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INFLUENCE OF MARKETING MANAGEMENT STRATEGIES ON THE PERFORMANCE OF SELECT MANUFACTURING FIRMS IN SOUTH-EASTERN NIGERIA

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Abstract

The study focused on influence of marketing management strategies on select manufacturing companies in South-Eastern Nigeria. The objectives of the study include: to examine the relationship between innovation and market share of companies in South-Eastern Nigeria; to ascertain the relationship between product positioning and profit level of companies in south-Eastern, Nigeria and to examine the relationship between intensive distribution and customer loyalty of companies in South-Eastern, Nigeria. the population of the study comprised all the management teams of PZ industries PLC, Nigeria Bottling Company ltd and 7-Up company ltd which total 1,100 (one thousand, one hundred) a sample size of 293 (two hundred and ninety-three) was drawn from the population using Taro Yamani (1964) statistical formula. Content validity and reliability tests of the survey instrument were established. Description research method was used. Copies of questionnaire were administered to 293 respondents through personal contact but 290 copies of questionnaire were returned which formed the basis for data analysis. Data were analyzed using percentage and frequency distribution tables. Three hypotheses were formulated and tested with Pearson product moment correlation coefficient to determine the nature and degree of association between the study variables. The major findings in the study showed that: there is a significant relationship between innovation and market share, there is a significant relationship between product positioning and profit level of companies and there is a significant relationship between intensive distribution and *customer loyalty in the companies. The study concluded that organizations should be proactive and not reactive in order to take advantage of anticipated opportunities in the market place. The researchers therefore recommend that management team of organizations should regularly monitor and manage their SWOT analytical tool and take appropriate actions; management of organizations should at intervals conduct studies through their Research and Development (R & D) departments to find out customers degree of acceptance or rejection of their offerings for strategy formulation and implementation; Human Resource management of the organizations should recruit and select sales force personnel that have physical, social, technical and intellectual abilities in performing their jobs among others.*

Keywords: Innovation, Product Positioning, Customer Loyalty, Institutional Theory, Game Theory, Product Quality Theory and Intensive Distribution

Introduction

Marketing strategies are those weapons that marketing managers project as nuclear arsenal to solving and resolving marketing problems (Okolo, 2017). Modern marketing is indeed of age in Nigeria, which is accompanied with increasing sophistication, sensitivity, dynamism, complexity, and instability of not just Nigeria's marketing system and environment, but also international markets (Agbonifoh, Ogwo, Nnolim and Nkamnebe, 2007). Such transformations are no doubt changing and indeed will continue to change the ways in which exchange is carried out in Nigeria. The ability of marketing organizations to master these new trends and even predict them will go a long way in determining the success or failure of these organizations. In this era of customer driven competitive market/marketing environment, success belongs only to those companies that are ready to tap into the future and discover better ways of solving or resolving anticipated customer problems (Anyanwu, 2013). The success story of marketing organizations may to an extent, depend on what they produce or offer to customers for their optimum satisfaction, but more importantly about how they offer it and to what extent it meets with current and potential customers expectations regarding what and how it is offered (product), how affordable it is (price), where and when it is offered (place) and to what extent it is brought to customers knowledge (promotion), as well as its sustainability.

Organizations who understand that every market or economic situation calls for a different futuristic marketing approach and focus are most likely to take profitable advantage of the dynamic nature of the marketing environment, than those who try to resist change (Hunt, 2000). This is why in strategic marketing, a company is required to look into the future in order to anticipate the likely changes in customer taste, preferences as well as opportunities that these might offer so as to better position itself to take advantage of them. Adirika, Ebue and Nnolim (2007) opine that organizations do employ the process of strategic marketing to convert unfulfilled marketing needs into profitable business opportunities and these unfulfilled needs are the fallout of the dynamic nature of the market. They also assert that this convertibility nature of marketing was especially manifested during the Structural Adjustment Programme (SAP), when some new toilet tissue manufacturing firms exploited the opportunity that emerged in the industry to produce various sizes and qualities to meet each market segment's needs.

No study in Nigeria had assessed the relationship between innovation and market share, product positioning and profit level, and customer loyalty and that is the gap in the literature that this particular study has succeeded filling.

Statement of problem

The Nigerian marketing environment is like a rollercoaster, and almost at the speed of light, such that the success or failure of firms operating in this environment is contingent upon how well they are able to position themselves to take advantage of, or to respond to, the unavoidable changes (Agbonifoh et al, 2007). Indeed, they must change from the usual way they think and act. They need to act fast, globally but locally. This requires proactively anticipating and managing change, which requires that they should be more strategic than ever in equipping themselves with the necessary resources required to strategically choose markets to invest in.

