

Effects of Marketing Orientation on the Performance of Telecommunication Firms in Ado-Ekiti

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ABSTRACT: *The study investigated the effect of marketing orientation on the performance of Telecommunication firms in Ado-Ekiti. The specific objectives are to: determine the effect of customer orientation on performance; examine the effect of competitor's orientation on performance and determine the effect of inter-functional coordination on performance. A descriptive survey research design was adopted for the study. Telecommunication staff constituted the study population. The sample size was 87 which were selected through census sampling. Primary data used for the study were gathered through structured questionnaire. Data gathered were analyzed using hierarchical multiple regression. The result showed that customer orientation positively affect business performance ($t=8.229, p<0.05$); furthermore, it showed that competitor orientation affect business performance positively ($t=2.283, p<0.05$) and finally, it showed that inter-functional coordination affect business performance positively ($t=4.002, p<0.05$). Thus, it concluded that marketing orientation positively affects the performance of Telecommunication especially in Ado-Ekiti from which the recommendation was made.*

KEYWORD: *Marketing, Marketing Orientation, Performance*

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I. INTRODUCTION

The economic development of every country in recent time is directly affected by the prevailing concept of market globalization. Through the liberalisation of trade and technological advancements, there have emerged new challenges as well as new competitions in both local and international markets. Despite the presence of large organisations with their technological advancements, the role and impact of telecommunication firm cannot be left out due to large employment generation capacity, economic development and global resources mobility (Hussain, Ismail & Akhtar, 2015). Conventional marketing wisdom holds that Market orientation leads to superior firm performance (Kara, 2005). Therefore, marketing orientation is a popular term used by marketers as an indicator of the extent a firm implements its marketing concept (Aziz & Yassin, 2010) since it facilitates business ability to predict, react to and capitalize on environmental changes, there by leading to better performance (Vieira & Ennew, 2010). The phenomenon of market orientation is one of fundamental factors contributing not only to profitability but market share, effectiveness and to gain competitive advantage. However, there are still many entities that do not exploit fully the potential of the focused market orientation. In an era of increasingly competitive environments, organizations must operate efficiently in order to achieve their goals. In view of this, the concept of market orientation is considered highly important. Apparently, some concept of market orientation has been so complex and difficult to define and many approaches exist in the literature. However, they share some common elements such as customer orientation, competitor's orientation and inter-functional coordination, as well as long-term survival of the company, all of which have profit maximizing as their basic motive (Jangl & Mikuláščík, 2014). Therefore, because of the growing importance of marketing strategies, the change on the attitudes of individuals, groups, organizations imposes on the marketing activities multiple challenges making the marketing process more complex under the technological acceleration, information revolution and the international, regional and local transformations. To this end, market imposes tough conditions on marketers, producers and the bargaining power now tend to favour the market factors, which makes the factors of production and marketing work hard in order to improve the marketing performance to achieve the needs and desires of individuals in order to achieve customers satisfaction (Abu-Dalbooh, 2014)

Nishikawa (2010) observed that the key factor of market orientation seems to be classified based on its subjects of learning (customers or competitors) and its purposes of learning (responsive market orientation or proactive market orientation). Thus, several studies have been conducted in relation to market orientation and business performance. Among the studies that reported a significant positive relationship between market orientation and performance which includes (Aziz & Yasin, 2010; Jyoti & Sharma, 2012; Long, 2013;

Mahmoud, 2011), A meta-analysis providing a positive, significant, and robust link. However, few studies reported no significant effect of market orientation on overall business performance which also includes Greenley, Hooley and Rudd (2005). The studies involve inconsistent result which there is a need for further study, due to inconclusive findings. Jabeen, Alekam, Aldaoud, Mat, Zureigat (2013) suggested that banking sector should adopt market orientation concept in developing economies to cope with the challenges of changing business environment. Suliyanto (2012) recommended a further study on market orientation and performance due to insufficient investigation or neglect of market orientation which also its implementation suffers from some gaps in the developing economies (Zhou, Brown & Dev, 2009). In view of this, this study will be conducted in Nigeria context with reference to telecommunication (MTN, GLO, Airtel) firms in Ado-Ekiti. In view of the above, this study will also broaden the knowledge of telecommunication firms on the extent to which the performance is achieved through customer satisfaction and loyalty in the midst of intense competition. Finally, this study will contribute to the existing literature and body of knowledge.

