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Comparative Performance of Organisational Strategies in Nigerian Telecommunication Industry: Miles & Snow and Porter's Strategic Views

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Abstract: *Many organisations have employed strategies that could enable them to survive and be competitive, but most of them used inappropriate and sometime ineffective strategies that have failed to solve perceived problems. This study therefore is aimed at examining the comparative performance improvement management for Nigeria Telecommunication Industry, using Miles & Snow and Porter's Strategic approach. The study employed survey research design. Two sampling techniques were used which were judgemental and stratified sampling techniques. The study focused on four major service providers in the industry. 377 copies of questionnaire were administered to the respondents who are management staff of the selected telecom firms. The hypotheses were tested with analysis of variance and Scheffe test to make multiple comparison. It was found that there is a significant difference between Miles and Snow strategies in the Nigerian telecommunication. Also, there is statistically significant difference in performance of selected Telecommunication companies in favour of those that are using product differentiation. The study concluded that the effectiveness of Mile and Snow's competitive strategy in the Nigerian telecommunications industry was shown to be effective. It also demonstrated that, in comparison to other methods, analyser strategies have less substantial influence. In order to enhance their performance, the study suggested that telecommunications businesses use prospector, defender, and reactor tactics. Furthermore, organisations should leverage on their core competence, resources uniqueness and product differentiation to combine and implement strategies that will give them competitive edge.*

JEL Classification:
M10; M13; M16.

Keywords: *Mile & Snow Strategies; Porter Generic Strategies; Firms' Performance.*

Introduction

Strategy has been a drive factor for execution of organisation plans. Akingbade (2021) expressed that Strategy gives an organisation a competitive edge over the competitors and serves as a means of achieving organizational objectives or goals. A strategy is a plan created by a business owner to accomplish a specific goal, and it entails developing the tactics that will give the owner of the business a competitive edge over his rivals in a way that will produce resounding success (Oghojafor, 2000). According to Thompson, Jr, Peteraf, Gamble, &

Strickland III, (2016), strategy is an activity that managers use to expand their business, stake out a market position, draw in and satisfy customers, compete successfully, run operations, and accomplish specific goals.

The process of formulating, implementation and evaluation of action towards achieving organisational objectives and goals is the strategic management. Establishing a firm mission, creating objectives, analysing the strengths as well as the weaknesses of an organisation, also identifying the opportunities and threats in the external environment are all parts of formulating a strategy. An organisation must set goals, create policies, inspire personnel, and allocate resources in a way that will enable stated strategies to be effectively pursued in order to implement a formed strategy. As a result, monitoring the outcomes of strategy design and execution activities is a part of strategy evaluation. The speed, size, and complexity of changes affecting organisations are all commonly considered to be accelerating nowadays.

The foundation of strategic management is the idea that major internal and external events and trends should be continuously monitored by an organisation. Additionally, it pursues tactics to strengthen internal assets, seize outside chances, lessen internal flaws, and lessen the effects of the threats. Strategic management process benefits organization by responding and reacting to its environment, effective allocation of resources, and reducing the internal conflicts (Oyedijo, 2013).

Every strategy used by organisations passed through the strategic management process. Porter (1980) and Mile and Snow (1978) gave more light on organisational strategies by developing generic strategy and Miles and Snow Strategy. The Porter (1980) generic strategy typologies stand out as the theoretical foundation for establishing strategic groups in businesses. The authors argued that a company can maximise performance in one of two ways: The first is by low cost producers and the second is by differentiation of goods and/or service. However, the two could be adopted or merged by an organisation According to Adeoye, Ajemunigbohun and Okunbanjo (2023), Akingbade (2021), any of the low cost and differentiation approach could be accompanied by an organisation via focusing on a specific market segment as well as the Prospectors, Analyzers, Defenders, and Reactors.