Most organizations do not properly analyze their current marketing situations in terms of describing their target markets and company's position; including information about the market, product performance, competition and distribution. Without a strategic orientation, the organization's preparedness to satisfy the needs of its targeted markets would be weakened. Once this happens, the possibility of achieving organizational objectives would be seriously hampered. Indeed, matching organizational competencies such as its products, with the needs of the markets competitively is one important area of strategic planning where marketing plays a prominent role.

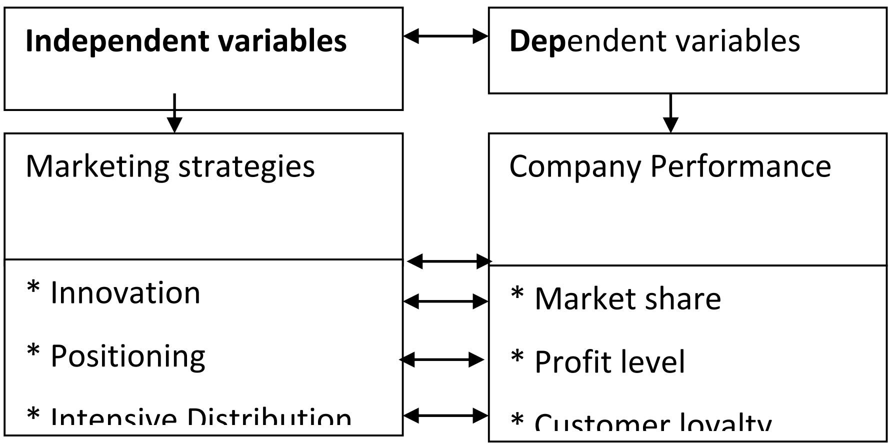

Figure I: Schematic Diagram of the Conceptual Framework of the Study.
Source: Anyanwu (2013). Marketing Management and Strategy Owerri: Avan Global Publications.

Without mincing words, most marketing managers fail to face the fact that being innovative had become a way of life for most successful enterprises. They lack the etiquette to robust product positioning and also misunderstand intensive distribution as the most profitable approach to making goods available to consumers in fulfilment of place utility. These marketing strategies have direct correlation with a company's market share, profit and customer loyalty and must be judiciously handled.

Objectives of the study

The main objectives of the study are to examine the relationship between marketing strategies and company performance of companies in South East Nigeria.

Specifically, the study seeks to:

i. To examine the relationship between innovation and market share of companies in South-East Nigeria.
ii. To ascertain the relationship between product positioning and profit level of companies in South-East Nigeria

iii. To investigate the relationship between intensive distribution and customer loyalty of companies in South-East Nigeria.

Research Questions

Based on the stated objectives, the following research questions guide this study:

i. What is the relationship between innovation and market share of companies in South-East Nigeria?
ii. What is the extent of relationship between positioning and profit level of companies in South-East Nigeria?
iii. What is the relationship between intensive distribution and customer loyalty of companies in South-East Nigeria?

Research Hypotheses

In the light of the forgoing, the following hypotheses of the study are formulated

i. Ho: There is no significant relationship between innovation and market share of companies in South East Nigeria.
ii. Ho: There is no significant relationship between positioning and profit level of companies in South-East Nigeria.
iii. Ho: There is no significant relationship between intensive distribution and customer loyalty of companies in South-East Nigeria.

Conceptual Framework
Innovation:

An innovation is not just a new product but one that offers new and improved value to customers. An innovation becomes necessary when an existing product no longer meets with the acceptance of the market place (Anyanwu, 2013). To be successful, innovation must not be viewed from the eyes of the organization but that of the customers/consumers. Innovation, therefore, should be market oriented (i.e. it must be seen by the consumer to have added value to him).

Miles (2003) and Anyanwu (2013) posit that lack of market orientation has been a principal reason for failure of most innovative ideas. Organizations have gone ahead to commercialize without first test marketing because they have considered value from their own view rather than from the point of view of the market or marketer who incidentally has contact with the market and therefore understands it better. Some authorities have concluded that competitiveness is not simply based on cutting costs and that new growth and increased market share come from product innovation. They went further to posit that innovation in manufacturing means looking at new ways of doing things and that it must adapt based on public (customer) demand. It is also their strong belief that product innovation is futuristic, and therefore, is concerned with future trends in competition and market share and that it will need to address new features due to new customer needs. Innovation might not necessarily be an entirely novel product and in which case requiring a complete change in consumer consumption pattern/behaviour (Varadarajan and Satish, 1999).