Research Objective

The specific objective is to examine the effect of marketing orientation on business performance;

Literature

Ogbonna and Ogwo (2013) asserted that marketing concept originated in the western developed countries following the industrial revolution. Over decades the concept of marketing has changed, evolved and passed through two distinct stages, production and sales orientations. At the end of the 1940s, production efficiencies were regarded as crucial for achieving a successful and prosperous business activity but in the 1950s researchers began to argue that marketers should pay more attention to the customers' needs and wants (Svensson, 2001). Most marketing definition is channelled towards offering proper product at a reasonable price in the proper place and time. Similarly, marketing decision variables in different models of marketing mix provide a framework through which the business develops plans for its marketing activities (Khodadad & Rezvani, 2009). In view of this, marketing orientation becomes a contemporary approach in marketing field recently.

Market orientation conceptualization is an area of study that is continuous and evolving yearly (Harris, 2000). Naude, Desai and Murphy (2002) described some terms that are used as interchangeably with market orientation such as Market driven, Market oriented, marketing oriented and customer oriented. Hussain, Ismail and Akhtar (2015), sees an extensive market orientation as a means to operationalize the marketing concept was started. The marketing concept implies that the long term benefits can be acquired through timely identification and satisfaction of the consumers' needs. Market orientation is a means to ensure this identification and satisfaction of needs on time. In view of this, the researcher further defined market orientation as "the organisational culture that most effectively and efficiently creates the necessary behaviours for the creation of superior value for buyers and, thus, continuous increased performance for the business. The eventual outcome of market orientation within an organization is an integrated effort by individuals and across functional areas which in turn, delivers superior organizational performance (Jaiyeoba, 2011). According to Narver (1995), a responsive market orientation is discovering, understanding, and satisfying of expressed customer needs. In contrast, a proactive market orientation is discovering, understanding, and satisfying of latent customer needs. Consequently, Hussain, Rahman and Shah (2016) posited that marketing orientation focuses on the implementation of marketing concept (Matsuno & Mentzer, 2005).

Consequently, market orientation is described as organizational culture that most effectively and efficiently necessary behaviours for the creation of superior value for customers and thus continuous business performance. More importantly, market orientation needs to be treated in three-dimensional perspective; customer orientation; competitor orientation and inter-functional coordination. Customer orientation involves knowing a firm's target customers; competitor orientation refers to having similar knowledge of strengths and weaknesses of a firm strategically (Awwad & Agti, 2011; Liu, Ke, Wei, & Hua, 2013; Zhou, Brown & Dev, 2009); while, inter-functional coordination is the harmonization of a firm's diverse assets and the customer associated activities across the functional areas (Zhou, Brown & Dev, 2009).

Components of Marketing Orientation

Marketing orientation is seen from three perspectives (customer orientation, competitor orientation and inter-functional coordination) which will be explicitly discussed and their impact on organisational performance in the service sector like telecommunication.

Customer Orientation Focus

Customer orientation is the sufficient understanding of one's target customers to be able to create superior value for them continuously (Levitt, 1960). Similarly, the marketing concept encourages a business to

be forward looking, a customer-focused business tends to be more interested in long-term business success as opposed to short-term profits. Firms call attention to customer-focused intelligence gathering activities at the expense of competitor information may be classified as “customer preoccupied” due to marketing concept promotes and prioritise the interests of customers which is considered customer-focus to be the most fundamental aspect of corporate culture (Kenosi & Yvonne, 2011). To this end, we are in a customer era where customers are to be treated like kings. However, giving customers adequate consideration enhances customer performance through market share, increased sales, profitability and firm effectiveness. Therefore, when a firm enjoys a large market share, such businesses build up a competitive strength which makes competitor orientation imperative.

Competitor Orientation Focus

Competitor orientation means that a firm understands the short-term strength and weaknesses, long-term capabilities and strategies of both the key current and potential competitors (Day & Wensley, 1988). Competitor-focused firms seek to identify their own strengths and weaknesses and to keep pace with or stay ahead of the rest of the field. Such competitors may frequently alter their strategic emphasis as close monitoring of competitors is difficult yet essential in an intimidating environment (Porter, 1980). Firms characterized as “strategically integrated” assign equal emphasis to the collection, dissemination, and use of both customer and competitor intelligence. Ries and Trout (1986), labelled marketing warrior as firms with a predominant emphasis on competitors in their external market analyses. Based on the above fact, firm should identify their competitors, the offered technology and the target customers to enhance smooth competition. Considering the nature of business understudy, there exists an intense competition among telecommunication firm. Telecommunication firm has taken over the industry in the 20th century compared to previous years where Nitel was the only active communication channel in Nigeria. The existence of more telecommunication firms like mobile telecommunication network, globacom and aitel among others exhibit high competition where technological advancement and marketing strategy becomes more relevant to telecommunication sector. In view of this, these firms are striving to become the market leader and to dominate in the current market.