Statement of the Research Problem

Companies that use organisational strategy may have a higher likelihood of surviving, growing their market base, and ranking highly, whilst those that do not are frequently at the mercy of environmental factors as pointed by Porter (1985). The Prospectors, Analyzers, Defenders, and Reactors were the four competitive strategic choices outlined by Miles and Snow in 1978. Prospectors, Analyzers, and Defenders are important for good performance as a results of alignment of the organisational strategies and the environmental requirements. The fourth type of strategy, the reactor, is conceptualised in line with the idea of strategic simplicity but does not represent a very effective approach (Lumpkin & Dess, 2012; Miller & Dess, 1993; Parnell & Wright, 1993). Findings of previous studies affirmed the validity of strategic typology propounded by Miles and Snow while few findings disagreed with the postulation of Miles and Snow (Hambrick, 2003; Parnell, 2012; Oyedijo & Akewushola, 2012; Sollosy, 2013; Karabag & Berggren, 2014).

The intense competition in the telecommunications sector seems to be driving Universal Mobile Telecommunication Service (UMTS) Companies to employ organisational methods that will enable them to seize opportunities, counter threats, and outmanoeuvre rivals (Akingbade, 2014). In Nigeria, the telecommunications sector has experienced tremendous growth and development during the past twenty-two years. Both the quantity and quality of the various services offered to customers have significantly improved. The number of telecom service providers has increased as a result of the deregulation of the sector. As a result, there is competition among the providers as each one pursues methods that will aid them in having a reasonable share in the market. It is necessary to find out the connectivity of organizational strategy and performances of firms in the telecommunication industry.

There has been growing interest in firm resources to enhanced performance, and testing strategy typologies too is also important, especially in industrializing economies like Nigeria with limited testing. Indeed, according to the past studies, Porter's generic strategy and Miles & Snow's strategic approach are compared in developing countries (Kimura & Mourdo-Ukoutas, 2010; Leiblein, 2013; Parnell, 2012). There are few high-quality publications that examine how managers conceptualise corporate strategy in developing countries (Beneke, 2010; Groznik & Maslaric, 2010). Although studies on the subject had looked at emerging economies, scholars and researchers continue to improve their understanding of the connectivity of organisational strategies and performance (Pang, Cropp & Cameron, 2006; Wongtada & Rice, 2008). Only a few of these studies have empirically validated Porter's generic strategies in Nigeria (Akingbade, 2016). This study identifies the prevailing dominant organizational strategies among Nigerian telecommunication companies and the extent to which particular organizational strategies could determine the performance of firms. This provides adequate and effective response to changing condition and check disruption and disequilibrium that could threaten organizational survival.

Literature Review and Theoretical Background

Organisational Strategies

Hence, Campbell-Hunt (2000) described Porter generic strategy has an unquestionably and most substantial and influential contributions to the study of strategic behaviour in organizations.

Organizations concentrated or focused on pursuing most effective competitive strategies to enable them to be more competitive, profitable and have an edge over their competitors (Akingbade, 2014). Thus, there are many strategies like Porter's (1980) generic strategy as well as the Miles and Snow (1978) strategic typology that explain the competition among organisation in similar industry in order to attain competitive advantage (Akingbade, 2016 & Alnoor, Khaw, Al-Abrrow & Alharbi, 2022). The competitive position of a firm is based on the framework developed by Porter (1980) that is meant for the analysis of environmental competition. The "five forces model" is based on market competition as a function of the following five competitive forces: Threat of new entrants; the bargaining power of buyers; the bargaining power of suppliers; threats from the substitute products, and close proximity of substitute products. According to Akingbade (2021), organisations can employ any of the generic strategies such as Cost leadership, Product differentiation and Focus strategy or Miles and Snow strategic achytype like Prospectors, Analysers, Defenders and Reactors to achieve a competitive advantage due to their crucial to attainment of organisational goals.

