

## Effect of customer-driven marketing strategy on market share of telecommunication organisation (case study of MTN Nigeria Limited)

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**Abstract:** *This paper assessed the impact of customer-driven marketing strategy on market share of MTN (Nig) PLC. Specific objectives are to examine the effect of customer-driven marketing strategy on customer retention and to find out the impact of customer-driven marketing strategy on market share of MTN (Nig) Ltd. Data for the study were collected through the questionnaire administration from marketing staff of the company. A 5-point likert scale was designed to capture and measure variables relating to impact of customer-driven marketing strategy on market share in MTN (Nig) PLC. The hypotheses were tested using Regression Analysis tool with the aid of Statistical Package for Social Sciences (Version 17.0). The calculated P-value of 0.000 (positive) was less than the tabulated value of 0.05 at 95% level of confidence. The study concluded that customer-driven marketing strategy has positive and significant impact on market share.*

**Keywords -** Customer-driven, Marketing Strategy, Marketing Share, Customer Retention

**Research Area:** Marketing Strategy

**Paper Type:** Research Paper

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### 1. INTRODUCTION

In today's complex and fiercely competitive business environment, organizations are propelled to deliver greater value to customers, while still focusing on gaining and growing better size of market shares (Cui, Lin & Tang, 2009). This is because business success is based on the ability to build a growing body of satisfied customers.

At the inception of Global System Mobile (GSM) in Nigeria in 2001, a total of 266,461 lines were subscribed for and this increased consistently to 32,814,861 in 2006 and later to 98,684,272 in 2010 (Nigeria Communication Commission (NCC), 2011). A further break down as at December 2013 shows that Mobile Telecommunication Network (MTN) Nigeria Limited; GLOBACOM (GLO) Nigeria Limited; AIRTEL & EMTS had 45%; 21%; 20% & 14% share of the Mobile GSM market (NCC, 2014), making MTN (Nig) the market leader. This occurrence has been attributed to innovative tendencies of MTN vis-à-vis making available Value Added Services (VAS) to subscribers (Akinbola, Adegbuyi & Otokiti, 2014). It is noteworthy that despite thousands of new lines being rolled out daily, the Nigerian telecommunication market is reaching saturation point. Gaining and maintaining considerably good market share in the telecommunication industry required not just consistency of better network availability, but also a satisfied customers which in the long run determine the success or otherwise of the company (Hassan, 2011). Evidently, the growth trend in the mobile telecom industry in Nigeria does not provide empirical support for the claim of many service providers that customer patronage and retention is being influenced by effective marketing strategy. Thus, this study empirically determines the impact of customer-

driven marketing strategy on market share of telecommunication companies and as well on customer retention in Nigeria.

## 2. LITERATURE REVIEW

### 2.1. Conceptual Definitions

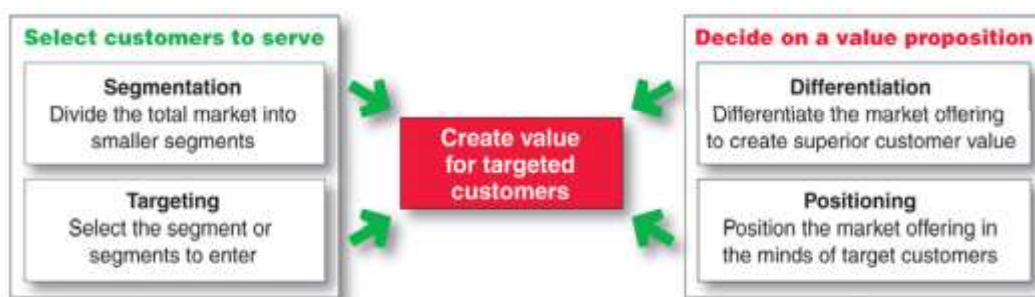
#### *Marketing Strategy*

Dibb, Simkin, Pride & Ferrell (1997) defined marketing concept as “a way of thinking; a management philosophy guiding an organization's overall activities affecting all the efforts of the organization, not just its marketing activities”. Basically, strategy is about two things: deciding where you want your business to go, and deciding how to get there (Porter, 1998). Marketing strategy according to Kotler, Armstrong, Saunders & Wong (1999), is the marketing logic by which the business unit hopes to achieve its marketing objectives. Shankar & Carpenter (2012) views marketing strategy as a broad plan of managerial initiatives and actions relating an organization to its customers and markets.

