it possible for Lagos citizens to receive British Broadcasting Corporation’s programmes. Two years later, this was renamed Radio Diffusion System and it served as the purveyor of the radio industry in Nigeria. By 1959, television service was added when the Western Nigerian Television Corporation was established in Ibadan ([Okon, 2021](#)).

In 1985, Nigeria Telecommunications Limited (NITEL) was established by merging the telecommunications arm of the Posts and Telecommunications (P&T) Department and Nigerian External Telecommunications (NET); and it monopolised the communication sector. While the P&T handled internal communication services (e.g., telegraph services and manual telephone exchange services), NET was responsible for external communication purposes, such as the provision of international telephone, telex and telephone services to major cities in Nigeria ([Olaoluwa, 2019](#)). In addition, mobile/cellular telephone, paging and electronic mail services

were parts of what NITEL offered through the X.25 and X.40 switching facilities in its network ([Alabi, 1996](#)).

Owing to complaints of ineffective services, such as congested lines, inefficient billing system, inadequate completion rate for long-distance calls and dissatisfaction with the use of analogue infrastructure, NITEL was reformed for enhanced services. This resulted in the partial deregulation of the telecoms industry by phasing out NITEL and establishing NCC through Decree No. 75 of 1992, which liberalised the terminal end-equipment and created room for competition and private-sector participation.

Prior to the full deregulation of the industry through the Nigerian Communications Act (NCA) of 2003, the country embraced GSM communication in 2001 when Econet (now Airtel) launched its services on August 8, 2001; while MTN began its operations in the same month of the same year. Other key players in the industry include Etisalat (now 9mobile) and Glo-mobile. As at July 2021, the number of active GSM lines in Nigeria was put at 187,470,860 ([NCC, 2021a](#)).

## The Nigerian Communications Commission and Its Functions

NCC is the independent regulatory authority for the telecoms industry in Nigeria. It was established under Decree No. 75 of November 24, 1992, which was later abrogated and replaced with the Nigerian Communications Act (NCA), 2003. Its responsibilities are: to regulate the supply of telecoms services and facilities; promote competition; and set performance standards for telephone services in Nigeria. In other words, NCC promotes and protects consumers' interests against unfair practices, particularly as they relate to tariffs and charges; guarantees availability and quality of communication services, equipment and facilities; ensures licensed operators comply with licence terms and conditions and operate the most efficient and accurate billing system; and develops and monitors performance standards and indices for quality of communication services/facilities supplied to consumers in Nigeria, having regard to best international performance indicators.

The Nigerian Communications Act 2003 confers extensive powers on NCC to enable it to perform its regulatory functions. These include powers to issue, suspend or revoke licences for communication operations and provision of communication services or facilities; to give written directions to licensees regarding the compliance, or otherwise, of any licence conditions or provisions of the Act or its subsidiary legislation; to impose fines for non-compliance with such directions; to summon persons to appear before it; and to inspect licensees' books of account ([Ukwueze, 2014](#); [NCC, 2021b](#)).

## Telecoms Consumers' Protection and Rights

In furtherance of its mandate, NCC established the Consumer Affairs Bureau to protect, inform and educate Nigerian telecoms customers. It uses this bureau to organise conferences, seminars, fora and the highly commendable monthly Telecommunications Consumers' Parliament ([Okom, 2018](#)). Also, it has created a consumer bureau website which lists the various ways consumers can contact NCC and lodge complaints or seek redress. This has substantially created awareness of consumers' rights and the regulations of service providers in solving consumers' problems ([NCC, 2021b](#)).

NCC's extensive rule-making and enforcement powers have, however, been criticised by Otubu ([2013](#)) as amounting to the legislature abdicating its law-making responsibility, and violation of the separation of powers doctrine. Otubu's criticism anchors on two points: first, the enabling statute does not require the legislature to check regulations made by NCC; and, second, NCC's power to make regulations and guidelines and punish those who breach them presents it as the law-giver and judge in its own case. However, this criticism has been debunked by Ukwueze ([2014](#)) thus:

Firstly, to accuse the legislature of abdicating its responsibility is to totally ignore the legal basis for, and the utility of delegated legislation in administrative law. The power for subsidiary law-making derives ultimately from the power of the legislature which has been "donated" (not surrendered) by the legislature. Such power must be exercised in accordance with the enabling statute and only for the purpose(s) for which it was donated and will be declared *ultra vires* if exercised otherwise... (p. 130).

