

**EFFECT OF RELATIONSHIP MARKETING ORIENTATION ON
CUSTOMER LOYALTY IN MOBILE TELECOMMUNICATIONS
SERVICE PROVISION IN NAIROBI, KENYA**

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DECLARATION

This is my original work and has not been presented for a degree award or published in this or any other institution of higher learning.



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This research project is submitted for examination with my approval as the University supervisor.

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DEDICATION

I wish to dedicate this research project to my family and especially my mother and father for their support throughout my academic journey.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

First I want to thank God for keeping me alive and healthy and giving me sufficient grace and strength to go through my entire master's program. I wish to specially acknowledge my supervisor Dr. Njeru's efforts and for her guidance throughout the period of research. My family has been very supportive throughout my study period and I wish to thank them. Finally, I wish to thank my respondents for sparing their time to fill my questionnaire, it wouldn't have been possible without you. May God bless you all!

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ABSTRACT

In the wake of increased competition, the Kenya mobile telecommunications market continues to undergo considerable changes. The mobile subscription, penetration and coverage continue to grow since 1999 when the first mobile operators started operating. The main focus for most companies in the present day competitive marketplace is on building long –term relationships that are mutually beneficial with customers which in turn lead to CL. The research objective was to determine the effect of RMO on CL in Nairobi's mobile telecommunications sector. Design utilized for study was descriptive cross-sectional survey, using all of the customers from Kenya's top five service providers as the study's population; namely Safaricom, Airtel Kenya, Telkom Kenya, Finserve (Equitel) and Jamii telecommunications. The study employed convenience sampling that saw all the 100 questionnaires filled thus indicating a 100% response rate. For the purpose of gathering data, the study used a structured questionnaire with a Likert scale. All the study variables formed the basis of structured questions where the 5-point scale with levels of agreement were used to seek respondents' feedback. Both inferential and descriptive techniques were utilized in data analysis including frequencies, percentages, mean, standard deviation and multivariate linear regression test. After editing and coding data, it was analyzed by the use of IBM SPSS Statistics version 29.0.0.0(241) and the same presented using tables. According to the study, CL is substantially impacted by reciprocity, shared values, empathy, communication bonding and, trust. Further to this, reciprocity and bonding are better predictors of customer loyalty.

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the Study

The main focus for most companies in the present day competitive marketplace is majorly creating long –term mutually beneficial relationships with customers ultimately bringing about to CL. RMO and CL are very important concepts in marketing, and researchers have studied them for many years. (Minta & Traore, 2018). CL is the ultimate reason for implementing RMO in a firm (Raza, 2012). Businesses that want to foster customer loyalty need to develop good relationships with customers in so as to take care of their desires, needs and expectations thereafter satisfying them more intelligently than competition. (Abtin & Pouramiri, 2016). Building customer relationships benefits both the company and the customer (Ndubisi, 2007). Customers' loyalty is lessening yet they are demanding more because they have more choices in the market, information is available and accessible and issues to do with security (Ojiaku et al, 2017). Managing and enhancing customer loyalty is vital to organizations (Richard & Zhang, 2012).

This research was supported by two theories. Relationship marketing that seeks to involve suppliers, customers, and other infrastructure stakeholders in an organization's marketing strategies and activities (McKenna, 1991; Shani & Chelasani, 1991). Berry and Parasuraman (1991) proposes relationship marketing to mainly center on developing, acquiring and maintaining connections with customers. The theory assumes a more relational approach whose main goal is to attract and retain customers (Crié, 2002). Relationship marketing orientation aims to identify, build, preserve and strengthen connections with clients and other stakeholders for their benefit and to ensure the goals of all involved parties are achieved and the same is done by mutually fulfilling

and exchanging promises (Grönroos, 1990). Secondly is the social exchange theory as proposed by Homans, 1958. It proposes that social behavior results in exchange processes intended to maximize benefits and save expenses. The theory assumes that actions with positive consequences are repeated. Second, actions that have been rewarded on similar occasions in the past are performed on the same occasion. A third assumption is that the more valuable the outcome of an action is to an actor, the more likely it is to be considered. Fourth, the more frequently a customer has recently been rewarded for an action, the less important that additional unit of reward is, ultimately (Homans, 1984).

The provision of mobile phone services is of great importance to the Kenyan economy. Today, the introduction of a large telecommunications infrastructure in Kenya that can provide efficient and affordable information and communication services is key to the country's economic growth. Mobile telecommunications allow customers to make calls, access internet, complete business work and remain connected from anywhere. Mobile telecommunications service providers in Kenya are facing competition owing to continuous growth and this call for strategies to remain competitive. Safaricom, Airtel Kenya, Telkom Kenya, Finserve (Equitel) and Jamii telecom are the major operators. As at September 2021 percentage mobile (SIM) subscription market share were Safaricom PLC 64.6%, Airtel Networks 26.4%, Telkom Kenya 6.4%, Finserve (Equitel) 2.3% and Jamii Telecom 0.3%. Present day's customers are becoming less loyal, more demanding and sophisticated due to the many choices available, availability and access to information and insecurity issues (Ojiaku et al, 2017). Today's customers are very knowledgeable and want value for money, they can thus easily switch to the available alternatives and therefore service providers have to keep pace with this fact.

1.1.1 Relationship Marketing Orientation

Relationship marketing orientation is all about building, maintaining, and improving relationships with your customers. (Berry, 1983). Relationship marketing orientation as a concept is an essential step to ensure profit and customer satisfaction and gain a competitive advantage around the world (Durmaz, 2020). Retaining customers is more important than getting new ones. Companies implementing the RMO principle should therefore develop strategies for building close and long-term associations with their most profitable consumers. Relationship marketing orientation is a continuous process of recognizing and generating fresh value with specific consumers and sharing the advantages of that value with them throughout the life of the relationship. (Gordon, 1988). This is because increased customer value improves client satisfaction, leading to customer retention, which in turn increases volume as a result of positive word of mouth and repeat purchases, and ultimately generates more profit. (Hollensen, 2019). Therefore, the direction of RMO is to recognize, build, nurture, improve, or, where appropriate terminate associations with stakeholders and consumers in order to achieve the goals of all parties to the end. This is achieved through mutually exchanging and fulfilling promises. (Grönroos, 1994).