Marketing strategy, one of the firm’s functional strategies, is a set of integrated decisions and actions (Day, 1990) by which a business expects to achieve its marketing objectives and meet the value requirements of its customers (Cravens, 1999; Varadarajan & Clark, 1994). This study view marketing strategy as a philosophical basis and underlining process by which organization strive to understand its target market needs and wants, and ensure that it satisfy these wants and needs better than competition, while meeting the organization's goals. This support the view of Dibb, Simkim, Pride & Ferrell (2006) that marketing strategy is ‘ the selection of which marketing opportunities to pursue, analysis of target market, and the creation and maintenance of an appropriate marketing mix that will satisfy those people in the target markets’. This implies that achieving organizational goals depends on determining the needs and wants of target markets and delivering of desired satisfactions more effectively and efficiently than competitors (Kotler, Armstrong, Sanders & Wong, 1999).

#### *Customer-Driven Marketing Strategy*

The conceptual framework adapted for this study in building Customer- Driven Marketing Strategy is shown in figure 1. The model integrates market segmentation; market targeting; positioning and differentiation as drivers of customer-driven marketing strategy in delivering competitive value to the customers.



*Figure 1: Customer-Driven Marketing Strategy*

Source: *Created from: Kotler, P & Armstrong, G., (2010) Principles of Marketing. New Jersey: Pearson Education.*

The concept of customer-driven marketing strategy as shown in figure 1 explains the company’s overall marketing mission statement and future goals. In designing and managing

effective customer-driven marketing strategy, consumers are the centre of all marketing activities. Kotler & Armstrong (2008) stated that the marketing logic by which the company hopes to create this customer value and achieve these profitable relationships with the customers necessitate effective customer-driven marketing strategy. Since the company owns the means of production it has the overall power to decide which customer to serve (segmentation and targeting) and how it will serve them (differentiation and positioning) (Ibidunni, 2009).

Kotler & Armstrong (2010) identified four major components involved in designing and managing a customer-driven marketing strategy to include market segmentation; market targeting; differentiation and positioning.

i) Market Segmentation involves dividing a market into smaller groups of buyers with distinct needs, characteristics, or behaviors who might require separate products or marketing mixes (Kotler & Armstrong, 2008; Kotler & Armstrong, 2010). Baker (2005) opined that segmentation involves identifying homogenous buying behaviour within a segment (and heterogeneous buying between segments) such that each segment can be considered as a target for a distinct marketing mix.

ii) Market targeting involves getting appropriate information of each market segment and then selecting one or more segments to enter (Kotler & Armstrong, 2009). According to Kotler (2010); Kotler & Armstrong (2009; 2008); a company might use the strategy “niche marketing” and target only a few segments from which the major competitor overlooked. Kotler & Armstrong (2010) stated that the company must essentially look at the following approaches for effective targeting: evaluate market segments; selecting target market segments (companies can target very broadly (undifferentiated marketing), very narrowly (micromarketing), or somewhere in between (differentiated or concentrated marketing); and choosing a targeting strategy.

iii) Differentiation and Positioning involves differentiating the firm’s market offering to create superior customer value (Kotler & Armstrong, 2010), while positioning consists of arranging for a market offering to occupy a clear, distinctive and desirable place relative to competing products in the minds of target consumers. A product's position is the place it occupies relative to competitors' products in consumers' minds (Kapferer, 2008).