Yet, despite NCC's assiduous efforts to protect consumers, telecoms service providers in Nigeria are still accused of poor service delivery; and consumers are grappling with various challenges of unacceptable service quality by Mobile Network Operators regarding billing, value-added services, SMS, call set-up, data services, SIM, recharge card, unsolicited text messages, etc. Indeed, NCC, through its various consumer portals, recorded 271,112 complaints between January 2015 and July 2020, out of which 95 percent were successfully resolved ([Okom, 2018](#)). Monitoring the level of resolution of every consumer query by NCC is continuous; and this helps to ensure improved telecoms service delivery and maximum protection of consumers' rights.

According to Ukwueze ([2014](#)), these consumers' rights, as provided for in the Act and the regulations and guidelines under it, include:

- (i) *Right to Information*, which makes consumers entitled to complete, accurate and up-to-date information from licensees, which must be given in simple, clear language.

- (ii) *Right to Quality Service*, which requires all telecoms service providers to meet such minimum standards of quality of service as NCC may periodically specify and publish. To ensure that this provision is effected, NCC made and published the Quality of Services Regulations (QSR) in 2012.
- (iii) *Right to Fair Charges and Accurate Billing*, which provides that before a contract for services is entered into, the licensee shall inform the consumer of the applicable rates and composition of charges; and that a licensee is mandated, among other things, to ensure accurate, timely and verifiable billing; and to send end-of-operation notification (EON) to prepaid consumers, indicating how much they were charged for every operation.
- (iv) *Right to Privacy and Protection of Personal Information* that provides for privacy, fair use and confidentiality of consumer information; and requires any licensee who collects information on individual consumers to adopt and implement a policy regarding the proper collection, use and protection of that information.
- (v) *Right to Redress*, which confers on NCC the powers to resolve disputes between stakeholders in the industry. For an inexpensive, fair, impartial and effective arbitration to resolve consumer-related disputes, NCC made and published the Dispute Resolution Guidelines (DRG) 2004.
- (vi) *Right to Consumer Education*, which in this context “refers to the process of exposing people to the knowledge about their rights and duties as consumers...” ([Ukwueze, 2014](#), p. 146).

## Research Methodology

The research design used in this study was the descriptive survey method. This method was considered appropriate because, as observed by Nwodu ([2006](#), p. 67), “it facilitates the study of a representative sample derived from a population that is deemed too large for the researcher to realistically observe all the elements”.

The population of Calabar Municipality and Calabar South Local Government Area of Cross River State of Nigeria, the study area, is 501,400 ([Nigerian Population Commission, 2021](#)). The sample size for the study comprised 400 mobile phone users drawn from the study area. This was determined using the Taro Yamane’s formula (1964), as cited in Israel ([2003](#)). This sample size was considered adequate, appropriate and representative of the study’s overall population; which ensured that, through the various sampling procedures adopted herein, every ward, street and person in the study area had an equal chance of being selected.

The multistage sampling technique was adopted for the selection of sampled respondents. First, the two local government areas used in the study were equally treated and each allotted 200 copies of the questionnaire. Next, eight wards were selected in each local government area. The 200 copies of questionnaire per local government area were subsequently shared 25 copies per ward. Also, five streets were selected per ward; and each got five copies of the questionnaire. Since each

of the selected streets has a minimum of 40 houses, subjects were drawn at a skip interval of every eighth house.

Thereafter, in selecting respondents, the accidental sampling technique (also known as grab, convenience, or opportunity sampling) was applied. This non-probability sampling was adopted because it allowed the use of only persons who were available and close to hand. Also, the purposive sampling technique (also called judgmental, selective, or subjective sampling) was applied in picking the actual respondents, since it allows researchers to use their judgment “to choose respondents ... that best meet the purpose of the study” (Asemah *et al.*, 2017, p. 171). This technique was deemed appropriate since this study was directed mainly at those who are literate and use mobile phones.

## Theoretical Framework

Lending theoretical support and backing to this study are the Perception Theory and the Uses and Gratifications Theory.

### Perception Theory

As cited in Anaeto, Onabajo & Osifeso (2008, pp. 66–68), Berelson and Steiner propounded the Perception Theory in 1964. The theorists note that the primary intention of the communicator in a typical mass communication setting is to cause or influence his/her audiences to pay attention to his/her message(s), learn the contents of the message(s) and make appropriate changes in attitudes or beliefs, or produce the desired changes in behaviour.

The theory holds that the afore-stated communicator’s goals may be difficult to achieve because the process of interpreting messages is, in itself, complex. This is more so because people selectively perceive an object, a message or an event such that, even though a message may successfully get to the target, it may still not accomplish its purpose; or may not have the intended meaning for all receivers. This is because perception is selective, and as explained by Watson & Hill (2015), people are surrounded by many sensations but they tend to pay attention to only a few of them. This, therefore, affects how they perceive each event that occurs around them.