Cost leadership strategy concentrate on realizing the industry lowest cost to attain competitive advantage and superior returns (Alnoor, et al 2022). Cost leadership strategy aids organisations to be a leader in their industries by outperforming its rivals in terms of total cost. A group effort is made to produce goods with qualities that consumers accept at a cost that is less than that of rivals (Alnoor, et al 2022). Porter noted that adoption of cost leadership strategy aids firms to be aggressive in pursuing low cost of production and reduction in the operational expenses of the firms (Amoaka-Gyampah & Acquaah, 2008). Therefore, a cost leadership firm try to create more price sensitive customers by giving them products at price below the prevailing market price.

Differentiation strategy focus on distinguishing the firms from competitors in terms of quality product, company image, effective delivery system, customer feedback to increase their loyalty

(Alnoor, et al 2022). Differentiation strategy is all about development of a product that consumers perceive as being superior across the board and distinctive in terms of distinctive flavour, superior quality, distinctive design, and other factors, a company can gain a competitive edge (Adeoye et al., 2023). Differentiation strategy can take the form of innovativeness, product quality, reliability, durability, features that are difficult for rivals to copy (Amoaka-Gyampah & Acquaah, 2008). A firm pursuing differentiation strategy may distinguish its product from rivals own in term of uniqueness, physical characteristics, improved performance, best customer service, rigorous advertisement, marketing strategy which enable the firm to convince their customers on superiority of their product and fetch them better image, reputation, customer satisfaction, loyalty and retention (Akingbade, 2014). Therefore, quality product that is difficult to imitate by rivals is the basis for differentiation competition in an industry not price which propel firm to be innovative.

Focus strategy is when a company concentrate on a section of the market by employing one of the generic strategy and targeting geographical area, market segmentation and customer group (Alnoor, et al 2022). Focus Strategy involves the selection of a particular segment or group of segments and catering to their somewhat special needs. It may also take the form of concentrating on a limited geographic market or on certain uses for the product (Porter, 1980). Therefore, a firm concentrate on serving a narrow market niche in a geographical region in order to attain either cost minimization or differentiation advantage.

Based on their patterns of strategic decisions, organisations are classified subjectively into four groups by Miles and Snow (1978) using the terms Prospectors, Analyzers, Defenders, and Reactors. The three of the four recognised strategic archetypes—Prospectors, Analyzers, and Defenders—should perform well and should outperform the fourth type, Reactors, according to Miles & Snow's (1978) hypothesis, because it lacks a coherent approach. According to the typology proposed by Miles and Snow (1978), strategy is a set of choices the business unit makes to match its management procedures with its surroundings. These choices include capability orientations (Sollosy, 2013). The organization's orientation towards choosing and altering its product-market domain and what Miles and Snow (1978) characterised as the entrepreneurial dilemma, as well as how the organisation approaches creating and delivering, stands out among these capabilities.

Prospectors are businesses that enter the market first by developing new goods, taking measured risks, and adopting new technology in order to establish themselves as industry leaders across a variety of industries. They actively pursue new market prospects and expand their offering of goods and services in order to retain a competitive position (Martin & Kato, 2010). Prospectors possessed the qualities that demonstrated high risk orientation, quick reaction to changing conditions, and innovation. Prospectors concentrate on the external environmental factors in order to compete in the industry (Hansu, 2016).

Defender are organisations that carve a niche for themselves in the industry or market so as to primarily compete on the basis of cost effectiveness, price, service delivery, and quality. Defender organisations maintain a narrow and stable set of products or services (Hambrick, 1983; Gnjidic, 2014; Youssef & Christodoulou, 2017). By using core technology, established and standardised technical processes, economies of scale, and a profitable line of products in market niches that are hard for rivals to enter, they maintain old without developing new product-markets in a stable environment to protect market share (Martins & Kato, 2010). Competition's non-substitutability innovation, however, might have an impact on a defender's organisational success.

Analyzers are businesses that gain a competitive edge through strategic adoption of prospectors and defenders traits. Analyzers modify the products and/or services they offer to the market more slowly than the prospectors. Analyzers do not place emphasize on the value of efficiency as well as stability than the defenders (Akingbade, 2016). Analysts are slow to be adopters.