The most popular classifications of innovation are as follows (Obiesie, 2003; Anyanwu, 2013):

i. **Continuous Innovation**
This is mild review in the features of old existing products in order to take care of certain customers/market characteristics. For instance a change in the colour of a

product or its package is a continuous innovation since it takes care of the colour psychology of consumers. Daye, Vanauken and Asacker (2008) identify colour as a critical element in developing a product and that colour not only enhances the appearance of the item but also influence consumer behaviour towards being favourably disposed to a firm's product. A change in the colour of a firm's product might become imperative because the effect and consumer perception of colour differ from culture to culture, e.g. white is death in China but purple means the same thing in Brazil. Yellow is sacred to the Chinese but signifies sadness in Greece and Jealousy in France (Daye, Vanauken and Asacker, 2008).

ii. **Dynamically Continuous Innovation**
This is one that requires a greater review in the old existing product more than the continuous innovation and therefore requires a change in consumer pattern of consumption. For instance, a change from manual clipper to electric clipper, or manual typewriter to electric typewriter.

iii. **Discontinuous Innovation**
This represents novel products requiring a complete change in consumer behaviour e.g. the invention of our air transportation.

Product Positioning/Repositioning

Positioning entails determining the favourable place and space a company's product or brand occupies in the minds of consumers while repositioning entails changing the place and space a company's product or brand occupies in the minds of consumers (Dairymple and Parson, 2000; Cravens and Piercy, 2003). Positioning and repositioning strategies are very critical and important to the success of a company's marketing programme in that they try to create a uniqueness about the product and therefore make consumers to assume a positive perception towards the product. Product positioning is a marketing technique intended to present products in the best possible light to different target audiences and involves consumers' perceptions of a product's attributes, uses, qualities and advantages relative to competing brands (Leboeuf, 2000). Marketers often conduct marketing research studies to analyze consumer preferences and to construct product position maps that plot their products position in relation to those of competitors' offerings.

In the words of Anyanwu (2013), positioning in marketing seeks to place products in the minds of prospective buyers to enable repeat purchase and guarantee savings in promotional expenditure. A firm first determines how it wants its products perceived by the market and then goes ahead to position the product in that direction. For instance, the Toyota pyrius brand reinforces the consumer perception of a progressive and environmental friendly product, Hyundai reinforces frugality, Mercedes reinforces success and status.

Intensive Distribution

This is a strategy whereby a company makes use of as many middlemen as possible in the distribution of its products (Okpara, 2002). The company sells through all willing middlemen so long as the product is enough to go round, the objective being to give maximum exposure or wide market coverage to its product. Though this strategy sometimes leads to the loss of control of the distribution channel on the part of the firms (Onyeke and Nebo, 2000); however it has the advantage of wider reach and greater sales turnover (Palmer, 2001). It also does not give room for middlemen to become monopolistic (Nwosu, 2003).

This strategy is common in the distribution of convenience goods which consumers tend to buy at the first available shop. Examples are toilet soaps, toilet tissue paper and table water which are sold in all kinds of retail outlets such as market stalls, street-side shops, kiosks, supermarkets and chemist shops. Thus, intensive distribution is likely to be adopted for convenience goods, when the goods are of low unit cost, bought frequently and by a large number of people who are widely distributed geographically (Johnson and Selnes, 2004).

Market share

A company's market share is the ratio of its sales to total industry sales (Day, 2005). In other words, it is the company's total sales in a given market over a given period expressed as a proportion of the sales of all companies in the industry. Kotler and Armstrong (2010) opine that a company's market share increases with increase in both market and sales potentials. The market potential for a product is generally considered to be the maximum total expected sales in monetary (Naira) or volume units of a product by all sellers during a stated period of time in a stated market, while sales potential is the maximum sales a company expects to make in a given period as it increases its marketing effort. The structure-conduct-performance model (Leboeuf, 2000) posits a positive relationship between industry concentration and profitability. Evidence also suggests that the relationship between market share and profitability is robust across different definitions of market share, different sampling frames and controls for accounting method variation.

- The quality explanation. In markets beset by uncertainty and imperfect information about product performance, the high market share of a brand acts as a signal of superior quality to consumers. In such markets, consumers are likely to have greater confidence in high market share brands. This enables high market share brands to command a price premium over lower market share brands and thereby enhance their profitability.
- The market power explanation. Businesses with a high market share, by exercising their market power-the ability to command a price premium, lower costs by negotiating for more favourable terms (than their competitors are able to) with vendors and marketing intermediaries, and obtaining favourable shelf placements from retailers enhance their profitability.
- The efficiency explanation. The scale and experience effects associated with market share lead to lower costs and thereby enable a business with a high market share to earn higher profits than its competitors with a low market share.
- The third-factor explanation. A set of factors (unobservables such as luck, uncertainty, or managerial insight) may play a crucial role in helping a business achieve a high market share as well as superior performance.