Severin & Tankard (2001) further explain that three other psychological processes, namely, selective exposure, selective attention and selective retention, which are similar to selective perception, sometimes come into play in the communication process. Selective exposure can occur when audience members attend to or expose themselves to certain mass media outlets or messages as a result of their pre-existing beliefs, attitudes and interests; and avoid those they feel

may conflict with what they believe in. Selective attention is “a general tendency for human beings to focus on only some of the sensory data or information available to them at any given time” (Chandler & Munday, 2011, p. 378) since it is impossible to pay attention to everything that happens around them. Selective retention, on the other hand, is the “process by which people tend to remember best and longest information consistent with their pre-existing attitudes and interests” (Baran & Davis, 2012, p. 182).

The theory is relevant to this study for, although the NCC has adequate provisions in the Nigerian Communications Act 2003 to promote and protect the rights of telecoms consumers; and that, through the Consumer Parliament, it periodically organises public enlightenment programmes to further create awareness on these rights, it is however not possible that these messages can have the same meaning for all the receivers. This is because, while some consumers may accept the messages and make good use of same, others may choose not to be exposed to the messages at all; or do so with selective perception (Okon, 2017).

## Uses and Gratification Theory

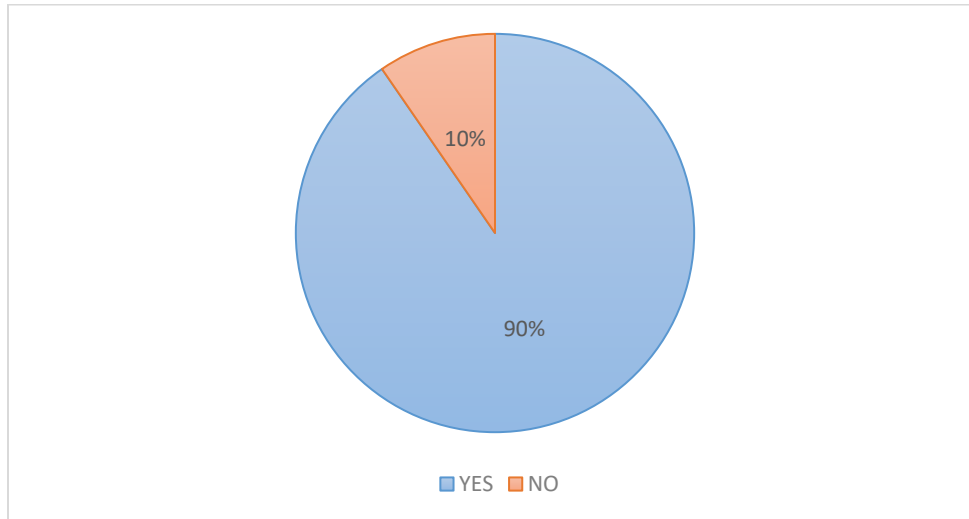
The second theory, Uses and Gratifications Theory, was propounded by Katz, Blumler and Gurevitch in 1974 (Katz, Blumler & Gurevitch, 1973-1974). The theory focuses on the audience member rather than the message, or the media via which the message is channelled. Unlike the tradition of the powerful effect theory of the media, this theory sees the audience member as a discriminatory and selective user of media who actively utilises the contents thereof, rather than being acted upon by the media. This means that the theory does not assume any direct relationship between messages and effects, but postulates instead that, by actively putting messages to use, audiences act as an intervening variable, thus influencing the effect process.

The theory is relevant to this study because, owing to the discriminatory nature of the individual in selectively utilising media contents, it could convincingly follow that a situation in which telecoms consumers (or, specifically, mobile phone users in Calabar) have a high level of knowledge about their rights and make use of same is a function of the extent to which they actively utilise the contents of the appropriate media in this respect. If, therefore, the knowledge level is low, it would mean the consumers have not actively accessed and utilised the relevant media and the contents therein. The effect in either case cannot be attributed to the message but to the individual audience member.