#### *Customer Retention*

Several research works have shown that there is positive relationship between customer satisfaction and customer retention; marketing strategy has a direct effect on customer retention (Rust and Subramaman, 1992) and that customer satisfaction is positively related to customer retention. Satisfied customer is more likely to return and stay with a company than a dissatisfied customer who can decide to go elsewhere (Ovenden, 1995). Desai and Mahajan (1998) argued that satisfaction leads to retention and the retention is not simply because of habit, indifference or inertia. Customer retention is central to the development of business relationships and these relationships depend on satisfaction (Eriksson and Vaghult, 2000). Athanassopoulos (2000) further asserted that customer satisfaction is an antecedent of customer retention. Also, it has found that customer satisfaction is a central determinant of customer retention (Gerpott et al., 2001); positively related to customer retention and the effect varies by customer size and the customer’s current level of satisfaction (Niraj et al., 2003). It was concluded that customer satisfaction could not be possibly achieved without effective marketing strategy. Thus, this study determines effects of customer-driven marketing strategy on customer retention.

## *2.2.Theoretical Framework*

### *Resourced Based View (RBV) of Firm*

The resource-based view of firm is a theory used to examine the link between a firm's internal characteristics and performance (Barney, 1991; Peteraf & Bergen, 2003; René, 2011). A firm's relative performance is determined by its relative resource endowments (Balmer, 2013). It also deals with the problem of how firms can exploit their internal resource base and capabilities to obtain sustained competitive advantages (Barney, 1991; Hamel & Prahalad, 1994; Tichá & Hron, 2006; Foss & Knudsen, 2003).

The general assumption of the RBV theory is that "firms within an industry may be heterogeneous with respect to the strategic resources they control" (Barney, 1991; 2002). "These resources may not be perfectly mobile across firms" (Barney, 1991).

### *2.3.Generic Strategies*

Porter (1985) considered that in the long-term the extent to which the firm is able to create a defensible position in an industry is a major determinant of the success with which it will out-perform its competitors. He therefore proposed generic strategies by which a firm can develop a competitive advantage and create a defensible position. These strategies are (i) overall cost leadership, (ii) differentiation, and (iii) focus. Porter (1998) argued that by adeptly pursuing the cost leadership, differentiation, or focus strategies, businesses can attain significant and enduring competitive advantage over their rivals (Porter, 1985).

Porter (1998) maintained that cost leadership strategy requires a continuous search for cost reductions in all aspects of the business. Condition given to be successful using this strategy usually requires a considerable market share advantage or preferential access to raw materials, components, labour and or some other important input (Ibidunni, 2009).

Porter (1998) emphasized that differentiation strategy involve creating a product that is perceived as unique, and that the unique features or benefits should provide superior value for the customer if this strategy is to be successful. This is because the customers see the product as unrivaled and unequaled, the price elasticity of demand tends to be reduced and customers tend to be more brands loyal, hence this can provide considerable insulation from competition.

While cost leadership focus on achievement of the lowest unit cost base of the industry, differentiation is the ability to charge a premium price for offering some perceived added value to the customer (Porter, 1985). The focus strategy is the concentration of a narrow segment and within that segment attempt to achieve either a cost advantage or differentiation (Porter, 1998).

Generic strategies are useful because they characterize strategic positions at the simplest and broadest level by which a business compete in the market. Porter maintains that achieving competitive advantage requires a firm to make a choice about the type and scope of its competitive advantage (Porter, 1998; Brassington & Pettitt, 2006).

It is observed that MTN Nig. is not competing basically on price basis but on differentiation-focused strategy (Sadiq, Oyelade and Ukachukwu, 2011). Thus, by offering unique brands to various target markets, the company is able to create impressive image of its brands in the minds of consumers.

### *2.4.Empirical Framework*

Gerpott, Rams & Schindler (2001) investigated customer satisfaction, loyalty and retention in the German mobile telecommunications among 684 respondents and reported

that customer retention cannot be equated with customer loyalty and/or customer satisfaction, rather a two-stage causal link can be assumed in which customer satisfaction drives customer loyalty which in turn has impacts on customer retention.

