

# State Capacity and The Curtailment of Corrupt Practices by Mobile Telecommunication Company in Nigeria

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## Abstract

The paper examined the Nigerian State's capacity to tackle the menace of corrupt practices by the Mobile Telecommunication company in Nigeria. The survey research design was adopted. Questionnaire and unstructured interview were the primary sources of data while the MTNN subscribers with a population of 228,902 as well as twenty (20) interviewees drawn from the officials of Nigeria Communications Commission (NCC), Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC), constituted the population of the study. The sample size of 400 was arrived at using the Taro Yamani formula. The mean score analysis of the quantitative data obtained from the questionnaire was done thematically. This was combined with desk analysis of qualitative data obtained from in-depth interview. It was found out that the State has the capacity to curtail the corrupt practices of the MTNN but relevant government agencies had not successfully addressed the corrupt practices of multinational telecommunication companies. It was recommended that the personnel of the State agencies should demonstrate the necessary patriotism and loyalty needed to accomplish the tasks of curtailing the corrupt practices of the MTNN to the benefit of the citizens as well as the State.

**Keywords:** State capacity, corrupt practices, MTNN, telecommunication

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## 1. Introduction

In recent years, allegations of corrupt practices have been rife in Nigerian telecommunication sector involving both indigenous companies and Multi-National Companies (MNCs) (Udoh, 2018). Indeed, saying that corruption is pervasive in Nigeria is stating the obvious. It is legitimate to refer to Nigeria's current state of corruption as either endemic or systemic. The goal of corruption is to use unethical methods to obtain riches or influence for personal gain (Osimen, Adenegan, Balogun, 2013). The notion of corruption is a widespread issue that exists to differing degrees in many nations. This portends as a major problem in the numerous unsolved happenings that have severely impeded, disrupted and hampered the prosperity of the Nigeria state. Obviously, it remains Nigeria's principal long-term political and economic problem, a canker worm that has ingested deeply into the fabrics of the multi-nation state. Petty corruption, political/bureaucratic corruption, and systemic corruption are nomenclatures that rightly capture the instances of Nigeria's deviation from globally acceptable patterns of financial behaviours (Osimen, Adenegan, and Balogun, 2013).

That notwithstanding, corrupt practices are rampant in the Nigerian state (as well as many other African and Asian countries), affecting both the leaders and the followers (Osimen, Adenegan, and Balogun, 2013). As a result, it appears to have resisted all essential antidotes.

There are allegations that telecommunication MNCs frequently engage in corrupt practices in Nigeria by underpaying their clients/customers thereby undermining the country's rule of law. Mobile Telephone Network Nigeria (MTNN), which our focus in this study, is a South African multinational corporation operating in Nigeria's telecommunications industry. It has one of the largest client and capital bases. However, a number of corruption allegations have been levelled against the MNC (Udo, 2018).

In the about twenty-two years of its existence, MTNN has had several run-ins with the regulatory authorities since it berthed on the beaches of Nigeria in 2001. It was penalized by the Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN) for regulatory violations in 2018. Besides this, the Attorney General of the Federation also accused it of tax evasion. Furthermore, MTNN asserted in its early days of operation that per seconds charging was impractical for customers. For more than three years, MTN profited greatly from the excessive per-minute call fees incurred by millions of its subscribers (Udo, 2018). It only adopted per second charging reluctantly and under duress when an indigenous telecommunications provider (Globacom) used it as part of its entrance marketing plan.

In another development, MTNN disregarded the legal need to remove every subscriber who had not put up a registration for their Subscriber Identity Module (SIM) cards from its networks not later than 1st July, 2013. The NCC fined MTN ₦ 1.04 trillion (approximately \$5.2 billion) in October 2015 for declining to remove 5.1 million SIM cards of unregistered users from its network. This was followed by assertions, denials and counter-

denials that the NCC had slashed or reduced the penalties by thirty-five percent (35%). MTNN was also accused of bribing a top official of the presidency who was said to have helped reduce the penalties (Udo, 2018).