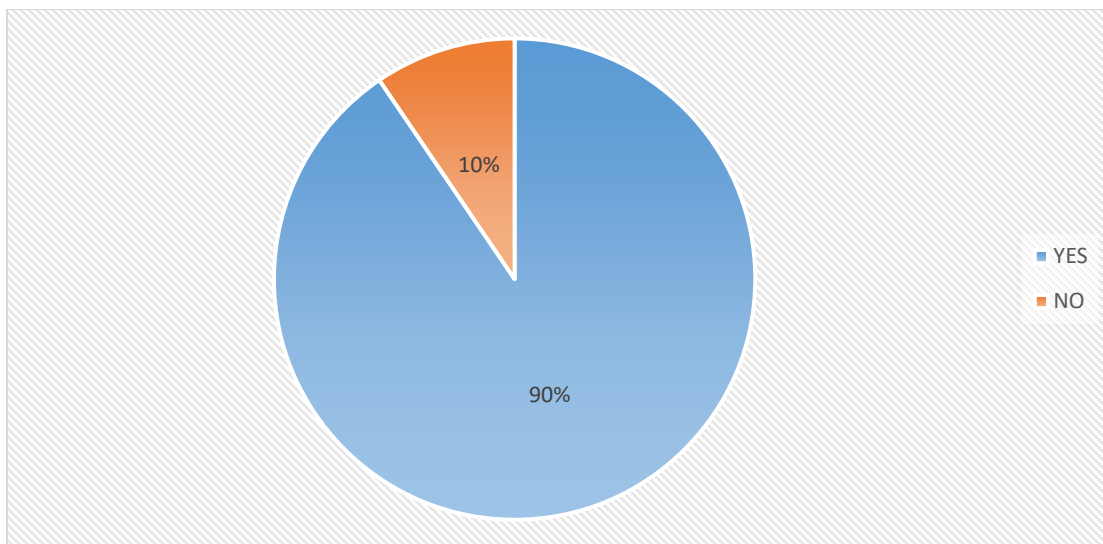


## Data Presentation and Analysis

Data collected from the 385 respondents who returned their validly-filled questionnaire are presented and analysed here. It should be noted from the outset that all the 385 respondents (100%) owned a mobile phone connected to at least one telecoms service provider; and that all of them use their phones regularly. This means that they were all not just relevant but useful and knowledgeable for the study.



**Figure 1. Respondents' exposure to NCC's mass media activities on telecoms users' rights**

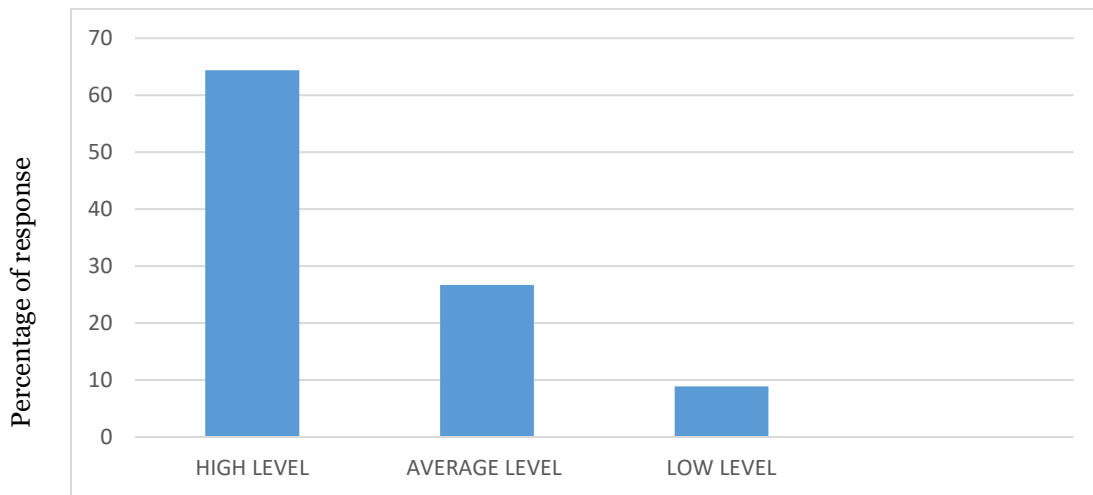


**Figure 2. Responses on whether or not the NCC's mass media activities have been intensive**

In Figure 1, the majority of the respondents, totalling 90.4%, had exposure to the NCC's mass media activities on telecoms users' rights. They are, therefore, well positioned to have adequate understanding of the essence of this study and contribute meaningfully to its overall success.