Yi (1990) expressed that the impact of customer satisfaction on customer loyalty by stating that “*customer satisfaction influences purchase intentions as well as post-purchase attitude*”. In other word, satisfaction is related to behavioural loyalty, which includes continuing purchases from the same company, word of mouth recommendation, and increased scope of relationship. Fornell (1992) found out that there is a positive relationship between customer loyalty and customer retention but this connection is not always a linear relation. This relationship depends on factors such as market regulation, switching costs, brand equity, existence of loyalty programs, proprietary technology, and product differentiation at the industry level.

Ijewere & Gbandi (2012) conducted an empirical study on telecommunications reforms and the marketing challenges in Nigeria. The study perceived that it is not the GSM service provider under different names such as MTN, AIRTEL, GLOBACOM and ETISALAT that is demanded but rather the one that has the characteristics of satisfying the consumers’ needs. Thus, the service providers are challenged in ensuring customer satisfaction and increasing the market share for their organization. The study is in line with the findings of Ros (1999); Li & Xu (2001); McNary (2001); and Wallsten (2001) that competition drives the biggest improvements in the sector.

In the study conducted by Hassan (2011), 89% of users sampled subscribe to MTN out of which over 23% subscribe to MTN line only, 65% subscribe to MTN and other networks. This clearly supports the statistics provided by NCC (2010) that MTN Nig. has maintained market leadership in the GSM sector. However, it is not clear whether or not MTN Nig. market share, the parameter being used in ranking industry leadership, is due to MTN marketing capacity or investment in network expansion or similar strategic investment. This current work was set to fill the gap by conducting an empirical assessment into the impact of customer-driven marketing strategies on market share of MTN Nig Ltd.

### **3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

This study focused on the effect of customer-driven marketing strategy on subscribers’ base (market share) in MTN Nig. Ltd. The geographical coverage of the study is limited to Ilorin in Kwara State, Nigeria. The information used covers a period between when the telecommunication industry was deregulated in Nigeria in 2001 to period of 2014, thirteen years (13 years) time period.

The research design adopted is survey method. The population for the study is the marketing staff in the MTN (Nig) Ltd in Ilorin capital of Kwara State, with a total number of twenty two (22). The study takes the census of all the twenty two (22) staff for study. Primary data were used for the study. Questionnaire was employed as instrument of primary data collection. Twenty two (22) copies of questionnaire were administered to the respondents. Likert Rating Scale of five points was employed to enable the respondents to give their opinions to issues (Zinbarg, Revelle & McDonald, 2006).

Regression analysis was used as tool to analysed the study’s data. The linear regression model used is express as:

$$Y = \beta_0 + \beta_1 X_1 + e. \text{ Where:}$$

Y = Dependent variable;  $\beta_0$  = Intercept of the model;  $B_1$  = Estimate of the parameter of the

independent variable in the model of the slope;  $X_1$ = element of independent variable and E= Error term.

*Statistical Models for the Studied Hypotheses*

Model for hypothesis 1:  $CUSRT = \beta_0 + \beta_1 CDMS + E$

Model for hypothesis 2:  $SUBA = \beta_0 + \beta_1 CDMS + E$ .

Where: CUSRT= Customer Retention (dependent variable); SUBA= Subscribers’ base (dependent variable);  $\beta_0$  = Intercept of the model;  $B_1$  = Estimate of the parameter of the independent variable in the model of the slope; CDMS= Customer-Driven Marketing Strategy (Independent variable); E= Error term.

**4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

*Test of Hypotheses*

This section tests the hypotheses formulated for the study. The distribution of respondents’ demographic data presented in appendix 2 indicates that majority were females with 63.2% of the total percentage, while males constitute 36.8% of the total respondents. The respondents’ distribution by career level posits that 5.3% of the respondents were at management level, 21.1% were at senior level and 73.7% constituting majority of the respondent were junior workers. The distribution of the respondents by year(s) of being a staff of MTN Nig. posits that 5.3% of the respondents have below 2 yrs experience, 26.3% have between 2-4 years experience, 47.4% have 5-8 years experience and 21.1% have above 8 years experience. The summary of this analysis shows that the telecommunication industry have many educated female staff and young adults who could easily understand the workings of customer driven marketing strategy, thereby positively contribute to the strategic development of telecommunication organizations in the industry.