For RMO to be successful, a business must have both an influx of new customers and a limit on customer exits. (Leaky Bucket Theory). A relationship exists only if both believe it exists, both agree to exist, and that relationship occupies a special place beyond casual contact. (Barnes and Howlett, 1998). RMO is the dimension of customer relationship management (CRM) focusing on retention of customers and satisfaction of customers in the long run. In this study, it examines six determinants of RMO, including; communication, trust, empathy bonding, shared value, and reciprocity (Sin et al, 2005).

1.1.2 Customer Loyalty

CL is a heartfelt devotion to repeat purchases of preferred products in future, causing repeat purchases of the same or the similar brand. (Oliver, 1999). Customer loyalty is seen as long-term profit (Kandapully et al, 2015).It is also considered a major business outcome (Ali et al, 2016). Provides various economic benefits such as price premiums, cost savings and additional sales income (Murali et al, 2016). Customer loyalty has two sides. Attitudinal loyalty attributed to customer preferences, recommendations, and purchase intent, and behavioral loyalty related to purchase rate and frequency (Raza & Rehman, 2012).

Determinants of customer loyalty vary by business type, customer type and goals (Abu-Alhaija et al, 2018). There are various determinants of customer loyalty that help in measuring the same. Various scholars have used some or all of them differently depending on their research objectives. For purposes of this research (Agrawal et al 2013)'s satisfaction, commitment, emotions, corporate image, value perception and quality will be adopted.

1.1.3 Mobile Telecommunications Service Provision in Nairobi

In the wake of increased competition, the Kenya mobile telecommunications market continues to undergo considerable changes. Cellular subscriptions, penetration and coverage have all grown since the first wireless service providers went live in 1999. There was an increase in the utilization of telephony services due to the COVID-19 pandemic that saw restrictions to most physical social interactions. The government offered 360 MHz spectrum of International Mobile Telecommunication (IMT) to mobile operators and other service providers to boost the increased demand for telecommunications services (Economic survey, 2021). As of September 30, 2021 the active mobile subscriptions (SIM cards) was 64.9 million, indicating an increase of 0.78% from the 3.9% increase on June 30, 2021.

The slow adoption of subscriptions is as a result of eliminating the USSD customer acquisition channel and the full rollout of SIM registration app channel following the Kenya Department of Communications guidelines on SIM registration. (Sector statistics report, 2021-2022). The availability of affordable smartphones and infrastructure development underpinned by the digital conversion of important government services has facilitated access and use of internet services countrywide in the past years. COVID-19 pandemic enhanced the use of ICT services, with the internet playing a key role in providing online services. As at September 2021 percentage mobile (SIM) subscription market share were Safaricom PLC 64.6%, Airtel Networks 26.4%, Telkom Kenya 6.4%, Finserve(Equitel) 2.3% and Jamii Telecom 0.3%. During the same period, there were 59 million mobile phones accessing mobile networks, 33 million of them were feature phones with 26 million being smartphones. In short, consumption of digital tools and services generally has changed during the COVID-19 pandemic. Out of necessity, more and more Kenyans are turning to mobile and internet services. With the potential risks of working from home, online learning, e-commerce, and dealing with cash, more consumers are turning to Internet services as a dependable, well organized and secure way to access goods and services.

1.2 Research Problem

In the wake of increased competition, relationship marketing and customer loyalty remain very important marketing concepts to be utilized by companies (Minta & Traore, 2018). Present day's customers are becoming less loyal, more demanding and sophisticated due to the many choices available, availability and access to information and insecurity issues (Ojiaku et al, 2017). Customers are very knowledgeable and want value for money, they can thus easily switch to the available alternatives and therefore service providers have to keep pace with this fact.

Building customer loyalty is the main reason companies introduce relationship marketing orientation (Raza, 2012). For businesses that want to build customer loyalty, maintaining good customer relationships is key to intelligently understanding their expectations, wants, and requirements to endeavor to satisfy them better than competition. (Abtin & Pouramiri, 2016). Safaricom, Airtel Kenya, Telkom Kenya, Finserve(Equitel) and Jamii telecom are the major service providers of mobile telecommunications service in Nairobi today.

Globally, Rizan et al (2014) conducted research on customer loyalty and relationship marketing, and further used customer trust and satisfaction as intervening variables. The current one examines how trust, attachment, communication, empathy, reciprocity and shared value affect customer loyalty. According to Husnain and Akhtar, (2015) in Pakistan RM and CL in banking formed the basis of their study. In the current research the main focus is the telecommunications industry in Kenya. In the UK, Banna and Rahman, (2020) carried out a study on the effect of RM on customer retention in the banking sector, unlike telecommunications sector in this study. In Africa, Koi - Akrofi et al, (2013) from Ghana examined RM strategies and customer loyalty in the mobile sector and the current research focused on the telecom industry in Kenya. Later, Ojiaku et al (2017) in Nigeria looked at the impact of RM and RM programs in pension fund on CL. That research had a different context from the current one and the determinants used to measure the variables are different too. Boateng, (2019) from Ghana embarked on a study on online RM and CL which primarily targeted customers that are online, as opposed to the current study, which targets all customers. Mhidze, (2019) in Tanzania explored the impact of RM on CL in the telecommunications sector in Dar es Salaam, but the current research focused on the Kenyan market. Those done locally on the variables include; one by (Kahora, 2012) in a Safaricom case study explored the impact of RM on relationship quality, the current study covered five mobile

telecommunications companies. (Wachira, 2012) investigated the application of relationship marketing in Kenya Commercial Bank Ltd. (Owino, 2012) explored the impact of organizational culture on relationship marketing. (Nyaosi, 2012) did one on the impact of RM on EABL stakeholders. (Kibeh, 2013) aimed at RM on customer loyalty for Nairobi's telecommunications industry. (Nyatichi, 2014) studied RM and CL in Kenyan commercial banks. (Kagia, 2016) went ahead to study RM, organizational resources and organizational performance. This study sought to provide a response to the question: What impact does a RMO have on CL when providing mobile telecoms services in Nairobi?

1.3 Research Objective

The objective of this study was to determine the effect of RMO on CL in mobile telecommunications service provision in Nairobi.