They do not easily or quickly adopt strategic traits when it comes to the development of new goods or services (Isoherrarem & Kess, 2011). However, they keep an eye on their rivals and revise their plans to include fresh ideas with promising market prospects, risk-taking, low R&D costs, adaptable technology, risk reduction, profit maximisation, cost efficiency, and superior products or services.

Reactors' approach are businesses that lack a distinct and succinct mix of structure and strategy due to a strong leader or because they do not fit into the challenging and intensely competitive environment. This makes the business to be viewed as non-strategy business. Th59ey are pressured to adapt by the competitive environment in order to preserve business success and avoid organisational catastrophes. Their approach is reactive rather than proactive, which is inappropriate given the current state of the organisation (Isoherrarem & Kess 2011).

Theoretical Background

Resource-Based Viewpoint (RBV) stressed on the unique competences and resources as the source of long-term competitive advantage. For sustainability of an organisation competitive advantage, the organisations' resources must be valuable, unusual, distinctive, and non-substitutable, according to Barney (1991). The RBV model according to Barney (1991) is based on the notion that the internal environment of an organisation embodies the resources and capabilities and it is highly relevant and significant than the external environmental factors in influencing the organisation strategic decisions. Literature supports the idea that different organisational strategies have diverse effects on company performance (Akingbade, 2016, Oyedijo, 2012; Parnell, 2012; Sollosy, 2013; Abiodun & Ibidunni, 2014). The development in the Nigeria telecommunication industries has necessitated the growing importance of organizational strategies in the industry, an important gap in the extant literature is the availability of reliable empirical evidence concerning possible linkages between organizational strategies and performance effects of telecommunication companies.

Hypotheses Development

H_{o1}: There is no significant differences among Miles & Snow strategies in the Nigerian Telecommunication industry.

H_{o2}: There is no significant differences between Porter's strategies in the Nigerian Telecommunication industry.

Research Methods

The cross-sectional design of the survey research, which mostly relies on questionnaires to obtain data, is the primary reason it was selected. The study was carried out in Lagos State, the most populous metropolis in West Africa and the current industrial and commercial hub of the nation were the headquarters of all telecommunication companies are located. Four (4) telecommunication firms like MTN, Airtel, Globalcom, 9Mobile were selected for the study. These four are the one providing Universal Mobile Telecommunication Services (UMTS) and Long Term Evolution (LTE) to about 98 per cent phone users in Nigeria.

A questionnaire was employed as a source for collection of primary data and research instrument and it was primarily created to extract information from the respondents. The questionnaire was developed to examine empirically the comparative analysis between Porter's generic strategy and Miles & Snow strategic approach utilized by the selected telecommunication companies and how they enhanced their performance. Most of the items used to measure Porter's generic strategy and Miles & Snow strategic approach came from the instruments developed by (Akingbade, 2016). Performance was measured objectively looking at sales growth, market share, profitability and customer satisfaction. This performance employed objective measures developed by Gray (1997); Venkatraman and Ramanujam (1996).

The study population is 19,459 workers who are in the top and middle level of selected telecommunication companies. The study used purposive sampling method. 377 respondents are determined by sample size using Taro Yamane formula of 1967. A content validated questionnaire subjected to test-re-test measure of reliability was used as the research instrument. Out of the total 377 questionnaires distributed, 356 were retrieved representing a response rate of 94.4%. Cronbach's alpha was used to test the internal consistency of the research instrument which values were 0.831 for prospector, 0.836 for analyser, 0.779 for defender,0.768 for reactor, 0.830 for product differentiation, 0.885 for cost leadership and 0.714 for performance. The data were analysed using descriptive statistics and Analysis of Variance (ANOVA).

Testing of Hypotheses

H_{o1}: There is no significant difference among Miles & Snow strategies in the Nigerian Telecommunication industry.