Test of hypothesis one

H<sub>1</sub>: Customer-driven marketing strategy has no impact on customer retention.

Table 1 Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.912 <sup>a</sup>	.832	.830	.451

Source: SPSS Printout, 2016

a. Predictors: (Constant), Customer-Driven Marketing Strategy adopted by the company.

The coefficient (R) value of 0.912 indicates the existence of strong positive relationship between customer driven marketing strategy and customer retention. The Coefficient of Determination (R<sup>2</sup>) explain the combine effect of the independent variable on the variation of the dependent variable. The R<sup>2</sup> value as shown in the table is 0.832 (83.2%) which explains that the independent variable (customer-driven marketing strategy) has a combine effect of 83.2% on the variation of the company’ ability to retain its customer (dependent variable). The adjusted R<sup>2</sup> explains the actual effect of the independent variable on the dependent variable. The adjusted R<sup>2</sup> value of 0.830 (83.0%) shows that customer-driven marketing strategy adopted by the company actually contribute to variation in the customer retention (dependent variable). This is good enough in determining the goodness of fit for the model (regression equation), while the remaining 16.8% is explained by other

factors which are not included in the model. The regression equation (model formulated) proved to be very useful for making predictions since the value of  $R^2$  is close to 1.

Table 2 ANOVA<sup>b</sup>

Model		Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	83.522	1	83.522	103.754	.000 <sup>a</sup>
	Residual	16.902	21	.805		
	Total	100.424	22			

Source: SPSS Printout, 2016

a. Predictors: (Constant), Customer-driven marketing strategy adopted by the company

b. Dependent Variable: Customer retention

Table 2 posits that the calculated P-value is 0.000 (positive), which is less than the tabulated P-value of 0.05 at 95% level of confidence. Thus, the Null hypothesis which states that customer-driven marketing strategy has no impact on customer retention is rejected, while the Alternative hypothesis was adopted and this established that customer-driven marketing strategy has impact on customer retention. This significantly established that customer-driven marketing strategy has impact on customer retention in MTN Nig. Ltd. This finding is in line with the arguments of many researchers including Palmatier (2006); Egan (2008); Gummesson (2008) who pointed out that marketers need to start shifting their strategy from mass marketing to marketing strategy that focus on satisfying individual customers.

Table 3 Coefficients Model

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	T	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	.464	.209		2.225	.029
	Customer-Driven Marketing Strategy adopted by the company.	1.010	.049	.911	20.670	.000

Source: SPSS Printout, 2016

a. Dependent Variable: Customer Retention

Table 3 provides information on the effect of independent variable on the dependent variable. The table depicts that the coefficient of independents variable exert significant effects on the dependent variable. The analysis equally indicates that the calculated p-values is less than the critical/tabulated p-values of 0.05, thus, the Null hypothesis ( $H_0$ ) is rejected while the Alternative hypothesis ( $H_1$ ) is accepted which established that customer-driven marketing strategy has impact on customer retention. This implies that customer-driven marketing strategy has significant effect on the ability of MTN Nig. Ltd to retain its customers over the years. This conform to the findings of Gerpott et al. (2001) who reported

that marketing strategy have significant effect on customer loyalty, customer retention, and customer profitability for telecommunications operators to have superior economic success.

Test of hypothesis two

*H<sub>2</sub>: Customer-driven marketing strategy has no impact on market share of MTN (Nig) Ltd.*

Table 4 Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.962 <sup>a</sup>	.925	.920	.339

Source: SPSS Printout, 2016

a. Predictors: (Constant), Customer-Driven Marketing Strategy adopted by the company.