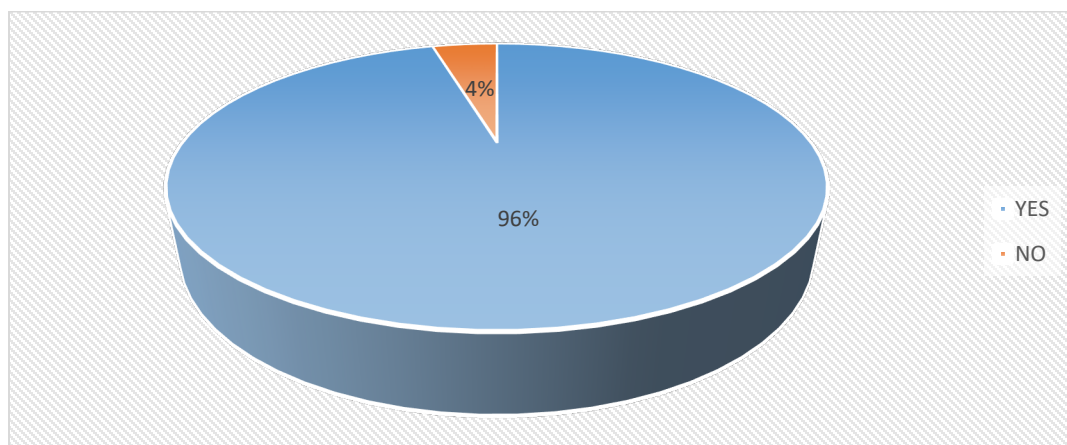
Intensity of NCC's mass media activities would help to identify how strong these activities actually were. Figure 2, therefore, provides this information, and shows that, out of 348 respondents who agreed to having been exposed to the NCC's media activities, 315 or 90.5% of them agreed these media activities on telecoms users' rights were intensive: that is, being thorough, in-depth, rigorous, and concentrated on the issue of telecoms users' rights.

Figure 3 shows that, out of the 315 respondents who saw the campaign as being intensive (as shown in Figure 2), 64.4% rated the level of intensiveness as high, while 26.7% rated it average and 8.9%, low. This confirms that almost two-thirds of the respondents highly approved of the media activities of NCC as being strong enough to create adequate awareness on the rights of telecoms users in Calabar.



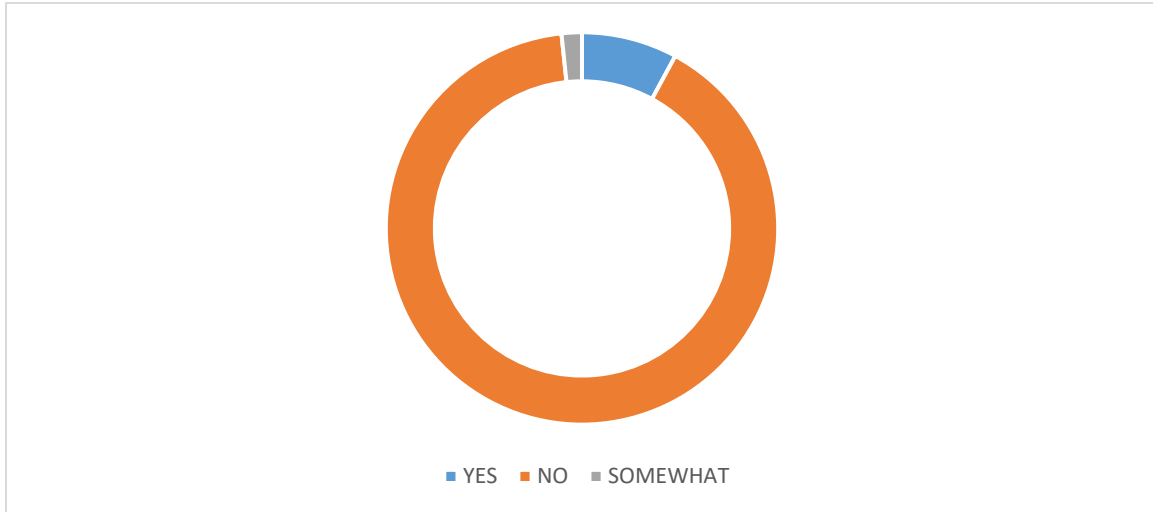
**Figure 3. Respondents' perceived level of intensiveness of the NCC's mass media activities**

Figure 4 indicates that 333 respondents, representing 95.7% of the entire respondents, agreed that the mass media activities had caused them to know their rights.