The data in Table 1 showed that the analysis of variance to ascertain the level of significant differences. The results showed that F value of 14.067 with significant value 0.000 at 0.05 level. The f-statistic value is strong with the p=0.000 and less than 0.05% confidence level. Thus, the null hypothesis is rejected and the study asserts that there is a significant difference between Miles and Snow strategies in the Nigerian telecommunication. It is further demonstrated that three predictor of organizational strategies significantly predicted the performance of the telecommunication companies in Nigeria. These predictors are prospectus strategy (B = .115, t = 3.701, P=0.000), domain defender strategy (B = .082, t = 2.158, P=0.032), and reactor strategy (B = -.103. t = -2.964, P=0.003). The relative significant contribution of each of the predictor variables to the organizational performance showed that prospectus strategy had the greatest significant contribution to the performance of selected telecommunication companies followed by reactor, then defender, while the anxious analyzer strategy had the least significant contribution on the performance of selected telecommunication companies.

Table 1. Results for the Significant Difference between Mile & Snow Strategies

Predictors	Unstandardized Coefficients				
	B	**Std. Error**	**T**	**P-value**	**P value-Ranking**
(Constant)	23.644	1.541	15.339	.000	
Prospectus	.115	.031	3.701	.000	1st
Analyzer	.043	.046	.937	.350	4th
Defender	.082	.038	2.158	.032	3rd
Reactor	-.103	.035	-2.964	.003	2nd

F Statistic = 14.067; P value = 0.000; N = 356.

a. Dependent Variable: Performance.

Source: Author's computation.

H_{o2}: There is no significant differences between Porter's strategies in the Nigerian Telecommunication industry.

Table 2 showed the result of Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) of the difference in performance of a telecommunication company that are pursuing product differentiation or cost leadership strategies exclusively and telecommunication company that are pursuing both strategies together.

Table 2. Results for the Significant Difference between Porter's Generic Strategies

Multiple Comparisons					
Dependent Variable: Performance					
	(I) Organizational Strategies	(J) Organizational Strategies	Mean Difference (I-J)	Std. Error	Sig.
Scheffe	Product Differentiation	Cost Leadership	1.94101*	.44704	.000
		Both Strategies	-50.31180*	.44704	.000
	Cost Leadership	Product Differentiation	-1.94101*	.44704	.000
		Both Strategies	-52.25281*	.44704	.000
	Both Strategies	Product Differentiation	50.31180*	.44704	.000
		Cost Leadership	52.25281*	.44704	.000

*: The mean difference is significant at the 0.05 level.

Source: Author's computation.

The study used post hoc Scheffe test to ascertain the differences between Porter's Strategies. The significant differences were obtained between cost leadership and both strategies on one hand and between product differentiation and both strategies on the other hand. There is statistically significant difference in performance of selected Telecommunication companies in favour of those that are using product differentiation at a mean difference of 50.31180. This implies that Telecommunication companies' performance differ significantly among those companies that practiced product differentiation. Based on this result, the hypothesis which states that performance of a telecommunication company that are pursuing product differentiation or cost leadership strategies exclusively will be higher than in Telecommunication Company that are pursuing both strategies together cannot be rejected.

Findings and Discussion

The finding of the study revealed that predominantly prospector's strategy, anxious analyzers strategy, domain defenders' strategy, and reluctant reactors strategy jointly have significant influence on the organizational performance of selected telecommunication companies in Nigeria.

The finding revealed that three independent variables that is, organizational strategies significantly predicted organizational performance of the selected telecommunication companies in Nigeria. These variables are prospectus strategy, reactor strategy, and defender strategy. Furthermore, finding revealed that there is statistically significant difference in performance of selected telecommunication companies in favour of those that are using product differentiation at a mean difference of 50.31180. This implies that telecommunication companies' performance differs significantly among those companies that practiced product differentiation. The finding of this study suggests that product differentiation affect performance of the selected telecommunication companies in Nigeria.