1.4 Value of the Study

This research seeks to fill a gap in theory not covered by other researchers. Therefore, it provides theoretical value and will serve as a reference for other scholars in the future. The application of RM theory in recruiting, creating, and sustaining relationships with customers in marketing and in maximizing and minimizing costs. Academic loyalists wishing to study social exchange theories that explain social behaviors that are the result of exchange processes that aim to bring benefits and relate them to customers will find this study useful.

The government and policy makers of Kenya's telecom service providers have also found the study helpful in designing viable strategies that assist in establishing and maintaining connections that last a long time with their customers therefore remaining competitive in the industry. It helps develop strategies to improve service quality in the industry.

The telecommunications sector continues to face intense competition, and marketing managers must stay close to their customers to serve them better than their competitors. This study helps marketing managers in the telecommunications sector develop relationship marketing strategies aimed at connecting with customers and attracting loyal customers.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

The chapter gives the relevant literature available, main studies conducted and their results. It provides a theoretical framework for research and clearly identifies research gaps.

2.2 Theoretical Framework

Relationship marketing and social exchange theories were adopted.

2.2.1 Relationship Marketing Theory

Bringing together many seemingly unrelated marketing ideas, RM is a popular concept. Customer relationship management (covered in this current study), marketing strategy, database marketing, business-to-business marketing, strategic thinking, legal relationships, business-to-business marketing, and affinity marketing. Each bringing significant benefits to both buyers and sellers (Zinkhan, 2002). RM is a multidisciplinary and integrative approach because it looks at marketing as an integrated process that integrates different functions in the organization and aims at promoting, maintaining and establishing connections in the long run (Coviello et al. 1997). A key idea in the relationship marketing paradigm is loyalty. Keeping customers for life reduces the cost of acquiring new customers and increases profitability (Muok, 2018→).

Customer acquisition is still the marketer's job, but relationship marketing focuses on the fact that in the long run, customer retention and customer development are equal and even more important to your business. From a relationship marketing perspective, the emphasis on relationships rather than transactions suggests that customers have ongoing value over the life of the organization (Berry, 1995). For the purpose of profit and ensuring objectives of all stakeholders are reached,

RM's role is to maintain, find, establish, and strengthen connections with stakeholders. And commitments are kept by exchanging goods and services (Gronroos, 1990). RM began to evolve when it moved from viewing the marketplace as transactional to looking at it as an ongoing relationship. We focused on our relationship with our customers. In marketing, his four phases that have contributed to understanding RM include Marketing channels, service marketing, direct marketing, database marketing, and B2B marketing (Möller and Halinen, 2006). RM suggests that when a company provides value to its customers, it strengthens customer relationships and increases customer retention. We focus on developing approaches and strategies that generate customer loyalty and break away from traditional marketing with a single selling strategy.

According to RM, sales alone cannot define a company's success, but they view sales as the beginning of a relationship with a customer, and consider the profit from that relationship a measure of the firm's achievement. We try to build an ongoing relationship with our customers. This can be achieved through excellent customer service or offering additional features. It talks about delivering customer value, believes customers come first and considers long-term relationships. Striving to provide robust customer service, RM understands customer expectations and promise to meet their expectations. She works on total quality control. According to RM, product pricing should be determined by negotiation and consensus, not by competitiveness (Juneja, 2015).

The theory of RM is relevant because nurturing long-term relationships with clients is probably more ideal than pursuing individual, unrelated interactions. This is a viable strategy for gaining a competitive advantage. By communicating and initiating partnerships with customers, mobile operators create opportunities to forming strong bonds with customers. This can be mutually beneficial, especially if both parties are interested in realizing long-term returns (Ganesan, 1994). RM concept can further be difficult to implement because it is not always desirable or possible to maintain close relationships with customers (Webster, 1992). Creating them can consume both time and resources. Clients may resist the company's efforts to establish relationships for their own reasons.

2.2.2 Social Exchange Theory

SE is a process of exchange between people that is either rewarding or costly. The theory postulates that social behavior is the result of exchange processes aimed at maximizing gains and reducing expenses. This theory holds that individuals consider the possible advantages and disadvantages of social interactions, and if the disadvantages outweigh the advantages, individuals are more likely to terminate or depart the relationship. It is said that they try to get a lot from Individuals want to maintain relationships because they expect them to be rewarding. Homans summarizes the system of social exchange theory into three propositions: The promise of success means that when a person is compensated for their behavior, they are likely to repeat that behavior. Secondly, is the stimulus proposition which indicates that when a given stimulus has led a reward several times in the past, the more likely a person is to respond to it. Finally, deprivation suggests that each extra unit of a client's reward gets less valuable the more recently the consumer has gotten that reward. (Homans, 1958). The social exchange theory has been shown to help explain customer loyalty when based on theory. Customer may maintain or terminate the exchange relationship based on its

expectations of the costs and advantages of the exchange relationship and the anticipated rewards of the substitution relationship. Given multiple options, customers choose the most beneficial relationship and continue with it for as long as the expected costs and advantages associated with the current association exceed a certain edge. Satisfactory experiences increase motivation to stay in relationships because expectations are primarily influenced by previous experiences in relationships when accessing future costs and benefits (Muok, 2018). The theory is relevant to this study as telecom companies serve their customers. These can be viewed as social exchanges. SE theory proposes that social conduct occurs through the process of exchange, aiming at maximizing advantages while reducing expenses.

2.3 Empirical Review and Research Gaps

The concepts of RMO and CL have recently been explored by researchers. Scientists around the world have conducted various studies on this concept. Lizan et al. (2014) in Indonesia researched on the nature of the link between RM and CL specifically using CS and CT as intervening variables. This study explored what customers perceived of customer satisfaction attributes. The survey sample consisted of 150 private his banking respondents, and the SEM was used in analysis of the relationships. The conclusion was that RM tactics had a substantially impact customer loyalty through CT and CS. The current study is different in that it uses different scales for the variables and is conducted in different contexts. Nasir et al. (2014) from Pakistan examined the main effect on CL in the telecommunications sector in Pakistan. Notably, different statistical methods utilized in this study, regression and reliability factor. The sample size was 170 citizens and questionnaire used for primary data that was collected. It was found that satisfaction and quality of service substantially impact CL. In contrast to this study, the current study focuses on RMO and customer loyalty. Husnain and Akhtar (2015) from Pakistan researched the effect of RM

strategies on CL in retail banking and explored if these relationships are enhanced by improved bank relationships. The study conveniently sampled 100 of the students with accounts in various banks and collected the data using questionnaires. Multiple regression analysis was used. Results indicated trust, engagement, conflict management and communication, had significant effects, predicting a significant proportion of customer loyalty variance. The current research focuses on the Kenyan market.