There is no doubting the fact that there are enough laws regulating the activities of mobile telecommunications companies in Nigeria as well as agencies to enforce same which ought to be a practical demonstration of the Nigerian State capacity in this regard. The current research effort therefore is geared towards assessing the effectiveness and efficiency of the Nigerian state capacity to address the perpetration of corrupt practices by MTNN.

## **1.1 Literature Review**

### **1.1.1 The Concept of State**

Peruzzoitti (2015) sees the state as a distinct institutional arrangement which gave birth to the installation of a distinguished arbiter construction of political authority within a territory. Pavone (2015) views it as an earthborn community that triumphantly exercises the exclusive ownership of the lawful deployment or utilization of coercion within a specified territory.

State equally connotes the compulsory organization of society intended to achieve a monopoly of organized violence for the preservation of order and peace (Morgenthau, 1948). This implies that the State can either be seen as an impartial umpire in conflict resolution between two or more groups. While the Liberal perspective views the State as an institution saddled with the responsibility *inter alia* of enacting laws so as to maintain peace and order.

Harold Laski (1935), opined that a State is a territorially defined entity which is separated on the basis of government and subjects whose interrelatedness is resolved by the use of force. In a simplistic manner, Weber perceives that state is a unified body of persons that triumphantly contends for the exclusive control of lawful utilization of coercive power in a defined territory (Weber 1919). In a nutshell, a State is a definite entity, where laws and order are maintained within the defined boundaries by a supreme authority. This legal or juridical definition implies that a State is a legitimate entity that can sue and be sued, and which permits laws and orders to be maintained within its boundary (Odemwingie, 2019). The maintenance of law and order prevents all manners of corruption that ultimately constitute an impediment to the attainment of benefits accruable to the society.

### **1.1.2 Corruption**

The word "Corruption" is gleaned from the Greek word "Corruptus" connoting a misnomer or deviation from laid down procedures (CLEEN Foundation, 2010). Its inclusive and integral nature is obtained from its Latin origin - "Corrumpere", which signifies making impure, defile, spoil, break in pieces, falsify, bribe, etc. (ICPC, 2015). In furtherance, corruption is a worldwide debility which turns aside or deflects the material wealth of societies, earmarked for basic amenities into the private accounts of individuals especially government officials (Abass, 2007). In a related perception, Lipset (2000) envisages corruption as an effort aimed at securing capital or the ability to produce effect via unlawful channels thereby gaining privately to the detriment of the public, or abusing public trust for individual benefit.

Otusanya (2011) views this global malaise as every character or activity which entails bullying, abuse of office, favoritism/nepotism, money laundering, fraud, insider trading, and clash of interests, receiving unlawful gratuity, white collar theft, and illegal contributions.

Machiavelli introduced a philosophical perspective to the view of corruption. He averred (as cited in Otalor & Eiya 2013) that corruption is a custom where the suitable value of the populace is impaired and ultimately ruined.

Despite that literature is replete with corruption issues concerning multi-national corporations especially in the transition economies; much attention has not been given to the MTNN as the leading mobile telecommunication multi-national in Nigeria in this regard, hence this study.

### **1.1.3 Methodology**

This study adopted the survey research design. In generating data for the study, both primary and secondary sources of data were relied upon. Questionnaire and unstructured interview were the primary sources of data for this study. MTNN subscribers with a population of 228,902 in six local government areas (Oredo, Egor, Ikpoba Okha, Uhumwode, Ovia North East and Ovia South West Local Government Areas of Edo state) as well as twenty (20) interviewees drawn from the officials of Nigeria Communications Commission (NCC), Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC), constituted the population of the study. The sample size of 400 was arrived at using the Taro Yamani formula. The mean score analysis of the quantitative data obtained from the questionnaire was done thematically. This was combined with desk analysis of qualitative data obtained from in-depth interview.

### **1.1.4 Research Proposition**

The government has been effective in addressing the corrupt practices of Multinational mobile telecommunications company (MTNN).