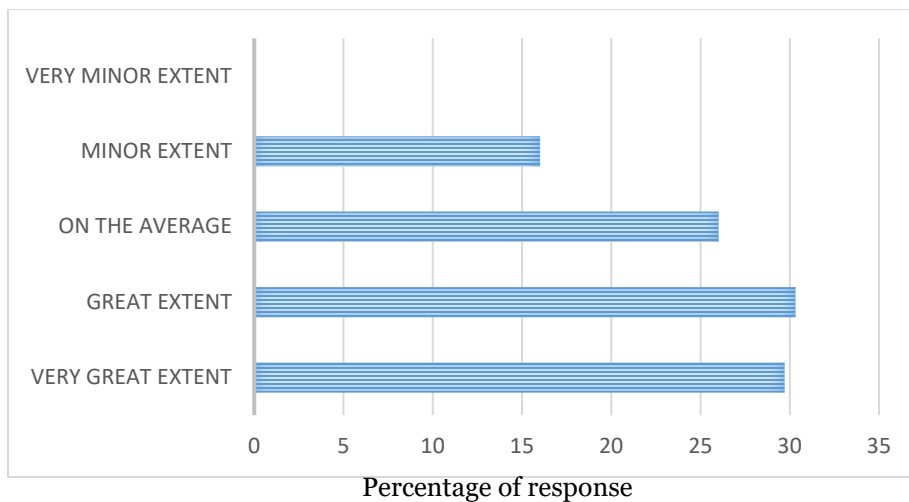
**Figure 4. Responses on whether the media activities have helped respondents to know their rights as telecoms consumers**

Figure 5 shows just 6.6% of the respondents as having real knowledge of their rights before they became exposed to the media activities; 75.6% totally lacked such knowledge, while 17.8% had a faint knowledge. Therefore, the fact that three-quarters of the respondents (75.6%) reported lack of knowledge of their rights prior to being exposed to the media activities suggests a rather high degree of effectiveness of the NCC’s media activities.



**Figure 5. Responses on whether respondents had knowledge of the telecoms users’ rights prior to the NCC’s mass media activities**

Earlier in Figure 4, a total of 333 or 95.7% of respondents exposed to the NCC’s media activities agreed they became knowledgeable of their rights in the telecoms industry due to the media activities. Figure 6 shows that a total of 60% said the media activities exposed them to the knowledge of their rights to very great or great extent; while 24% did so to an average extent; 16% with minor exposure, and 0.0% with “very minor extent”.



**Figure 6. Extent to which the NCC’s mass media activities have helped to expose respondents to their rights as telecoms consumers**

There are people who have rights and do not know they do; and there are those who have such rights but do not know how to use them or are not even willing to use them. For telecoms users in Calabar, Table 1 shows a vivid picture of people who know they have rights and are willing to use them, as 99.4% of the 348 respondents who were exposed to NCC's media activities were willing to enforce their rights, while only two (0.6%) were not. This goes to confirm that the NCC's media activities have made the people to know their rights as telecoms users and be willing to enforce those rights.

**Table 1. Responses on respondents' willingness to enforce their rights after acquiring knowledge of them**

<b>Responses</b>	<b>Frequency (n)</b>	<b>Percentage (%)</b>
Yes	346	99.4%
No	2	0.6%
<b>Total</b>	<b>348</b>	<b>100%</b>

In Table 2, the entire 100% of the 348 respondents who were exposed to the NCC's media activities agreed that the media activities were both necessary and useful. Thus, the efforts made by NCC to bring to public knowledge the rights of telecoms users have not been in vain.

**Table 2. Responses on whether respondents saw the NCC's media activities as necessary**

<b>Responses</b>	<b>Frequency (n)</b>	<b>Percentage (%)</b>
Yes	348	100%
No	-	-
<b>Total</b>	<b>348</b>	<b>100%</b>

Table 3 reveals the entire 100% of the 348 respondents exposed to the NCC's media activities as agreeing they would like to keep having the media activities from time to time.

**Table 3. Responses on whether the media activities should be continued from time to time**

<b>Responses</b>	<b>Frequency (n)</b>	<b>Percentage (%)</b>
Yes	348	100%
No	-	-
<b>Total</b>	<b>348</b>	<b>100%</b>

## Other Findings

Answers to questions 1–5 in the questionnaire provided the demographic information of respondents, which are recorded in Table 4.

From the table, we see that female respondents were slightly more than male by 2.4%. On age, those between 18 and 29 years presented the single largest entity among the respondents. This goes to confirm the submission by UNICEF (Rojas, 2020) that “[t]he group of people that goes from 14 to 29 years of age constitute the largest generation in history”. As regards marital status,

more than half of the respondents (54.8%) were single. For occupation, students constituted the single largest group at 46.5%. The last variable was “educational qualification” and those with WASC/GCE/SSC had the highest percentage – 48.8%. This can be understood because most of the students are university undergraduates whose main qualification is the School Certificate.

The high level of knowledge of NCC’s media activities on telecoms rights, as seen in this study, can be traceable to the high number of youths, students, and those with educational qualifications from School Certificate and above among the respondents. These same dominant groups also influenced the positive and satisfactory attitude most respondents had towards the NCC’s media activities on telecoms rights. Also, most of the respondents, being students, young, single, and educated, had a positive perception of their rights as mobile phone users and expressed their willingness to enforce these rights. However, apart from the dominant group as mentioned here, other segments of the audience – the old, less-educated and rural dwellers – are among the 95.7% who were exposed to their telecoms rights by the NCC media activities, and the 99.4% of the respondents who expressed the willingness to enforce their rights whenever these are infringed upon.