Profit level

Revenue is the most important aspect of every economic activity. It is the product of total output and unit price of units of output sold (Chima, 2003). All management decisions regarding the acquisition of production factors of labour, capital, land and co-ordinations, are all aimed at generating revenue from which profit is expected.

Profit is measured by the excess of revenue from sales over the costs that expired in obtaining the revenue. Thus, it is seen that profit is a residual, which is dependent upon the volume of output sold (Onah and Thomas, 2004). Management attempts to maximize its profits from operations by use of its knowledge of the effects of changes in sales volume and changes in operating costs on profit (Rossiler, 2001). To the extent that these two variables can be controlled, the desired profit for the period may be obtained

Customer loyalty

Customer loyalty refer to customer consistent and serious commitment to patronize a company permanently and perpetually (Okolo, Agu, Obikeze and Ugonna, 2015). This is the result of consistently positive emotional experience, physical attribute based satisfaction and perceived value of an experience which includes the product or service. Loyalty means hanging in there even when there may be a problem. This occurs because the organization has been good to them in the past and addresses issues when they arise. It means that they do not seek out competitors and, when approached by competitors, are not interested. It also means being wilful to spend the time and effort to communicate with the organization so as to build on past successes and overcome any weaknesses. In a nutshell, loyalty means a customer wants to do business with you and does.

Loyal customers believe the products and services purchased from their suppliers are superior to those of the competition. Frequently, they are customers who view their interaction as more than simply transactional. They believe there is a relationship that is bigger than just the products or services they buy. Measuring loyalty means measuring the strength of this relationship between buyer and seller, between the organization and its customer. What we are looking at is measuring those attitudes as well as behaviours that we know make up this concept of loyalty. For example, some of the important attitudes and behaviours expected of a loyal customer include (Wilkie and Moore, 2006).

- Likelihood to recommend your products and services to others.
- Likelihood to continue purchasing your products and services, at minimum, at the same level.
- Likelihood of purchasing other products and services you offer.
- Believing your products and services are superior to others offered in the market place.
- Not actively seeking alternative providers to replace you.
- Providing your company with opportunities to correct problems and not using these as a basis for compromising the relationship.

Based on customers' responses to questions such as these as well as others that evaluate specific aspects of their relationship with your company, a loyalty profile of your customers can be created. Loyalty segments categorize customers as loyal, neutral and vulnerable.

Theoretical framework

Institutional theory

This theory suggests that the actions of firms and the outcomes of these actions are influenced by the knowledge systems, beliefs, and rules that characterize the context of the organization (Varadarajan and Satish, 1999).

- ➢ The firm is embedded in a general environment comprising (a) the institutions that lay the guidelines to shape the behaviour of firms and (b) macro-societal factors such as the prevailing culture.
- ➢ The firm is embedded in an industry environment that comprises the actors within an industry such as suppliers, customers, competitors, and channel partners. The nature of the relationships among these industry stakeholders influences the actions that a firm can initiate in pursuit of competitive advantage.

- The firm has an internal environment that comprises its unique sets of skills and resources; collective beliefs about the market, competition, and industry (e.g., shared mental models; and culture).

Corporate strategy, business strategy, and functional strategies such as marketing strategy interact to shape the competitive advantage of individual businesses in a firm's portfolio. It is the confluence of these strategies that determines the extent to which a particular business is able to achieve and sustain a competitive advantage. This competitive advantage, in turn, affects the market-based performance and financial performance of the businesses. A number of competing and complementary theories in industrial organization economics, business policy and strategy, and marketing provide valuable insights into the determinants of performance at different levels. For instance:

- The structure-conduct-performance model (Baker, 1999) attempts to explain "why some industries, on average, are more profitable than others".
- The efficiency perspective (Canon, 1999) provides insights into "why some firms in an industry are more profitable than others".
- The works of Wilkie and Moore (2006) provide insights into "how the structural characteristics of an industry and the competitive strategy pursued by a business jointly determine the performance of a business."
- The resource-based view of the firm (Tamilia,2009) attempts to explain superior firm/business performance in terms of firm-specific skills and resources that are rare, valuable, and characterized by absence of equivalent substitutes.
- The works of Palmer (2001) is representative of research that attempts to shed insights into content, process, and implementation factors that affect long-term performance of firms at a more general level regardless of the industry in which they operate.