**Theme:** The effectiveness of government’s involvement in addressing the corrupt practices by MTN Nigeria

**Table 1**

S/N	ITEM	Response					Mean	Remark
		SA	A	UN	D	SD		
1.	The MTNN being studied has engaged in corruption.	162 42.6%	188 49.5%	- -	22 5.8%	8 2.1%	4.25	Accepted
2.	Relevant government agencies that have the capacity to enforce the anti-corruption laws cover the operation of MTNN.	183 48.3%	66 17.4%	43 11.3%	74 19.5%	14 3.7%	3.87	Accepted
3.	To my knowledge, relevant government agencies have successfully addressed the corrupt practices of MTNN.	- -	- -	22 5.8%	159 41.8%	199 52.4%	1.53	Rejected

**Source:** Researchers’ survey, 2021.

Prior to ascertaining the thoughts and perceptions of this study’s participants on the corrupt practices of the MTN, it was deemed pertinent to obtain their agreement on the factuality of MTN’s involvement in corruption. Tagging on this line of the ethical thought, the respondents were asked to express their view on whether the multinational telecommunication company being studied had engaged in corruption. Overwhelmingly, the submission was that MTNN had engaged in various forms of corrupt practices. This was evidenced by the 42.6 percent and 49.5 percent of the respondents who strongly agreed, and simply agreed respectively, to the assertion. None of the respondents took an undecided stance on the assertion. However, 5.8 percent of the respondents and another 2.1 percent of the respondents disagreed and strongly disagreed respectively to the assertion. From the data, the study revealed a mean value of 4.25 which means that the respondents accepted that submission that MTN had engaged in various forms of corrupt practices in the country. Here are the views of some of the interviewees below:

I will classify the level of government involvement in addressing the corruption of multinational mobile telecom companies as passive. This is because so many misdeeds by these companies are left unchecked despite the fact that government is the chief regulator of these firms **(43 years Male, Anti-corruption agent, Subscriber for 12 years, 12/10/2021).**

I will say the government with the aid of the Nigeria Communication Company has made a moderate involvement in addressing the corruption of the telecommunications. Despite NCC/Government whose responsibility is to ensure the promotion of the interest of consumers against unfair practices, the NCC/Government at every point in time will not be able to monitor the services provided for every network user **(23 years Male, Undergraduate, Subscriber for 5 years, 14/10/2021).**

The level of this involvement is low because they are also corrupt and would gain from any slack in the system **(43 years Female, Judiciary official, Subscriber for 12 years, 13/10/2021).**

The level of government’s involvement in addressing the corruption of multinational mobile telecommunication is moderate. The government is not enthusiastic about how the choices of the telecommunication affect the citizens. Though they are very involved in how the telecommunication brings about changes in sectors such as banking, e-commerce, trading, aviation but they’ve not really concerned themselves with personal consumer or citizens satisfaction **(40 years Male, Civil Right Activist, Subscriber for 14 years, 13/10/2021).**

These discoveries therefore direct attention to the fact that a considerable proportion of the MTN subscribers perceived MTN as a multinational corporation that has been involved in corrupt practices that range from their service to its customers and its operations in the political economy of the Nigeria state.

For diverse reasons bordering on the worldwide recognition of Nigeria being one of the most corrupt countries in the global space, the Nigeria government has enacted laws that have given legal backing to the establishment of anti-corruption agencies charged with the mandate to prevent corrupt practices and institute legal proceedings against perpetrators. Some of these anti-corruption agencies are EFCC and ICPC. Apart from

the anti-corruption efforts of the Nigerian government to prevent and fight against corruption, there are regulatory agencies set up by the same to check and balance the activities as well as the operations of relevant individual, firms, and organizations.