Theoretical research showed that the RBV model is based on the idea that an organization's internal environment, in terms of its resources and skills, is more important in determining its strategic actions than the environment outside the organisation (Barney, 1991). A company can maximise performance, in accordance with Porter (1985), by either aiming to be the low cost producer in a given industry or by differentiating its line of goods or services from those of other companies. An organization's efforts can be concentrated on a particular market segment in conjunction with any of these two techniques. According to Porter (1980), any company that tries to integrate the two approaches always finds itself in the middle of the road.

Conclusions

There is no single but best strategy can be generalized; however, this study embarked on comparative analysis between Porter's generic strategy and Miles & Snow strategic approach utilized by the selected telecommunication companies and how they enhanced their performance. The study provides both empirical and statistical evidence on the relationship among organizational strategies like prospectus, analyzers, defenders, reactors, cost leadership, product differentiation, resource base and organizational performance. This research established that telecommunication company performances are determined by predominantly prospectus, anxious analyzer, domain defender and reluctant reactor. This study further established that Telecommunication Company pursuing product differentiation or cost leadership strategies exclusively will be higher than in performance than those pursuing both strategies together. The study established a link between organisational performance and the extent to which organisational strategies are employed by Nigerian telecommunications businesses. Thus, Nigeria telecommunication companies do adopt organizational strategies and are conscious of the potential benefits of enhanced performance.

Recommendations

Based on the conclusions, the recommendations are made to strengthening the organizational strategies and performance relationships in the Nigeria telecommunication companies. The study recommends that firms using the differentiation strategy should concentrate on efficiency in all areas of operation investing in and be different in their innovation, service delivery, marketing as well as quality in a way that it will be well perceived by customers.

The study recommends that the Nigerian telecommunication firms need to continue to adopt cost leadership strategy. The management should make sure the company is equipped to seize opportunities, react quickly to environmental changes, and recover quickly from value erosion brought on by rival actions.

The report suggests that the telecommunications companies should concentrate on the market in order to increase market sustainability. Companies employing this technique need to segment their markets in some way in order to effectively meet the needs of the market as marketplaces get more dynamic and customers become more erratic and fickle. A company's unique selling proposition should be formally defined, institutionalised, and disseminated. Since customers' opinions of the institutions are important, managers must make sure that the message of differentiation reaches them. Companies' segmentation levels should be raised to better reflect the strategy used (Mwangi & Ombui, 2013). The findings suggest that a strategy of product/service and market innovation and other factors will help the telecommunications industry reach high levels of organisational success.

Limitations of the Study and Suggestions for Further Research

The focus of this study was to examine the comparative performance improvement management in Nigeria Telecommunication Industry, using Miles & Snow and Porter's Strategic approach. Future research has been given some feasible directions. This study information is completely dependent on managers' self-evaluations of the factors under investigation, which are frequently subject to prejudice. Only the four largest service providers in the Nigerian telecommunications sector make up the sample, which can limit the generalizability of results because other telecommunications businesses are not included. Additionally, conclusions from this study could be more broadly generalised if it were repeated in a different setting or with enterprises from a different nation. This study empirically compared and tested Miles & Snow and Porter generic strategy. Further researcher is suggested to test the focus strategy of Porter generic strategy in another industry and many countries.

This study was unable to account for environmental variations. For instance, market volatility, market expansion, uncertainty, etc., may affect the proper strategy and may affect the relationship between strategy and performance. On this subject matter, more study is advised. The significance of the chosen strategy's perseverance and consistency with regard to this matter. Does a particular situation call for a rigid, seldom changed strategy or for a flexible, frequently updated strategy? Strategy by itself is not a goal. A company's strategy is crucial for providing direction, and it should be in line with the resources and capabilities that are now at their disposal. Particularly telecommunications firms may experience resource limitations and disadvantages compared to larger firms in the same sector.

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