Banna and Rahman (2020) from the UK conducted a study to understand if RM has a substantially impact retention of customers in the banking industry. The survey included 2,500 online customers, but only 160 of her responded. SPSS was used in analysis of data, averages and graphs. There was a positive substantial impact between RM and CL and retention. The current research focuses on Kenya's mobile communications industry. Many studies on this subject have also been done in Africa. Koi Akrofi et al. (2013) in Ghana assessed the effect of RM tactics on CL in Ghana's mobile sector. The study examined the effect on customer loyalty in Ghana's mobile market by addressing value delivered as service standards, perceived value, brand perception, and relationship marketing strategies. A questionnaire utilized in collecting data. Each of the four RM strategies and retention of customers were found to have a substantial impact based on reliability tests as well as other parametric and nonparametric analyses. It is in a different context and timing than the current study. Ojiaku et al. (2017) from Nigeria investigated the connection between RM and CL. Specifically, examining the impact of satisfaction, CT and engagement on loyalty, and to see the impact of RM programs run by annuities on CL. Regression analysis assisted in testing the model on data from a sample of 354 customers of a pension services company at Nandi Azikiwe University, Awka, Anambra. The results show that customer trust and satisfaction influence customer loyalty. It was also confirmed that RM programs had an impact on customer loyalty. The

current research focuses on Kenya's market in the telecommunications industry. Boateng (2019) from Ghana examined the signaling function of online RM practices in creating CL and online trust through the signaling theory. Data was collected from banks using a sample of 429 customers and the results analyzed by SEM techniques. In summary, beyond online tools used, in a bank, online relationship activities need to convey relevant and useful signals that positively impact trust and customer loyalty. The current study covers all customers in the mobile telecommunications industry in the Kenyan market.

Mhidze (2019) from Tanzania studied the relationship between RM and CL in the telecommunications sector in Dar es Salaam, Tanzania. Gathering of primary data was by questionnaire, and a descriptive survey methodology was also used. The sample size is 400 and consists of mobile subscribers of Tigo, Airtel and Vodacom, who live in Dar Es Salaam. The study found a positive substantial impact between RM and CL. The current research focuses on the Kenyan market. Etim et al. (2021) investigated the effects of RM on retention of customers in the telecommunications sector in Nigeria. It was carried out to assess the impact of dialogue, establishment of trust, customer service and excellence of service on customer retention in the context of telecommunications. Survey design was adopted and a questionnaire for collecting primary data from 198 customers. The results showed that trust building, communication, customer care and service quality substantially impacted CL in the telecommunications sector. Current research focuses on customer loyalty, not customer retention. Kibeh (2013) from Kenya analyzed CRM and CL in the Kenyan mobile industry. Descriptive survey design was adopted and a sample of 384 respondents, individuals using the services of his four mobile operators in Kenya. A stratified sampling technique was used, obtaining a sampling distribution from each firm according to its market share percentage. Data collection was done using a questionnaire and

quantitative data analyzed by descriptive statistical techniques. It was found that quality of service, effective communication, and good brand image substantially impacted CL. The current study is different in that it is being conducted nine years later, and some of the mobile operators used in the study have already ceased operations and have been replaced.

Nyatichi (2014) studied RM and CL in Kenyan commercial banks. A descriptive survey design was used and data collection done by using a questionnaire. All Kenyan commercial banks formed the study population. Coded data analyzed by the SPSS. Results suggested that RM has a substantial impact on CL. The current study is different as it focuses on the mobile telecommunications. Odhiambo (2018) did one on the impact of CRM on brand choice in supermarkets in Kisumu City. A descriptive survey design was used with a questionnaire forming the basis of primary data collection. Stratified sample from eight supermarkets in Kisumu were used to obtain a sample of 193 respondents. Data analysis was by regression and descriptive statistics. The context is different from the current research. Chesula (2021) in Kenya aimed to find out the impact of aspects of relationship marketing. Switching costs reduce the interactions between information exchange, product customization, dispute resolution, and consumer happiness. From Tier 1 supermarkets in Nairobi County, a sample of 384 customers was obtained and a questionnaire to get the data. In conclusion, applying RM practices significantly improves satisfaction in customers, but switching costs substantially impacts relationships. Current research focuses on the mobile telecommunications.

CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

The chapter covers the procedure to be adopted in conducting the research. It will explain such items as; research design, data collection, data analysis, population of study and sample design.

3.2 Research Design

The design adopted was descriptive cross-sectional survey. Descriptive research deals with what, where, or how much of a phenomenon. In this case, researchers have some understanding of important aspects of the phenomenon, but little or no knowledge of its characteristic properties and details. The study was done at specific time and therefore further classified as cross-sectional. Descriptive cross-sectional research methods use structured tools such as questionnaires to investigate phenomena or topics, and use descriptive dimensions such as frequencies, percentages, means, standard deviations, and statistical relevance to identify distinctions. It is the main investigative process from which conclusions can be drawn. Descriptive research methods provide the basis for research, examining the relationships between variables that explore why/how/what connections are made, and the consequences of such variables, in this case relationship marketing and customer loyalty (Cooper and Schindler, 2014).

3.3 Population of Study

All customers from the five major service providers in Kenya namely Safaricom, Airtel Kenya, Telkom Kenya, Finserve (Equitel) and Jamii telecommunications formed the study population. The number of active mobile phone contracts (SIM cards) was 64.9 million and percentage mobile

(SIM) subscription market share were Safaricom PLC 64.6%,Airtel Networks 26.4%,Telkom Kenya 6.4%,Finserve(Equitel) 2.3% and Jamii Telecom 0.3% (Sector statistics report, 2021-2022).