In the telecommunication industry of which MTN is a player, the Nigerian Communication Commission (NCC) is the major regulatory agency. Whether these relevant government agencies actually have the capacity to enforce the anti-corruption laws covering the operations of multinational telecommunication companies was examined. It was the position of a majority of the respondents representing 48.3 percent, who strongly agreed that the relevant government agencies actually had the capacity to enforce the anti-corruption laws cover the operation of multinational telecommunication companies. Similarly, another 17.4 percent of the respondents simply agreed to the aforementioned assertion. An undecided position of the assertion was taken by a small proportion of the respondents who were 11.3 percent. However, 19.5 percent of the respondents and another 3.7 percent of the respondents disagreed and strongly disagreed respectively that the relevant government agencies actually had the capability to strengthen the anti-corruption laws cover the operation of multinational telecommunication companies. The study produced a mean value of 3.87 which stipulates that the respondents accepted that the relevant government agencies actually have the capacity to enforce the anti-corruption laws covering the *modus operandi* of the multinational telecommunication companies including MTNN. Simply put, the foregoing quantitative data shows that the Nigerian government through its relevant agencies, has the capacity to regulate the activities and operations of the multinational telecommunication company. Evidences of this are captured in the responses of most of the interviewees who had this to say:

The government's involvement in addressing corruption of multinational mobile telecommunication companies over the years has been immense. Let's take for example, NCC fined MTN US\$5 billion for refusing to sever or cut off subscribers with unregistered SIM-cards that were gotten before January 2012.

Also in 2016, the Nigerian government slammed a fine of US\$1.7 billion on MTNN for failing to accede to the policy that mandated the registration of SIM-card holders.

Some of these steps and measures are taken up by the government in the push against corrupt practices in the mobile telecommunication companies (**34 years Female, Civil Right Activist, Subscriber for 9 years, 14/10/2021**).

In order to curb corruption in multinational mobile telecommunication companies, the government has put in place regulatory authorities whose duties are to ensure transparency in the companies and make sure consumers are not exploited. The independent body NCC (Nigeria Communication Commission) is responsible for regulating the supply of telecommunication services, raising awareness for healthy competition and establishing standards for telephone service in Nigeria (**35 years Female, Anti-corruption agent, Subscriber for 13 years, 13/10/2021**).

To ascertain the success of relevant government agencies in addressing corruption in the telecommunication companies, the study discovered that having the capacity to enforce a law is one thing, but actually utilizing the capacity to enforce the law or standard is another. Given the data contained in Table 1 which confirm the fact that the appropriate government bodies actually do possess the requisite capacity to enforce the anti-corruption laws cover the operation of multinational telecommunication companies, it became necessary to investigate the actual and practical use of the said capacity possessed by the various governmental anti-corruption and regulatory agencies to successfully get justice for the victims of MTN's corrupt practices.

The good majority of the respondents confirmed that, to the best of their knowledge, relevant government agencies had not successfully addressed the corrupt practices of multinational telecommunication companies. This is evidenced with the 41.8 percent of these respondents simply disagreeing and another 52.4 percent strongly disagreeing with the assertion that relevant government agencies had successfully addressed the corrupt practices of multinational telecommunication companies. While none of the respondents agreed to the assertion, 5.8 percent of the respondents were unsure if relevant government agencies had successfully addressed the corrupt practices of multinational telecommunication companies. A mean value of 1.53 was recorded by the study which signifies that the respondents rejected the notion that relevant government agencies had successfully addressed the corrupt practices of multinational telecommunication companies. An implication of this finding is that virtually all customers of MTN who have had experiences of the corrupt practice of the company feel that those organizations which ought to fetch them justice have done little or nothing in this regard.

Majority of the respondents to the questionnaire shared the notion that the government's efforts at addressing the corrupt practices of the multinational telecom company had not been successful, a majority of the interviewees also shared similar view. They described the Nigerian government's involvement in handling the unfair and unjust operations of the multinational telecom companies as lacking effectiveness. Some responses of the interviewees are captured below:

The effectiveness isn't noticeable. As earlier said, the NCC won't have the perfect feedback of the services rendered to MTN subscribers at all time. Also the NCC / Government have failed in giving a proper enlightenment of the rights of telecom users **(28 years Male, Graduate, Subscriber for 5 years, 14/10/2021)**.