Game Theory

Game-theoretic models assume that firms are (hyper) rational utility maximizers, where rationality implies that they strive to achieve the most preferred of outcomes subject to the constraint that their rivals also behave in a similar fashion (Cravens and Piercy,2003). While there may be uncertainty regarding the expectations and actions of its rivals, a rational firm is expected to overcome uncertainty by forming competitive conjectures, subjective probability estimates of rivals' expectations and behaviour. In effect, game-theoretic models assume intelligent firms that can put themselves into the "shoes" of their rivals and reason from their perspective. Such firms carry out Signalling.

Competitive signals are "announcements or previews of potential actions intended to convey information or to gain information from competitors. Competitive behaviour is often influenced by signals sent by competitors. Signalling could also place the firm that sends the signal at a disadvantage. For example, signals that provide competitors with advance information about the firm's intentions could hurt the competitive position of the firm, and signals that are not followed through (cheap talk) could hurt the competitive reputation of the firm. Furthermore, signalling that is interpreted as predatory behaviour may trigger antitrust review into the behaviour of the firm.

Product Quality Theory

The economic view of quality is "any aspect other than price that influences the demand curve of a product". Combining these two notions, quality can be construed as any non price aspect of product that signifies its superiority and causes a shift in its demand curve. Ideally, a business would want to sustain a higher price as well as a higher market share but these two objectives may not always be compatible. That is, if the business were to follow a niching strategy by offering a high quality product at a high price targeted at a small market niche, it effectively excludes itself from the contest for market share dominance in the broader market.

The ability of a business to charge higher prices for higher quality is contingent on the ease with which consumers can determine the quality of the product. When quality is uncertain, consumers tend to use price as an indicator of quality. This suggests a bidirectional relationship between quality and price, in which perceived quality positively influences price under conditions of greater information availability, and price positively influences perceived quality under conditions of lower information availability.

Research Methodology

Anyanwu (2016) posits that research design is all about why and how of the research study. It is both a plan and structure. As a plan, it maps out the stage-by-state pattern of investigation to be able to obtain answers to the research questions, and as a structure, it lays down the framework of the relations among variables of a study.

Explanatory research design was used in this study. This is because it is interested in generating data to answer research questions or to explain the relationship among variables.

The sources of data collection are mainly primary data (information generated by the researcher on the variables of interest in the study). The primary data were generated through interviewing and questionnaire administered to the respondents.

The population of the study constitutes of all the management teams of Nigerian Bottling Company Ltd, Enugu State (630), PZ industries ltd, Ebonyi State (220) and 7-UP Company ltd, Anambra State (250) respectively which brings the total figure to 1100 (one thousand, one hundred) management teams (Companies Resource centre, 2017). This figure represents board members, unit managers, the supervisors, and administrative officers of the companies.

A sample size of 293 was drawn from the population of the study using Taro Yamani (1964) statistical formula:

$$n = \frac{N}{1_t N(e)^2}$$

n = sample

N = Population

1 = Constant

e = Margin of tolerable error

The sampling technique adopted in this study was the probability sampling which gave all the members of the sample equal chance of being selected, and which also made a sample to be representative of the population from which it was selected. The probability sampling method used was the systematic random sampling.

The sampling method (instrument and how to reach the respondents) which the researcher used in the generation of data for this study was the questionnaire. Copies of the questionnaire were administered to 293 respondents and out of this number, 290 was correctly filled and returned which formed the basis for data analysis.

The validity of the instrument was ascertained by using a questionnaire review-panel that did objective assessment of the questions and ensured their relevance to the issues at stake and coverage of the entire study.

In establishing the reliability estimate, the test/retest method was used. The instrument was administered to the same group of individual on two different occasions separated by time interval of between 7-14 days. The two sets of data from the two occasions were correlated using the pearson product moment correlation coefficient which was calculated and used to adjudge the reliability of the instrument. The value of the coefficient of correlation obtained was 0.7 which confirmed the instrument reliable and acceptable (Normelly, 1978).

The statistical technique adopted in testing the hypotheses was the Pearson product moment correlation coefficient (an inferential tool of the statistical package for social sciences version 21).

Data Analysis

Table Ia: Innovation strategy

A: Innovation is futuristic and concerns the future trends in competition .

Response options	Frequency	Percentage
Strongly Agree	80	27
Agree	190	65
Strongly Disagree	5	2
Disagree	10	3
Neutral	5	2
Total	290	100

Source: Survey Data, 2017

Table 1a above revealed that a total of 290 (92%) respondents were in agreement that innovation addresses future trends in competition, while 15(5% respondents did not agree. Only 5 (2%) respondents were undecided at the instance of the research.