3.4 Sample Design

The study employed convenience sampling. This is a sampling procedure in which the interviewee uses his/her convenience in terms of time and effort .In this case the sampling units were all successful, convenient and cooperative (Munyoki and Mulwa, 2012).If the researcher was to use market share statistics and Krejcie & Morgan (1970) in arriving at the sample size per service provider, then Jamii Telecom would end up with only one respondent. In order to have a representative sample size per service provider, the population was divided into five telecommunications companies and then each segment conveniently provided at least 10 respondents.

n = 100

Table 3.1: Sample Size per Service Provider

Telecommunications service providers	Sample size
Safaricom	40
Airtel Kenya	25
Telkom Kenya	15
Finserve (Equitel)	10
Jamii Telecom	10
Total	100

Source: Author, (2022)

3.5 Data Collection

For primary data collection, a survey questionnaire was used to accurately reflect the effect of RMO on customer loyalty. This is a written text containing questions about a research subject and is presented to respondents who are subject experts or key stakeholders (Cooper & Schindler, 2014). A structured questionnaire constructed on a Likert scale. All survey variables, including determinants of both RMO and customer loyalty, formed the basis of structured questions. It used a 5-point agreement scale to gather respondents' feedback. The questionnaires were issued to the respondents via email and follow up calls done to ensure they were filled on time. Since mobile subscribers are readily available contacts were obtained from referrals

3.6 Data Analysis

For analysis of data, both descriptive and inferential techniques were used. Descriptive statistics, including: percentage, mean, standard deviation and frequency were used for data analysis. The inference method used in this study was the multivariate linear regression test. Edited and coded data were analyzed using IBM SPSS statistics. A regression model helped determine the degree of association between RMO and customer loyalty.

The linear regression adopted in the study was;

$$Y = \beta_0 + \beta_1 X_1 + \beta_2 X_2 + \beta_3 X_3 + \beta_4 X_4 + \beta_5 X_5 + \beta_6 X_6 + \epsilon$$

Where;

Y = Customer Loyalty

β_0 = Constant (Intersect)

$\beta_{1, 2,}$ = beta-coefficients for independent variables

X_1 = Trust X_5 = Empathy

X_2 =Bonding X_6 = Reciprocity

X_3 = Communication ϵ = error-term

X_4 = Shared value

CHAPTER FOUR

DATA ANALYSIS, FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

4.1 Introduction

This chapter gives a presentation of the results of the research and its analysis. The analysis is guided by the objective of the study.

4.2 Response Rate

100 questionnaires were issued to 100 respondents as per the sample size. All the 100 questionnaires were filled thus indicating a 100% response rate. The study employed convenience sampling meaning sampling units are successful, convenient and cooperative.

4.3 Background Information

This is information about the respondents that helps understand them better including gender, age, company they are customers to and duration of partnership.

4.3.1 Gender

Results on the gender are shown in the table

Table 4.1: Gender

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Male	42	42.0	42.0	42.0
	Female	58	58.0	58.0	100.0
	Total	100	100.0	100.0	

Source: Author, (2022)

This means that there were more women than men.

4.3.2 Age Distribution

Highest percentage of the respondents were aged between 29-39 years standing at 78% of the total of 100 respondents. 14% of the respondents were aged 18-28 years, 3% were 40-50 years and 5% show 51 years and above. The outcomes show that the younger generation are more active in the use of mobile telecommunication service in Nairobi, Kenya.

Table 4.2: Age distribution

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	18-28	14	14.0	14.0	14.0
	29-39	78	78.0	78.0	92.0
	40-50	3	3.0	3.0	95.0
	51 and above	5	5.0	5.0	100.0
	Total	100	100.0	100.0	

Source: Author, (2022)

4.3.3 Telecommunications Service Providers

Respondents were asked to identify the specific telecommunications service providers who they were customers to. The table below displays the outcomes.

Table 4.3: Mobile Telecommunications Service Providers

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Safaricom	45	45.0	45.0	45.0
	Airtel Kenya	25	25.0	25.0	70.0
	Telkom Kenya	10	10.0	10.0	80.0
	Finserve (Equitel)	10	10.0	10.0	90.0
	Jamii Telecom	10	10.0	10.0	100.0
	Total	100	100.0	100.0	

Source: Author, (2022)

4.3.4 Duration they have been customers

To find out for how long the respondents have been customers to their specific telecommunications service providers, respondents were asked to choose from the choices.

Table 4.4: Duration of customers

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Less than 1 year	4	4.0	4.0	4.0
	1 - 5 years	38	38.0	38.0	42.0
	6- 10 years	18	18.0	18.0	60.0
	Over 10 years	40	40.0	40.0	100.0
	Total	100	100.0	100.0	

Source: Author, (2022)

Highest percentage of respondents at 40% had been customers to their respective service providers for over 10 years, 18% were 6-10 years, 38% 1-5 years and only 4% for less than 1 year. The results show that majority of the respondents have been using their various service providers for very long periods of over 6 years which is an indication of loyalty.

4.4 Determinants of Relationship Marketing Orientation

Next, the study tried to ascertain whether respondents agreed or disagreed with specific claims regarding the factors that determine RMO.

Table 4.5 Descriptive statistics: Determinants of Relationship Marketing Orientation

Statements	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
Trust; My telecommunications company acts with integrity, honesty and I can always rely on their promises.	100	3.96	1.014
I trust the services of my telecommunications provider.	100	3.94	.993
The company is made up of competent personnel.	100	3.99	.823
Bonding; I am committed to being a customer with the company for years to come	100	4.04	.953
I am proud to be associated with my service provider.	100	4.07	.832
I enjoy the services offered by the company	100	3.99	.882
Communication; Relevant information by my telecommunication service provider is shared on time.	100	4.09	.780
I receive constant updates regarding service offerings	100	4.14	.888
My telecommunications service provider has both online and offline modes of communication and can be accessed at any time.	100	3.93	1.047
The company makes follow ups on customer feedback	100	3.31	1.134
Shared value; I have so much in common with the company in terms our beliefs.	100	3.49	.904
Empathy; My telecommunications service provider does a lot of research to understand the customer needs in order to serve them better.	100	3.53	1.010
Reciprocity; My telecommunications service provider rewards customers occasionally for using their services	100	3.60	1.015
Valid N (list wise)	100		