Not effective at all. Taking the 2016 incident of MTN paying N50 billion Naira to the federal government for imposed fine scandal and the federal government denial of acceptance, it will be a total bizarre to say the government have been involved in addressing the case of corruption **(40 years Male, Civil Right Activist, Subscriber for 14 years, 13/10/2021)**.

It has been ineffective, if the government has not fully addressed their own corruption, how would they be expected to handle others **(43 years Female, Judiciary official, Subscriber for 12 years, 13/10/2021)**.

The effectiveness of Government in tackling the corrupt practices of MTN is below par. Legislators only come to wail about MTN evading tax payment and at the end of the day no severe sanctions put in place to forestall this practices by MTN which hamper our economic development **(43 years Male, Anti-corruption agent, Subscriber for 12 years, 12/10/2021)**.

Some of the interviewees had a contrary view on the success and effectiveness of government's involvement in addressing the corrupt practices in the multinational players in the Nigerian telecom industry and their positions and the reasons behind the positions are captured thus:

It is highly effective. In situations where government, has made genuine effort to hold telecom companies accountable, we have seen they can actually keep these firms in check. An example is the case where the Federal govt. of Nigeria fined MTN for gross misconduct and because the government interest was stern, we saw MTN picking up the blame and seeking redress **(43 years Male, Anti-corruption agent, Subscriber for 12 years, 12/10/2021)**.

The NCC has been very effective since inception although some individuals were involved in #122,000,000 fraud but their integrity still tops the ICPC's scorecard **(35 years Male, Civil Right Activist, Subscriber for 15 years, 13/10/2021)**.

The involvement of government in addressing the corruption in multinational mobile telecommunication companies is quite encouraging. The customers have been protected from unfair practices and exploitation. The NCC have been able to create an atmosphere for healthy competition among operators within the business **(45 years Female, Anti-corruption agent, Subscriber for 13 years, 13/10/2021)**.

These moves by the government to fight and address corruption of multinational mobile telecommunication companies have proven to be effective as some of these companies are finally taking adequate steps to initiate policies that are beneficial for their customers and the country at large. For example, some telecommunication companies now have user and customer friendly internet data, voice call and SMS bundles with low prices and tariffs that suit the need of individual customers **(34 years Female, Civil Right Activist, Subscriber for 9 years, 14/10/2021)**.

### 1.1.5 Discussion of Findings

The 2015 statistical review of the telecommunication industry underscored the impact of sales promos on the sector's growth potential (Oketola, 2010). The review unveiled that with no call into question, such approach added to the growth of the prepaid subscribers' base in the system from about 10.7 million in 2004 to 16.8 million at the end of September 2005. Riddled with lack of transparency, insincerity and outright deception, sales promotions have left much to be desired and have become many things to different people (Oketola, 2010).

Generally, a widespread feeling of hopelessness about the actual ambitions of the telecommunication operators pervades the country (Oketola, 2010). Furthermore, until June 26<sup>th</sup>, 2018 when the Executive Vice Chairman of Nigerian Communications Commission (NCC) – Prof. Garba Umar Danbatta directed operators in the telecommunication industry at the 95<sup>th</sup> consumers Outreach Programme in Dutse, Jigawa State; to begin data rollover, subscribers could not use their unfinished data subscription after its monthly expiration and this was a rip-off on subscribers (Okonji, 2019).

On the 21st June, 2010, the Nigerian Communications Commission in the utilization of its constitutionally conferred powers specifically by the provisions of the Nigerian communications Act known as “the Act” 2003 in a publication on the Nation’s Newspaper emphasized the approved guidelines for promotion. Basically, it emphasized that telecommunications operators are licensed by the commission to deploy telecoms services and as such, may carry out promotions as defined in the Guidelines. Suffice it to say that lotteries that appear parasitic in that the subscribers are not availed the commensurate service is not part of promotions as established in the guidelines. Operators’ charge of premium fees in services far below premium was prohibited.