Table 1b: Innovation strategy

B: Product innovation is effective in contributing to new growth and increased market share.

Response options	Frequency	Percentage
Strongly Agree	70	24
Agree	210	73
Strongly Disagree	3	1
Disagree	7	2
Neutral	-	100
Total	290	100

Source: survey Data, 2017.

In table Ib above, 280 respondents representing 97% were in agreement that innovation brings new growth and increased market share. Only 10 respondents representing 3% were not in agreement about the statement.

Table 2a: Product positioning strategy

A: Positioning is effective in creating a uniqueness and consumers positive perceptions about the product.

Response options	Frequency	Percentage
Strongly Agree	120	42
Agree	160	55
Strongly Disagree	-	-
Disagree	10	3
Neutral	-	-
Total	290	100

Source: Survey Data, 2017

Table 2a above indicated that 280 respondents representing 97% were in agreement about the above statement while only 10 respondents representing 3% disagreed with the statement.

Table 2b: Product positioning strategy

B: Positioning ensures repeat purchase and guarantees savings in promotional expenditure.

Response options	Frequency	Percentage
Strongly Agree	40	14
Agree	250	86
Strongly Disagree	-	-
Disagree	-	-
Neutral	-	-
Total	290	100

Source: Survey Data, 2017

In table 2b above, 40 respondents representing 14% strongly agreed on the statement, while 250 (66%) respondents were also in agreement. However, none of the respondents either showed disagreement or was undecided at the instance of the research.

Table 3a: Intensive Distribution strategy

A; Intensive distribution is effective in providing wider reach and greater sales volume.

Response options	Frequency	Percentage
Strongly Agree	90	31
Agree	160	56
Strongly Disagree	10	3
Disagree	30	10
Neutral	-	-
Total	290	100

Source: Survey Data, 2017.

Table 3a above revealed that 250 respondents representing statement, while 40 respondents disagreed on the statement. None of the respondents was undecided at the instance of the research.

Table 3b: Intensive Distribution strategy

B: Intensive distribution makes use of all the available intermediaries to give maximum exposure to company's products.

Response options	Frequency	Percentage
Strongly Agree	70	24
Agree	200	69
Strongly Disagree	-	-
Disagree	15	5
Neutral	5	2
Total	290	100

Source: Survey Data, 2017.

In table 3b above, a total of 270 respondents representing 93% were in agreement on the above statement, while 15 respondents representing 5% disagreed. Only 5 respondents representing 2% were undecided at the instance of the research.

Table 4a: Responses on sales force performance

A: Sales force performance is effective in contributing to the company's market share.

Response options	Frequency	Percentage
Strongly Agree	70	24
Agree	150	52
Strongly Disagree	20	7
Disagree	50	17
Neutral	-	-
Total	290	100

Source: Survey Data, 2017.

In table 4a above, 220 (76%) respondents were in agreement about the above statement while 70 (24%) respondents disagreed on the statement.

Table 4b: Responses on sales force performance

B: Sales force performance is effective in generating high level of sales revenue.

Response options	Frequency	Percentage
Strongly Agree	80	28
Agree	170	59
Strongly Disagree	10	3
Disagree	20	7
Neutral	10	3
Total	290	100

Source: Survey Data, 2017.

In table 4b above, 250 respondents representing 87% agreed on the above statement while 15 respondents representing 5% disagreed. Only 5 respondents representing 2% were undecided at the instance of the research.

Test of Hypotheses

Hypothesis I:

Ho: There is no significant relationship between innovation and market share of companies in South-East, Nigeria.

Decision rule

Interpret the correlation coefficient (r) in terms of the nature and degree of the variables of study using the following interpretation guide (Nwana, 2001).

Value of r	Interpretations
0.80 and above	Very high
0.60 to 0.80	High
0.40 to 0.60	Medium
0.20 to 0.40	Low
0.00 to 0.20	Very low

Source: Nwana, O.C. (2001) Educational measurement for teachers. Lagos: Thomas Nelson.

Table 5: Descriptive statistics

	N	Min.	Max.	Mean	Standard deviation
Innovation	10	25	35	29.00	3.454
Market share	10	23	30	26.90	2.601
Valid N (Listwise)	10				

Source: SPSS output Data, 2017

Table 6: Correlations

	Innovation	Market share
Pearson correlation innovation.	1	.703
Sig. (2-taited)		.023
N	10	10
Pearson correlation	703	1
market share. sig. (2.tailed)	.023	
N	10	10

*Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailted)

Source: SPSS Output Data, 2017

Interpretation

The descriptive statistics showed that innovation has a mean value of 29.00 and standard deviation of 3.454 while market share has a mean value of 26-90 and standard deviation 2.601 respectively.