Inter Functional Coordination

Inter functional coordination is the coordinated and utilization of firm resources in creating greater value for target customers (Porter 1980, Narver & Slater, 1990). Inter functional coordination is based on the customer and competitor information and comprises the business’s coordinated efforts, typically involving more than the marketing functional areas to create superior value for the customers (Ogbonna & Ogwo, 2013). Inter-functional coordination is the coordination of the entire functional areas in the business by utilizing customer and other market information to create higher value for customers. Personnel’s implementation of market orientation is essential for business success. The front-line employees play a crucial role in performance of an organisation. These employees are the representatives of the organisation and can contribute extensively through active interaction with the organisational customers. Customer satisfaction can be accomplished through an effective interaction of employees with the customers which becomes more important in the service industry (Hussain, Ismail & Akhtar, 2015). Business functional areas differs particularly in most organisation such as production, sales, finance , research and development and human resources to mention but a few, these functional unit should not exist in isolation but should work hand in hand with other units towards the set goals. The coordination of these units increases the internal strength of a business and boost their competitive power. Therefore, the connection or effective communication between these functional units affects organisational performance and develop a power base for competition.

Performance

A firm performance can be measured in terms of the output achieved after the internal and external goals of a firm are accomplished (Lin, Peng & Kao, 2008). Previous researchers employed different kinds of indicators for measuring the organizational performance and have restricted themselves to collect information only on those variables which is to generate the required information (Jalali, Jaafar & Ramayah, 2014). Prior research highlighted that often firm managers are reluctant to provide financial data and also, opined that subjective measures provide correct, reliable and accurate measure than objective measures provided by the owners/ managers (Khan & Khalique, 2014). The present study undertake four indicators of performance as non-financial performance indicators identified and modified from the study of Kirca, Jayachandran and Bearden (2005) comprised of market share, quality of service, innovation, customer satisfaction and organizational effectiveness. Business performance is currently receiving an increasing attention from both practitioners and academics (Pont & Shaw, 2003). Therefore, firm performance is a relevant measures in strategic management research and frequently used as a dependent variable. Concepts of business performance are generally centred on either efficiency or effectiveness. Since business enterprises must eventually be profitable to survive, financial efficiency is a germane form typically used as an ultimate outcome when

performance is included in recent research. It is one of the most commonly used definitions of business performance and the non-financial performance gives the organisation the opportunity to meet with the target respondents for genuine response.

II. METHODOLOGY

Study Area: The study was conducted in Ado-Ekiti, the capital city of Ekiti State.

Research Design: This study employed a descriptive survey research design through a structured questionnaire. The questionnaire was closed ended questionnaire and was used to elicit information from the target respondents.

Population of the Study: The study population comprises the telecommunication (Mobile Telecommunication Network, Globacom and Airtel) staff in Ado-Ekiti. The study total population was eighty seven (87) respondents.

Sample Size and Sampling Technique: The study used a sample size of eighty (87) respondents. As stated above, this comprise the entire telecommunication (Mobile Telecommunication Network, Globacom and Airtel) staff in Ado Ekiti. All category of staff were employed except cleaners, gatemen and contract staff. The target staff employed was conveniently selected among others. Therefore, the entire telecommunication staff constituted the sample size for this study using census sampling.

Method of Data Analysis: Inferential statistic including the use of frequency table was used to analyze respondents demographic information while the data generated through questionnaire will be analyzed with the use of hierarchical multiple regression for the stated objectives through SPSS 2.1 edition.

Model Specification: Three models were developed to capture marketing orientation. The three (3) sub-variables were considered in this study using hierarchical multiple regression models. The independent variables construct were customer orientation (CSO), competitor orientation (CMO) and inter-functional coordination (IFC) while the dependent variable is performance.