The level of government’s involvement in addressing the corrupt practices of multinational mobile telecommunication companies could be in the area of checking and regulating their service quality. According to Bitner (1990), service quality is “the customer’s overall impression of the relative inferiority/superiority of an organization and its service delivery.” Quality service is defined from the perspective of the peculiar and essential character expected of performance or delivery. In the view of Ying-Feng, Chi-Ming, & Wei-Jaw, (2009), the “quality service as perceived by the customer has an effect on the perceived value of the service rendered. That is, how a customer sees a quality service creates a vague awareness of the value. In generating value, the success or otherwise is connectedly determined by the relationship between the service events; the customer’s prior and post perceptions, and perceived and actual quality of delivered service.” An outward sign or indication from preceding studies revealed that service provider can retain a customer when the customer perceives the service quality to be high and nice than when the service is seen as low (Keaveney, 2001; Jones & Sasser, 1995). Hence, the capacity of a firm to breed, sustain and maintain quality service endears the loyalty of the customer thereby availing the firm a competitive advantage which is a function of high level of service quality provided by the service provider (Yoo & Park, 2007). This character of quality service endears and enhances the customer’s tendency to patronize the firm again and again; even to the point of being less price conscious and recommending others to have the same favourable experience and thus a major differentiation and competitive advantages that attract prospective customers and contributing to the market share (Santouridis & Trivellas, 2010).

In this study, overwhelmingly, the submission was that MTNN had engaged in various forms of corrupt practices. The findings therefore pointed to the fact that a considerable proportion of the MTN subscribers perceived MTN as a multinational corporation that has been involved in corrupt practices that range from the service to its customers and its operations in the political economy of the Nigeria state. This tallies with the view of Odu of Premium Times Newspaper which noted that MTN Nigeria is slowly, but inadvertently, establishing an overall character of flinging or flirting with scandal. While it may be a market leader in the telecommunications industry today (on the basis of customers), it has made a habit of courting controversy since arriving in Nigeria's shores in 2001 (Udo, 2018). MTN's repeated run-ins with regulatory authorities in less than two decades of business paints a poor picture of the company. Its recent censure by the Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN) for regulatory violations, as well as its accusation of tax evasion by the Attorney General of the Federation, demonstrate that, like the leopard, it never changes its spots (Udo, 2018).

Otusanya (2011) views the global malaise of corruption as every character or activity which entails bullying, abuse of office, favoritism/nepotism, money laundering, fraud, insider trading, conflict of interest, receiving unlawful gratuity, white collar theft, and illegal contributions. MTN Group (precisely MTN Nigeria) was indicted of collaborating with four Nigerian banks (Standard Chartered Bank, Stanbic-IBTC Bank, Citibank and Diamond Bank) of transferring the sum of \$8.13 billion abroad between 2007 and 2015 without due recourse to laid down procedures or codes on transfer (Olutola and Ogunnubi, 2018). The telecommunications giant was indicted and sanctioned for the perceived refusal to legally obtain the certificate of capital importation (CCI) which needed the approval of the Central Bank of Nigeria for the dividend repatriation. The company was therefore asked to refund the said sum. This sanction was coming on the hills of a settlement of a prior sanction of the company to the tune of \$1.5 billion leveled against the company over its refusal to disconnect unregistered subscribers in 2018 (Adegboyega, 2018; Ezeamalu, 2019; Okoroafor, 2012). Apart from corruption against the state, MTN Nigeria has been reportedly involved, consciously and unconsciously, in practices which its customers may term as corruption.

Qualitative data collected in relation to the level of government involvement in addressing the corruption of multinational mobile telecommunication companies, indicated a preponderant submission that it was passive, moderate, has been lackadaisical and shambolic, and low. Reasons advanced for the above submission were many misdeeds by MTNN that are left unchecked despite the fact that government is supposed to be the chief

regulator of these firms, that the government had been insensitive to the gross tax evasion committed by MTN, and that the government was not enthusiastic about how the choices of the telecommunication affects the citizens. In fact, inspectors or agents of government saddled with the responsibility of monitoring and availing correct feedbacks are liquored and palm greased. There is enough of imported liquor to 'blind' the minds of the inspectors.