The correlation coefficient (r) which has a value of 0.703, indicates that there is a significant relationship between innovation and market share of companies in South-East, Nigeria. In order to estimate the proportion of the variations in market share that are as a result of the variations in innovation , we calculate the coefficient of determination. The coefficient of determination, CD, is the square of the correlation coefficient,

i.e, $CD = r^2$

thus, $r = 0.703$

$r^2 = (0.703)^2 = 0.49$

This means that, with a correlation coefficient of 0.703 or 49.0% of the variations in market share are determined by variations in innovation. The correlation coefficient is high, signifying high degree of association between innovation and market share which did not occur by chance.
The null hypothesis was therefore rejected while the alternative hypothesis was accepted.

Hypothesis 2:

Ho: There is no significant relationship between product positioning and profit level of companies in South-East, Nigeria.

Table 7: Descriptive Statistics

	N	Min.	Max.	Mean	Std.Dev.
Product positioning	10	25	35	29.00	3.484
Profit level	10	23	30	26.60	2.366
Valid N (listwise)	10				

Source: SPSS Output Data, 2017

Table 8: Correlations

	Product positioning	Profit level
Pearson correlation	1	.773
product positioning sig. (2-tailed)		.009
N	10	10
Pearson correlation	.772	1
Profit level sig.(2-tailed)	.009	
N	10	10

*Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed)
Source: SPSS Output Data, 2017

Interpretation

The descriptive statistics revealed that product positioning has a mean and standard deviation values of 29.00 and 3.484 while profit level has a mean and standard deviation values of 26.60 and 2.366 respectively. The correlation coefficient (r) has a value of 0.773 which indicates a high association (which is significant) between product positioning and profit level of companies in South East, Nigeria.

The coefficient of determination (CD) which is the square of the correlation coefficient can also be calculated to estimate the proportion of the variations in profit level that are as a result of the variations in product positioning. Therefore, CD = r^2

Thus, r = 0,773

$r^2 = (0.773)^3 = 0.597 = 0.60$

This means that a correlation coefficient of 0.77 or 60.0% of the variations in profit level are determined by variations in product positioning. We, therefore, reject the Null hypothesis and accept the alternative hypothesis.

Hypothesis 3:

Ho: There is no significant relationship between intensive distribution and customer royalty of companies in South-East, Nigeria.

Table 9: Descriptive Statistics

	N	Min.	Max.	Mean	Std. Dev.
Intensive Distribution customer	10	25	36	29.00	3.464
loyalty	10	23	31	27.20	2.658
Valid N (list wise)	10				

Source: SPSS Output Data, 2017.

Table 10: Correlations

	Intensive Distribution	Customer Loyalty
Pearson correlation	1	.639
Intensive Dist. Sig (2-tailed)		.046
N	10	10
Pearson correlation	.639	1
Customer loyalty. sig (2-tailed	.046	
N	10	10

*Correlation is significant at the 0.05levle (2-tailed).
Source: SPSS Output Data, 2017.

Interpretation

The descriptive statistics showed that intensive distribution has a mean value of 29.00 and standard deviation of 3.464 while customer loyalty has a mean value of 27.20 and standard deviation of 2.658 respectively.

The correlation coefficient (r) has a value of 0.639 which indicates a medium relationship between intensive distribution and customer loyalty of companies in South-East, Nigeria. In order to estimate the proportion of the variations in customer loyalty that are as a result of the variations in intensive distribution, we calculate the coefficient of determination.

The coefficient of determination, CD, is the square of the correlation coefficient, i.e, CD = r^2

Thus, r = 0.639 = 0.64

$r^2 = (0.639)^2 = 0.408 = 0.41$

This means that, a correlation coefficient of 0.64 or 41.0% of the variations in customer loyalty are determined by variations in intensive distribution. We, therefore, reject the null hypothesis and accept the alternative hypothesis.

Summary of findings

The summary of major findings in the study is:

i. There is significant relationship between innovation and market share of companies in South –East Nigeria.
ii. There is significant relationship between product positioning and profit level of companies in South-East Nigeria.

iii. There is also significant relationship between intensive distribution and customer loyalty of companies in South-East, Nigeria.