**Table 4. Demographic Background of Respondents**

<b>Variables</b>	<b>Categories</b>	<b>Frequency (n)</b>	<b>Percentage (%)</b>
Sex	Male	188	48.8%
	Female	197	51.2%
<b>Total</b>		<b>385</b>	<b>100%</b>
Age (Years)	18–29	174	45.2%
	30–39	101	26.2%
	40–49	68	17.7%
	50 and Above	42	10.9%
<b>Total</b>		<b>385</b>	<b>100%</b>
Marital Status	Single	211	54.8%
	Married	156	40.5%
	Divorced	8	2.1%
	Widowed	10	2.6%
<b>Total</b>		<b>385</b>	<b>100%</b>
Occupation	Civil/Public Servant	94	24.4%
	Businessman/woman	60	15.6%
	Politician	52	13.5%
	Student	179	46.5%
<b>Total</b>		<b>385</b>	<b>100%</b>
Educational Qualification	F.S.L.C.	53	13.8%
	WASC/GCE/SSC	188	48.8%
	OND/NCE/HSC	44	11.4%
	HND/Degree	89	23.1%
	Post-Graduate	11	2.9%
<b>Total</b>		<b>385</b>	<b>100%</b>

## Discussion of Findings

Findings of the study as they relate to the four research questions earlier raised are discussed in this section of the work, as follows.

### Research Question One: To what extent did mobile phone users in Calabar have awareness of their telecoms rights prior to the NCC's mass media activities?

This first research question helps to determine where mobile phone users in Calabar were in terms of awareness of their telecoms rights before they were exposed to the NCC's mass media activities on those rights. Figures 1 and 5 are useful in providing answers to the research question.

From Figure 1, we see that 90.4% of the respondents agreed to have had exposure to the NCC's mass media activities on telecoms users' rights; and Figure 5 shows that only 6.6% had knowledge of their rights as telecoms consumers prior to the NCC's mass media activities. This means that, prior to their exposure to the NCC's media activities on telecoms rights, a vast majority of respondents had little or no knowledge of their rights as phone users.

These findings tend to support the position of Nagler (2017) that, for the media to affect the attitude and perception of any individual or group of individuals, there must first be media exposure. This author went ahead to define media exposure as "the extent to which individuals encounter specific media messages or content". For this study, the "individuals" in the definition are mobile phone users in Calabar and the "specific media messages or content" they encountered are the NCC's media messages on telecoms rights.

Such exposure to the NCC's media activities brought about some direct or indirect change in the knowledge of the people, and modification in their attitudes and perceptions. We see in this study that 60% of respondents, as shown in Figure 1, after being exposed to NCC's the media activities, became more knowledgeable of their telecoms rights to a very great and great extent. Also, in Figures 1 and 3, we see a significant modification in respondents' attitudes and perceptions.

### Research Question Two: To what extent did the NCC's mass media activities on telecoms users' rights enable mobile phone users in Calabar to have knowledge of their rights?

Merriam-Webster's Collegiate Dictionary defines knowledge as "the fact or condition of knowing something with familiarity gained through experience or association". Here, association refers to relationship created in communication. This is why Duck & McMahan (2009, p. 1) declare that "any type of communication you ever participate in both has a relationship assumed underneath

it and does or achieves something for you as a result, namely communication creates a world of meaning”. From here, we can vividly see that, when information is sent out, as was done in the case of NCC’s media activities, the receiver becomes familiar with what he/she was being informed about.

To properly answer the second research question, the researchers refer to Figures 1, 2, 3, 4, 5 and 6. Apart from the fact that 90.4% of all the sampled respondents accepted being exposed to the NCC’s mass media activities, as presented in Figure 1, it is also clearly shown in Figure 2 that, while only a negligible 9.5% claimed that the campaign was not intensive, the remaining 90.5% said it was. Beyond this, the level of intensiveness of the campaign, as revealed in Figure 3, was reported to have been impressively high. Again, beyond the revelation in Figure 4 where 95.7% of the respondents who were exposed to the NCC’s mass media activities said the media activities had helped them to know their rights, it is also clearly shown in Figure 5 that, while only 16% and 0.0% of this category of respondents claimed to have been aided to a minor extent or very minor extent, respectively, by the campaign to have knowledge of their rights, an overwhelming 84% in Figure 6 reported that they were aided to a high or impressive extent. All these figures point to the fact that the NCC’s mass media activities on telecoms users’ rights were effective enough to enable mobile phone users in Calabar to come to a knowledge of their rights, and therewith the willingness to enforce the same.