The requisite ground rules of the negative impact on the people is inadequately administered as government agencies and the MNCs are complicit in strengthening the MNCs' scorn of the consumers by the fostering of intermediary or go-between relations between state officials and telecommunication firms (Kaldor, et al., 2007).

Some actors in the Nigerian state are top players in the world pitch of corruption where they have the capacity of scoring over a hundred goals in the regular ninety minutes soccer game (Egharevba & Oveneri-Ogbomo, 2018). In corroboration, agents and handlers of the Nigerian state would always play at the finals without any threat; the Nigerian state has been transmogrified into a ridiculous predatory arena that applies all manner of convoluted means to short-change the citizenry. Omoyibo, (2014:27) noted thus;

in a country like Nigeria where the prizes are so few, and the stakes so high, the fight for booty or 'national cake' is fierce and often vicious. It has at times led to a debilitating corruption in the arena of public policy making and implementation. 'Who gains, who loses in these federal, state and local policy arena is rarely an accident more often than not, the distributional consequences of public policies are the intended result of the private interests which have been instrumental in their design, passage, and implementation.

Conversely, there were submissions that regarded government's involvement in addressing the corruption of multinational mobile telecommunication companies, as immense and vital. These were hinged on the establishment of the anti-corruption agencies and regulatory agencies as the EFCC and the NCC, and the government's ability to sanction MTNN for refusing to disconnect subscribers with unregistered SIM-cards that were bought before January 2012. Also in 2016, MTN was fined US\$1.7 billion by the Nigerian government for failing to accede to regulations that requires the registration of SIM-card holders.

Transparency International (2021) in their website noted that transparency must be adopted in the fight against corruption. Transparency is about understanding who, why, what, how, and how much something costs. This entails illuminating official and unofficial norms, plans, procedures, and activities. Transparency enables us, the public, to hold those in positions of power accountable for the general good (Transparency International, 2021). The right to request and receive information is a fundamental human right that can serve as an inhibition to corrupt practices, thereby promoting public trust in decision makers and public organizations.

### **Conclusion**

From the preponderance of empirical evidence presented in this work, it can be affirmed, to a reasonable extent, that corrupt practices are prevalent in the MTNN particularly against their customers and as well as the Nigerian State. Further to that is that the State possesses the requisite capacities to check these excesses as demonstrated in the presence of both regulatory and anti-corruption agencies as copiously exemplified in this work. Their presence and their modest functionalities notwithstanding, there is a trust gap between the consumers of the services of the MTNN and the abilities of these agencies of the State. This lack of trust appears to have obliterated the modest activities of these agencies from the consciousness of the citizens and of course a clear sign of a disconnect between the State and the citizens. The interviews conducted with some personnel of the anti-graft agencies and civil society organizations on the one hand; and the responses to the structured questionnaire by the MTNN customers clearly objectified this assertion. In effect, the following recommendations will certainly go a long way in addressing some of these gaps in citizen-state distrust.

#### **1.1.6 Recommendations**

1. Since the State possesses the capacity to handle cases of corruption perpetrated by the MTNN, the personnel of the State agencies should demonstrate the necessary patriotism and loyalty needed to accomplish the tasks to the benefit of the citizens as well as the State.
2. There should be concerted collaboration among the agencies of the State. Both the regulatory agencies such as NCC and the anti-graft agencies such as EFCC and ICPC as well as relevant financial institutions like the CBN should work together to combat the menace of shortchanging both the citizens and the State by the multinational telecommunication companies especially the MTNN that is the focus of this study. The inter-State agencies' collaboration will definitely strengthen the anti-corruption effort of the state towards curbing the excesses of the MTNN.

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