Source: Author, (2022)

To find out the presence of trust as a determinant of relationship marketing orientation, respondents were asked if their telecommunications service providers acted with integrity, honesty and whether they could always rely on their promises. The MS was 3.96, suggesting agreement with a SD of

1.014. They were then asked whether they had confidence with their telecommunications' service providers' services and the results indicate MS of 3.94 and SD of 0.993 meaning they concurred with the statement. On whether the various companies were made up of competent personnel, MS of 3.99 indicated that the respondents concurred. Bonding as a determinant of relationship marketing orientation had various statements to find out its presence or absence. First the respondents were asked if they were committed to being customers to their various service providers for years and they concurred with a MS of 4.04 and SD of 0.953. On whether they were proud to be associated with the service providers, they were also in agreement with a MS of 4.07 and SD of 0.832. The study sought to find out whether the customers enjoyed the services offered by the various providers and the respondents actually concurred that they did with a MS of 3.99 and SD of 0.882.

The study then sought to find out the presence or absence of communication as a determinant of relationship marketing orientation. The respondents concurred that relevant information by the various service providers was shared on time with a MS of 4.09 and SD of 0.780. They also concurred that they receive constant updates regarding service offerings scoring a MS of 4.14 and SD of 0.888. The respondents concurred that the various service providers had both online and offline modes of communication and they could be accessed at any time with a MS of 3.93 and SD of 1.047. The study also sought to find out whether the telecommunications service providers make follow ups on customer feedback and the results indicated that they were neutral on this with a MS of 3.31 and SD of 1.134. This means that there is need for companies to work on this. The study then sought to find out if Shared value was present and the respondents were asked if they had much in common with their various providers in terms of beliefs. With a MS of 3.49 and SD of 0.904, they concurred that they did. On empathy, the study sought to find out if the various

service providers do a lot of research to understand the customer needs in order to serve them better and the MS was 3.53 and SD was 1.015 meaning the respondents concurred. Lastly on reciprocity, the respondents were asked whether the various mobile telecommunications service providers rewarded them occasionally for using their services. According to the results, the MS was 3.60 and SD was 1.015 meaning they concurred.

4.5 Determinants of Customer Loyalty

The study also aimed to establish whether Nairobi's telecom customers exhibited any kind of CL. The respondents were asked to rate how much they agreed or disagreed with various statements regarding the factors that influence CL.

Table 4.6: Descriptive statistics; Determinants of CL

Statements	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
Satisfaction; What I expected from the service offerings is what receive	100	3.83	.853
I would recommend others to choose my service provider for their telecommunications needs.	100	4.03	.810
I will always consider this company for my telecommunication service needs.	100	3.97	.822
I always follow my service providers on social media to keep up with everything that is happening.	100	3.05	1.184
Commitment; I find it more beneficial using my telecommunications service provider than any other.	100	3.82	.914
Emotions; I will probably switch to a different service provider	100	2.75	1.123
I often share the positive experiences of my service provider with others	100	3.57	.998
I am willing to pay even more for services offered by my telecommunications service provider	100	2.60	1.181
Corporate image; My service provider has a good reputation	100	3.96	.974
Value perception; I get value for my money from the services I receive.	100	3.82	1.067
Quality; My experience with my service provider always meets expectations.	100	3.80	.816
Valid N (list wise)	100		

Source: Author (2022)

On satisfaction, the respondents were asked if what they expected from service offerings is actually what they receive. The results reveal that they concurred with a MS of 3.83 and SD of 0.853. They were also asked if they usually recommend others to choose their various service providers for their telecommunications needs and they concurred with a MS of 4.03 and SD of 0.810. On whether they will always consider their various service providers for their telecommunications needs, the respondents concurred with a MS of 3.97 and SD of 0.822. Lastly on satisfaction, the study sought to find out if customers follow their service providers on social media to keep up with what is

happening and most respondents were neutral about this with a MS of 3.05 and SD of 1.184. This shows that most of them do not follow their service providers knowingly or unknowingly. Companies need to work on educating customers on this.

On commitment, the respondents were asked if they find it beneficial using their various service providers as compared to others. They concurred that they do with a MS of 3.82 and SD of 0.914. Then the study sought to find out the presence or absence of emotions as a determinant of customer loyalty. The respondents were asked whether they were likely to switch to other service providers and the results show that they were neutral with a MS of 2.75 and SD of 1.123. They were then asked whether they share positive experiences of their service providers with others and they concurred that they do with a MS of 3.57 and SD of 0.998. On whether they were willing to pay even more for services offered by their respective service providers, the respondents were neutral with a MS of 2.60 and SD of 1.181.

Further, on corporate image, the study sought to find out whether the various mobile telecommunications service providers had good reputation and the respondents concurred with a MS of 3.96 and SD of 0.974. On value perception, the respondents were asked if they get value for their money from the services offered and the results showed that they concurred with a MS of 3.82 and SD of 1.067. Finally, on quality, the respondents were asked whether their experience with their respective service providers always met their expectations and they concurred with a MS of 3.80 and SD of 0.816.

4.6: Regression Analysis

This is carried out in order to find out which variables have an impact on the topic of interest. In this case it explained whether RMO had any effect on CL. It also explained how much variance in CL could be explained by the various RMO determinants. Lastly from the analysis, the study was able to tell the determinants of RMO that are better predictors of CL.

Table 4.7: Regression Analysis- Model Summary^b

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	Durbin-Watson
1	.820 ^a	.672	.651	.35124	2.294

a. Predictors: (Constant), Reciprocity, Shared value, Trust, Empathy, Communication, Bonding

b. Dependent Variable: Customer Loyalty

Source: Author (2022)

R (Pearson's coefficient of correlation) demonstrates the linear relationship's strength and direction. In this case R-value which is 0.82 demonstrates a significant and favorable correlation between the variables.

R square measures the model's explanatory strength or goodness of fit. It basically gives the percentage of variation in CL that is explained by RMO. The current study R Square is 0.672 meaning that 67.2% of the changes in CL can be explained by RMO determinants. The model has a good fit .Adjusted R square 0.651 which is 65.1% also demonstrates the model's good fit because it is more than 50%.