This study adapted the research model used by Ogbonna and Ogwo (2013) which was specified as:

$$\text{Perf} = f^{\circ} (\text{MTO}) \dots\dots\dots (i)$$

$$\text{Perf} = f^{\circ} (\text{CSO, CMO, IFC}) \dots\dots\dots (ii)$$

MTO = Marketing Orientation

Perf = Performance

CSO = Customer Orientation

CMO = Competitor Orientation

IFC = Inter-Functional Coordination

P = Performance

f = Functional Notation

Description of Respondents

Structured questionnaires were administered to telecommunication staff in Ado-Ekiti. A total of 87 questionnaires were self-administered to the target respondents which the entire 87 were returned indicating 100% return rate. The returned questionnaires contained 100% valid response as presented in Tables 1.

Table 1: Distribution of Questionnaire by Firm

SN	Firm	No Distributed	No Returned	% Returned
1	MTN	36	36	100.0
2	GLOBACOM	28	28	100.0
3	AIRTEL	23	23	100.0
TOTAL		87	87	100.0

Source: Researchers' Field Survey, 2019

Table 2: Respondents Demographic Distribution

Variables	Frequency	Percent
Sex		
Male	52	59.8
Female	35	40.2
Total	87	100.0
Marital Status		
Single	29	33.3
Married	56	64.4
Divorced	2	2.3
Total	87	100.0
Academic Qualification		
University	72	82.8
Polytechnic	15	17.2
Total	87	100.0
Year of Experience		
Below 5	19	21.8
6-10	25	28.8
11-15	35	40.2
16 Above	8	9.2
Total	87	100.0

Source: Field Survey, 2019

Sex distribution showed 59.8% of the respondents are Male and 40.2% of the respondents are Female which implies most of the respondents are Male. Considering the marital status, it was shown that 33.3% of the respondents were single, 64.4% of the respondents were married and 2.3% of the respondents were divorced thus imply majority of the respondent were married. Academic background showed that 82.8% of the respondents attended university while 17.2% of the respondents attended polytechnic thus implies that majority of the respondent attended university. Year of experience showed that 21.8% of the respondents falls below 5 year of experience, 28.8% of the respondents falls between 6-10 year of experience, 40.2% of the respondents falls between 11-15 year of experience while 9.2% of the respondents falls above 16 years of experience thus implies that majority of the respondent falls between 11-15 year of experience.

Interpretation of Results

This study investigates the effect of marketing orientation on the performance of telecommunication in Ado-Ekiti. To achieve the stated objective, a multiple hierarchical regression was employed.

Table 3: Model Summary of Hierarchical Multiple Regression on Influence of Marketing Orientation on Performance

Model	R	R²	Adjusted R²	Std. Error of the Estimate	Sig
1	.682	.465	.458	.78040	.000
1	.706	.499	.486	.76015	.000
1	.765	.586	.570	.69536	.000

Source: Data Output, 2019

The model summary in Table 3 gives the R= 0.682, 0.706 and 0.765 which is the hierarchical regression of the three predictors and organisational performance. Again, the closeness of the R² and adjusted R² (0.465-0.458) which is 0.007, 0.7%, R² (0.499-0.486) which is 0.013, 13% and R² (0.586-0.570) which is 0.016, 16% demonstrated a very strong positive significant relationship between the predictors variable and organisational performance. i.e marketing orientation showed a very strong positive influence on organisational performance. Also, this model is predicting 7%, 13% and 16% of the variance in performance using all predictors simultaneously; meaning that 7%, 13% and 16% of the variance in performance can be predicted from marketing orientation on performance of Telecommunication firm in Ado-Ekiti which is the combination of customer orientation (CSO), competitor orientation (CMO) and Inter-functional coordination (IFC).

Table 4: Multiple Regression Analysis Showing Significance of Predictors on Performance

Model	Sum of Square	df	Mean Square	F	Sig
Regression	21.246	3	41.246	67.725	.000
Residual	47.504	84	.609		
Total	88.750	87			
Regression	44.257	3	22.128	38.296	.000
Residual	44.493	84	.578		
Total	88.750	87			
Regression	52.002	3	17.334	35.849	.000
Residual	36.748	84	.484		
Total	88.750	87			

Source: Data Output, 2019

Considering Table 4, which is at 5 percent confident limit, F statistic revealed that the whole hierarchical regression model is statistically significant in terms of its goodness of fit, which showed that automated teller machine is capable of influencing performance of telecommunication in Ado-Ekiti as showed by (F1, 87) = 67.725, P<0.05, (F2, 87) =38.296, P<0.05 and (F3, 87) = 35.849, P>0.05. Hence, this revealed that marketing orientation is capable of influencing performance of telecommunication firm in Ado-Ekiti.