Also corroborating these facts are recent unfolding events within the telecommunications industry. According to reports, during the first quarter of 2021 alone, telecoms subscribers lodged 3,019 complaints against Mobile Network Operators (MNOs), showing a 5.9 percent increase over the 2,854 complaints received in the first quarter of 2020 ([Adepetun, 2021](#)).

The findings in this study, as well as the increased complaints by telecoms users, further support the uses and gratifications theory. This is because, owing to the discriminating nature of individuals in selectively utilising media contents, it can only logically and convincingly follow that the high level of knowledge gained by mobile phone users in Calabar about their rights in the telecoms industry was a function of the extent to which they actively utilised the contents of the NCC’s media activities; and not because they were acted upon by the campaign media, to determine the effect.

### Research Question Three: What was the attitude of mobile phone users in Calabar towards the NCC’s mass media activities on telecom users’ rights?

The answer to the third research question of this study lies in Table 3, which displays responses on whether the respondents would like NCC to come up with more mass media activities from

time to time. In the table, 100% of the respondents who had earlier agreed to have been exposed to the NCC's media activities agreed that they saw the media activities as necessary and would invariably like these activities to be launched occasionally. Such show of liking for the campaign messages and the planners is an exhibition of positive attitude towards a referent or cognitive object, which, in this case, is the NCC's media activities on telecoms users' rights.

In sum, this finding indicates that the attitude of mobile phone users in Calabar towards the mass media activities on telecoms users' rights was friendly, positive and accommodating. It would not be wrong to allude here to the possibility that the respondents' positive attitude could have been enhanced by the satisfaction or pleasure (gratification) they derived from actively accessing and utilising the NCC's mass media activities (uses). This goes to support the uses and gratifications theory used in this study.

#### Research Question Four: What was the perception of mobile phone users in Calabar towards the NCC's mass media activities on telecom users' rights?

Perception is "the process of acquiring and interpreting information from sensory data". It is "what we see, hear, smell, taste and touch in our daily interaction with others" (Griffin & Bone, 2014, p. 31). However, in building our perception about something, these authors maintain that we may, consciously or unconsciously, decide to give attention to some senses (like what we see and hear in media activities, as in this study) and ignore others (such as touching, tasting and smelling). In the course of our perception building, there are some factors that help us to determine what we focus on. Two such factors are repetition and intensity.

As can be seen in this study, the NCC's mass media activities involved a conscious repetition of the media messages sent to telecoms consumers, which became intensive in their penetration of the target audience. In Figure 3, all the respondents agreed that the NCC's mass media activities were intensive, that is, they were thorough, in-depth and concerted, though in different degrees. This confirms that the messages sent out provided audience members with adequate information which helped them to develop an enduring perception about their rights as telecoms consumers.

Also, we refer to the content in Table 2, which presents responses that tell how mobile phone users in Calabar view, feel about, or perceive the NCC's mass media activities on telecoms users' rights. It is clearly revealed that 100% of those who were exposed to the NCC's mass media activities saw them as not only necessary, but useful. This finding is a pointer to an overwhelming positive perception about not only the generality of the media activities, but also about their planners. In this regard, Paisley (2001) has noted that one of the key factors for any public communication campaign to succeed is when the public perceives or views its source (stakeholders/planners)



positively as a group that is entitled to, or has the right to offer, the message, place same on the public's issue agenda, and attempt to change the behaviour of the audiences.

This finding supports the perception theory used in the study. This is because, even though consumers of media content have many activities and events happening around them, they pay attention to, appreciate and/or accept a given message and make good use of same (as is the case with the respondents in this study).

## Conclusion and Recommendations

The study established that NCC's mass media activities on telecoms users' rights were quite successful, as the majority of the target audience (mobile phone users) in Calabar were exposed to the media messages. Although a great majority of the respondents had no knowledge of telecoms users' rights prior to the campaign, the reverse was the case during and after the campaign. This is because, besides being very intensive, the media activities brought to them the knowledge of their rights as consumers in the telecoms industry. The study also indicates that respondents viewed the campaign as useful and necessary; and this explains why their attitude and perception towards the media activities were very positive.

To continue, therefore, in helping telecoms consumers know and enforce their rights, the researchers recommend that NCC should always maintain high standards in planning and executing its mass media activities. Also, further research could be carried out to determine how other user groups – older, less-educated, rural dwellers, etc. – might be reached through the NCC's media activities.

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