The coefficient (R) value of 0.962 indicates the existence of strong positive relationship between customer driven marketing strategy and customer retention. The R<sup>2</sup> Coefficient of Determination explains the combine effect of the independent variable on the variation of the dependent variable. The R<sup>2</sup> value as shown in the table is 0.925 (92.5%) which explains that the independent variable (customer-driven marketing strategy) has a combine effect of 92.5% on the variation of market share of the company (dependent variable). The adjusted R<sup>2</sup> explains the actual effect of the independent variable on the dependent variable. The adjusted R<sup>2</sup> value of 0.920 (92.0%) shows that customer-driven marketing strategy adopted by the company actually contribute to variation in the market share of the (dependent variable). This is good enough in determining the goodness of fit for the model (regression equation), while the remaining 8.0% is explained by other factors which are not included in the model. The regression equation (model formulated) proved to be very useful for making predictions since the value of R<sup>2</sup> is close to 1.

Table 5 ANOVA<sup>b</sup>

Model		Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	24.045	1	24.045	258.271	.000 <sup>a</sup>
	Residual	1.955	21	.0931		
	Total	26.000	22			

Source: SPSS Printout, 2016

a. Predictors: (Constant), Customer Driven Marketing Strategy

b. Dependent Variable: Market Share Size of the Organisation

Table 5 revealed that the calculated P-value is 0.000 (positive) and is less than the tabulated value of 0.05 at 95% level of confidence. This indicates that customer-driven marketing strategy has significant relationship with market share of the company as indicated in the model.



Table 6 Coefficients Model

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	T	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
1 (Constant)	.091	.164		.554	.587
Customers Driven Marketing Strategy.	1.045	.072	.962	14.462	.000

Source: SPSS Printout, 2016

a. Dependent Variable: Market Share Size of the Organisation

The table provides information on the effect of independent variable on the dependent variable. The table depicts that the coefficient of independent variable exert significant effects on the dependent variable. The analysis indicates that the calculated p-values is less than the critical/tabulated p-values of 0.05, thus, the Null hypothesis ( $H_0$ ) is rejected while the Alternative hypothesis ( $H_1$ ) is accepted which established that customer-driven marketing strategy has impact on market share of the company. The result shows that customer-driven marketing strategy has significant impact on market share of MTN Nig. Ltd.

**5. CONCLUSION**

The primary focus of this study is to find out the impact of customer-driven marketing strategy on market share of MTN (Nig.) Ltd. The study found that customer-driven marketing strategy has significant impact on customer retention, an indication that customer-driven marketing strategy is a tool for appealing to consumers' interest and for gaining and maintaining customers' patronage.

The study empirically pointed out that customer-driven marketing strategy significantly influenced market share of MTN Nig. Ltd. This is because the study found that customer-driven marketing strategy account for 92.0% changes in variation of market share of the company. Given the empirical findings of the study, customer-driven marketing strategy is workable in the context of the telecommunication companies operating in Nigeria telecommunication industry.

The study concludes that customer-driven marketing strategy has positive and significant impact on market share of telecommunication organizations operating in Nigeria. Thus, Telecommunication Company with effective customer-driven marketing strategy will outperform firms with ineffective customer-driven marketing strategy in Nigeria.

In view of the above findings, the study recommend that MTN Nig. Ltd must ensure it continue adopting and using appropriate customer-driven marketing strategy, so that various segments of its target market are provided with specific brands that would meet the needs and requirements of each segment of its consumers' market. This would ensure that the company has in its possession a good weapon for gaining and sustaining customers' loyalty, which would ensure that market share of the company continue to grow and is efficiently sustained.

There should be management re-orientation of the telecommunication companies operating in Nigeria, with focus on selling the importance and benefits of customer-driven marketing strategy to managements. This would help future marketing planning and appealing to and gaining customer commitment to their respective network services.

The management of MTN Nig. Ltd and other organisations in the Nigeria telecommunication industry need to integrate customer-driven marketing strategy into their marketing strategy. This would serve as a tool for obtaining and communicating relevant information from and to the target market and for integrating different types of customers into their overall strategy. The management of MTN Nig. Ltd should continue to improve mobile services attributes such as service quality and network availability, by investing more on basic equipment to enhance call quality and coverage, offer reasonable pricing, and enhance customer care that would ensure that customers are not leaving its network for that of the competitors. This is essential to keeping its customers and thereby maintaining good market share percentage in the industry.

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