Table 4.8: ANOVA^a

Model		Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	23.486	6	3.914	31.729	<.001 ^b
	Residual	11.473	93	.123		
	Total	34.959	99			

a. Dependent Variable: CL

b. Predictors: (Constant), Reciprocity, Shared value, Trust, Empathy, Communication, Bonding

Source: Author (2022)

This is the analysis of variance and is utilized to identify discrepancies between research group means. Significance level of 0.001 confirms that the model is significant. There is a considerable effect of reciprocity, shared value, trust, empathy, communication and bonding on CL

Table 4.9: Coefficients^a

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	T	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	.767	.216		3.552	<.001
	Trust	.014	.064	.019	.214	.831
	Bonding	.309	.081	.384	3.834	<.001
	Communication	.138	.075	.166	1.835	.070
	Shared value	.052	.050	.079	1.049	.297
	Empathy	.058	.046	.098	1.261	.210
	Reciprocity	.160	.042	.273	3.802	<.001

a. Dependent Variable: Customer Loyalty

Source: Author (2022)

This examines whether each RMO determinant has an impact on CL. The research asked, what was the effect of RMO on CL in mobile telecommunications service provision in Nairobi? The regression analysis revealed that; trust substantially impacts CL (Beta 1.9%), bonding has a substantial impact on CL (Beta 38.4%), Communication has a substantial impact on CL (Beta 16.6%), Shared value has a substantial impact on CL (Beta 7.9%), empathy has a substantial impact on CL (Beta 9.8%) and reciprocity has a substantial impact on CL (Beta 27.3%). It is also important to note that according to these results only bonding and reciprocity are better predictors of CL.

4.7 Discussion of Findings

The current study aimed to find out the effect of RMO on CL. Six determinants of RMO including; shared value, empathy, trust, bonding, communication and reciprocity were used to measure it. On the other hand, six determinants of customer loyalty including; corporate image, value perception, quality satisfaction, commitment and emotions, were used in measuring it. The results revealed that there is a substantial impact of each of the determinants of RMO on CL and that bonding and reciprocity are better predictors of CL. In chapter two of this paper, various studies that relate to the current study were identified and their findings noted. The outcome of the current research have revealed that it concurs with the previous studies done in some specific aspects.

According to the outcome of the regression test of the current study, RMO has a substantial impact on CL. This concurs to a large extent with Rizan et al, (2014) in Indonesia who studied the nature of linkages between RM and CL. The outcome indicated that the RM tactics had substantial impact on CL. This current research also studied quality and satisfaction as determinants of CL concurring with Nasir et al, (2014) in Pakistan who studied major influences on CL in Telecom section of Pakistan. The results revealed that service quality and satisfaction substantially impacts CL. Trust,

commitment and communication according to the current study had substantial impact on CL. This too was the case for Husnain and Akhtar, (2015) in Pakistan went ahead to give clarity into the effect of RM strategy on CL of retail bank sector and to examine if the relationships improve through strengthening in banking relationship. Results revealed that communication, conflict handling, trust and commitment have substantial impact and predict a high percentage of variance in CL.

RMO has proved to have a substantial impact on CL in the current study. This results concur with those of Banna and Rahman, (2020) in the UK who aimed to understand whether RM had any substantial impact on CL in the banking sector. The outcome indicated that there is a string positive connection between RM and CL and retention. It also concured with Koi-Akrofi et al, (2013) in Ghana who went on to assess the effect of RM tactics on CL in the Ghanaian mobile industry. The conclusion was that there exist a substantial positive connection between each of the four RM tactics and CL. The current study concurs that trust has a substantial impact on CL just like Ojiaku et al, (2017) in Nigeria who examined the connection between RM and CL. The results showed that satisfaction and trust substantially impact customer loyalty. The current study agrees with that of Mhidze, (2019) from Tanzania who analyzed the connection between RM and CL in the telecommunication sector in Dar es Salaam, Tanzania. The results showed a substantial positive influence between RM and CL. Communication, according this study has a substantial impact on CL. This agrees in part with Kibeh, (2013) in Kenya who analyzed the connection between CRM and CL in the mobile telecommunication sector in Kenya. It was found that, good communication, service quality and positive brand image have substantial impact on CL. The current study also agrees with that of Nyatichi, (2014) who sought to understand the association between RM and CL in commercial banks in Kenya. The findings suggested that, RM substantially impact CL.

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1: Introduction

This chapter puts together findings from chapter four. It further gives conclusion and recommendations based on the research objective which in this case was to determine the effect of RMO on CL in mobile telecommunications service provision in Nairobi.

5.2 Summary of the Findings

RMO is important and companies are using it to gain competitive advantage and in turn win loyal customers. Mobile telecommunications service providers in Nairobi have not been left out as customers are on the lookout for the one that serves them better. The current research focused on finding out whether RMO had been adopted by the mobile telecommunications service providers in Nairobi. Various statements relating to determinants of RMO, were posed to respondents to show level of agreement or disagreement. The results in a nut shell revealed that RMO has been adopted by mobile telecommunications service providers in Nairobi. This is because all responses to each statement had MS of above 3.40 except one statement under communication on whether the company makes follow ups on customer feedback that scored a MS of 3.31 meaning majority of the respondents were neutral on this. This study also aimed to find out if customers were indeed loyal to their respective service providers. Statements that related to the determinants of CL were sent out to respondents and majority scored a MS of above 3.40 indicating that they concurred with the statements. However respondents disagreed that they are not willing to pay more for services offered by their service providers with a MS of 2.60. They were neutral on whether they follow their respective service providers on social media to keep up with everything that was

happening with a MS of 3.05 and on whether they were likely to move to other providers of services with a MS of 2.75. The regression analysis revealed a substantial impact of empathy, communication, reciprocity, shared value, trust, and bonding on CL. Bonding and reciprocity were found to be better predictors of CL.

5.3 Conclusion

With an objective to determine the effect of RMO on CL in mobile telecommunications service provision in Nairobi, this study has clearly revealed that there is a substantial impact of empathy, communication, reciprocity, shared value, trust and bonding, which are determinants of RMO that were adopted in the current study, on CL. In as much as all these determinants have an impact on CL, bonding and reciprocity were found to better predict CL. The mobile telecommunications providers of service in Nairobi have embraced RMO practices and this is evident from the findings. It is important to note that there are still areas that need more focus to make it more successful.