Table 5 Coefficients of Marketing Orientation and Performance

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	T	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	1.491	.332		4.495	.000
	Stress Reduction	.663	.081	.682	8.229	.000
2	(Constant)	1.883	.384		6.488	.000
	Stress Reduction	.781	.080	.179	2.991	.000
	Easiness and Accuracy	.224	.098	.221	2.283	.005
3	(Constant)	1.201	.376		3.198	.002
	Stress Reduction	.609	.096	.626	6.321	.000
	Easiness and Accuracy	.254	.090	.251	2.820	.003
	Quality of Service	.369	.092	.354	4.002	.000

Source: Data Output, 2019

The Table 5 showed the contribution of each of the predictors. In this case, customer orientation (CSO) has the highest beta with value = 0.663, p<.05 and t-value = 8.229, followed by Inter-functional coordination (IFC) with Beta = 0.369, p<.05 and t-value = 4.002, followed by competitor orientation (CMO) with Beta = 0.224, p>.05 and t-value = 2.283. All their contributions were statistically significant to performance. Hence, the null hypothesis is rejected and accepted the alternative hypothesis.

III. DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

Marketing Orientation and Performance

The findings showed that marketing orientation is significant and positively related to performance of telecommunication in Ado-Ekiti. Customer orientation, competitor orientation and inter-functional coordination were used to proxy marketing orientation which were subjected to multiple hierarchical regression and the predictors were found with strong and very strong effect on performance. The study accept alternate hypothesis and rejected otherwise. This finding is consistent with the research carried out by Ogbonna and Ogwo (2013) who investigated the effect of market orientation on corporate performance of insurance firms in Nigeria. The study customer focus, competitor focus and inter functional coordination affects performance. In the same vein, Hussain, Ismail and Akhtar (2015) examined the relationship between market orientation and its three dimensions with firm performance in Pakistan. The study found that market orientation as a construct has a significant relationship and influence on performance of SMEs.

IV. SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

- i. Marketing orientation has significant effect on performance of Telecommunication in Ado-Ekiti, with Adjusted R² of 0.458%, 0.486%, and 0.570%, rejecting the null hypothesis at 0.05 level of significance.

V. CONCLUSION

The purpose of this paper is to examine the effect of marketing orientation on business performance of Telecommunication in Ado-Ekiti. According to the obtained results of inferential statistics indicated that the entire marketing orientation attribute measured have Positive and significant effect on performance at 0.05 level of significance. The marketing orientation components including customer orientation, competitor orientation and inter-functional coordination have a very strong and strong positive significance impact on performance while customer orientation has the most significant value on performance thus concluded that marketing orientation is positively related to performance of Telecommunication in Ado-Ekiti.

VI. RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings and the study conclusion, it is recommended that re-establishment of training and increasing worker's efficiency should be prioritise for professionalism in managing of customers which may in turn increases market share and improve the competitive strength of the since the telecommunication sector is very competitive and volatile with regards to current environment in Nigeria. Telecommunication firm should also identify the competitors in this sector and ensure better technology and other modern equipments are employed to perform better than competitors. However, it is necessary that firm scan the environment to offer quality service to customers as environment changes. Finally, it is recommended that proper coordination should be put in place for resources utilisation and well to build a power base for effective competition. The functional units should be coordinated towards the set goals

VII. CONTRIBUTION TO KNOWLEDGE

This research has vividly explored the important role market orientation play and its influence on performance especially among telecommunication staff in Ado-Ekiti where there is intense competition. This study has discovered that in enhancing performance, there must be perfect understanding of customers need, want and also the complex nature of customers. Since it is very clear that the attitude and behaviour of customers differs, thus the study revealed the importance and the need for market orientation to improve their marketing performance and to satisfy customers which in turn maintain or boost their competitiveness. Furthermore, this study identified customer orientation, competitor orientation and inter-functional coordination as proxy for market orientation and their impact on the performance of telecommunication. Finally, this study has contributed immensely to the body knowledge in accordance to existing literature, theories and findings.

SUGGESTION FOR FURTHER STUDY

This study investigates the effect of marketing orientation on business performance with reference to telecommunication firms in Ado-Ekiti. However, further study can be done on marketing sector or manufacturing sector in Nigeria due to their relationship with customers and competition.

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