5.4 Recommendations of the Study

Results from this study have revealed that RMO has a substantial impact on CL in the mobile telecommunications service provision in Nairobi. It therefore recommends that five service providers, Safaricom, Airtel Kenya, Telkom Kenya, Finserve (Equitel) and Jamii Telecom, should be more effective in the implementation of the six determinants of RMO adopted in this study. The service providers should put more effort in ensuring bonding and reciprocity are given priority as they substantially impact CL.

Telecommunications service providers should put more emphasis in following up on customer feedback. This is because it scored a mean of 3.31 meaning respondents were neutral about this. This clearly means that a lot still needs to be done to help win more loyal customers that may feel

left out because of their feedback not being attended to. The study also recommends that mobile telecommunications service providers should align with their customers in terms of beliefs. This is because half of the respondents felt they did not have much in common with their service providers. It is extremely important to have common beliefs and goals.

The study recommends that mobile telecommunications service providers focus on ensuring that they give quality and exemplary services. According to the current study, most of these consumers are reluctant to pay more for services offered by their respective service providers. The only way they will do is when they feel that they are receiving premium services. This will also ensure that there is no switching behavior as most respondents also admitted they could easily switch to other available options.

The final recommendation from this study is that Mobile Telecommunication service providers should ensure that they do enough research to fully understand their customers. As much as majority concurred that research is done, a MS of 3.53 means there is still a lot to be done. Consumer research should be a continuous undertaking in everyday running of the company. This may be the only way customer needs and wants will be met and therefore gaining loyal customers.

5.5 Suggestions for Further Research

RMO is very broad yet very important and therefore needs to be explored more by future scholars. This study employed only six determinants of RMO in relation to customer loyalty. That leaves room for other scholars to look at more determinants to holistically study the subject. There is also room to explore other industries in the market as relationship marketing orientation should be employed in every industry. Further to this, the focus was in Nairobi, Kenya and therefore other scholars can look at other areas both locally and internationally. As time goes by, so much changes and this calls for continuous research over the years to keep filling the gap in theory, policy and practice and keep it up to date.

It is also important to note that this study was built on two theories including RM theory and social exchange theories. Other scholars can do more research founded on other theories to broaden the scope. More research can still be done using other research designs like case studies to focus more on the depth. Finally, there are various reasons for doing research and as time goes by many problems keep coming up whose solutions can be found through research.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX I: QUESTIONNAIRE

SECTION A: BACKGROUND INFORMATION (Tick where applicable)

1. Gender

Male

Female

2. Age

18 – 28 years

29 – 39 years

40 – 50 years

51 and above

3. Which company are you a customer to?

i. Safaricom

ii. Airtel Kenya

iii. Telkom Kenya

iv. Finserve (Equitel)

v. Jamii Telecom

4. For how long have you been a customer to this company?

Less than 1 year

1 – 5 years

6 – 10 years

Over 10 years

In the subsequent sections, kindly indicate how much you agree/disagree with the following statements on a scale of 1 to 5 as per the table below:

Level of Agreement

(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree

SECTION B:RELATIONSHIP MARKETING ORIENTATION

Please indicate the extent to which you agree with the following statements on relationship marketing orientation determinants; trust, bonding, communication, shared value, empathy and reciprocity.

	STATEMENTS	RATING				
		(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
1.Trust	My telecommunications company acts with integrity, honesty and I can always rely on their promises. I have confidence in my telecommunication company's services The company is made up of competent personnel.					

2. Bonding I am committed to being a customer with the company for years to come
- I am proud to be associated with the service provider.
- I enjoy the services offered by the company
3. Communication Relevant information by my telecommunication service provider is shared on time.
- I receive constant updates regarding service offerings
- My telecommunications service provider has both online and offline modes of communication and can be accessed at any time.
- The company makes follow ups on customer feedback
4. Shared value I have so much in common with the company in terms our beliefs.
5. Empathy My telecommunications service provider does a lot of research to understand the customer needs in order to serve them better.
6. Reciprocity My telecommunications service provider rewards customers occasionally for using their services.

SECTION C: CUSTOMER LOYALTY

Please indicate the extent to which you agree with the following statements on customer loyalty determinants; satisfaction, commitment, emotions, corporate image, value perception and quality.

No.	STATEMENTS	RATING				
		(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
1. Satisfaction	What I expected from the service offerings is what I receive					
	I would recommend others to choose my service provider for their telecommunications needs.					

I will always consider this company for my telecommunication service needs.

I always follow my service providers on social media to keep up with everything that is happening.

2.Commitment I find it more beneficial using my telecommunications service provider than any other.

3.Emotions I am likely to switch to another service provider

I often share the positive experiences of my service provider with others

I am willing to pay even more for services offered by my telecommunications service provider.

4.Corporate image My service provider has a good reputation

5.Value perception I get value for my money from the services I receive.

6.Quality My experience with my service provider always meets expectations.

SECTION D: RELATIONSHIP MARKETING ORIENTATION AND CUSTOMER LOYALTY

Please indicate the extent to which you agree with the following statements on the effect of relationship marketing orientation on customer loyalty

No.	STATEMENTS	RATING				
		(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
1.	Because of the trust that the telecommunications company had built with me I am committed to being their customer for years.					
2.	The company has created experiences for our needs to ensure that we have a strong bond and this has strengthened our emotional attachment.					

3. The company has well laid procedures for handling customer complaints, has a comprehensive marketing data base and information management system and a website where information is readily available. This has greatly contributed to my loyalty to the company.
4. Since we share common goals and dreams I am committed to a long-term relationship.
5. My telecommunications service provider is always looking for ways to serve me better by continuous research that has seen me constantly satisfied with their services.
6. The occasional rewards have influenced my quest to have more of their services

Thank you for your feedback

APPENDIX 2:

LIST OF MOBILE TELECOMMUNICATIONS SERVICE PROVIDERS IN KENYA

1. Safaricom
2. Airtel Kenya
3. Telkom Kenya
4. Finserve (Equitel)
5. Jamii Telecommunications
- 6.

(Source: Communications Authority of Kenya, 2022)