Discussion of Findings

Innovation and Market share

Hypothesis 1 of this study states that there is no significant relationship between innovation and market share of companies in south- East, Nigeria. The result of the analysis of this hypothesis shows a correlation coefficient (r) value of 0.703. This result indicates that there is a high correlation between innovation and market share of companies. This result agrees with the study of Lawler (2009) that product modification has significant relationship with market share. Product that has additional features creates positive perception of consumers towards itself. Miles (2003) states that lack of market orientation has been a principal reason for failure of most innovative ideas. Organizations should first of all do test marketing before they embark on commercializing their products. This is important because they have to consider value from the point of view of the market or marketer who incidentally has contact with the market and therefore understands it better. A successful innovation must not be viewed from the eyes of the organization but that of the customers/consumers. This will increase the process and rate of acceptance of the product (diffusion) and invariably add to new growth and increased market share. The emphasis in diffusion is on the percentage of potential adopters within the social system or market segment who purchase the products rather than on absolute sales figures (Anyanwu, 2013).

Product Positioning and Profit level

Hypothesis 2 of this study states that there is no significant relationship between product positioning and profit level of companies. The analysis of this hypothesis reveals a correlation coefficient value of $r = 0.773$. This result indicates that there is a high relationship between product positioning and profit level of companies. In the words of Jane and Dawn (2003), a product that is uniquely positioned has a significant relationship with profit level of companies. Continuing, they opine that such positioning places products in the minds of prospective buyers to enable repeat purchase and guarantee savings in promotional expenditure. Organizations can decide on the unique combination of attributes or product features to incorporate in or to ascribe to, its brand so as to make it distinct from those of competitors and appealing to a deliberately selected target market. It should be obvious that since the product is being made for a specific category or type of consumers, the attributes must reflect their preferences for repeated trade.

Positioning is very critical and important to the success of a company's marketing programme in that it makes consumers to assume a positive perception towards the product. This will translate into huge revenue to the organization from which profit can be determined. Product positioning is a leap in the dark, if it is not based on a sound knowledge of consumer behaviour (Agbonifoh, et al, 2007).

Intensive Distribution and Customer Loyalty

The third hypothesis of the study states that there is no significant relationship between intensive distribution and customer loyalty. The result of the analysis of this hypothesis shows a correlation coefficient value of $r =0.639$.This result indicates a medium relationship between intensive distribution and customer loyalty. This is in agreement with the studies carried by Piercy, Cravens and Morgan (2011) which showed that product availability at the right place, at the right time, at the right quantities and at a minimum cost is significantly related to customer loyalty. The objective of intensive distribution is to give maximum exposure or wide market coverage to its product. The degree of market coverage may be defined in terms of the number of middlemen being used, the greater the number of such middlemen, the more the intensity of market coverage (Onyeke and Nebo, 2000). This means that the products have to be distributed through those wholesale and retail outlets in which consumers normally make their purchases.

The convenience and preferences of the consumer are, therefore, the major criteria in the choice of distribution channels (Onah and Thomas, 2004). Only a thorough understanding of the problems, locations, shopping behaviour and preferences of consumers or buyers can result in an effective distribution policy. The consumer or customer establishes interpersonal relationships with the marketer, hence customer relationship marketing (CRM) is being built which is all about building customer loyalty which will guarantee repeat purchases, less marketing expenditures and profit returns to the company. It is the duty of the relationship marketer to assist the loyal customer as he buys from the company (customer), encourages the company, (supporter), speaks for the company (Advocate) and shares from the resources of the company (partner) (Anyanwu, 2013).

Conclusion

Organizations can plan and adjust their efforts in order to attain optimum customer satisfaction and society's welfare which is the primary objective of modern marketing. It becomes obvious that organizations should be proactive and not reactive, in order to enable them take advantage of anticipated opportunities in the market place. The study concludes that there is significant relationship between marketing strategies (Innovation, product positioning, intensive distribution) and salesforce performance in terms of market share, profit level, and customer loyalty of companies in South-East, Nigeria.

Recommendations

Based on the findings from the study, we, therefore, recommend as follows:

i. Management of the companies should adopt a broad-based managerial strategies and tactics to address consumer behaviour and preferences.
ii. Heads of marketing departments of companies should adopt various feedback mechanism to enhance reliable, adequate and timely information from their sales force personnel in identifying their customer requirements.
iii. Management of the organizations should keep to the principle of marketing concept which requires that products and other marketing mix elements are tailored to meet the needs of consumers.
iv. Human Resource management of the organizations should take care in recruiting and selecting sales force personnel who obviously should be adequately trained and found physically socially, technically and intellectually sound for their jobs.
v. Management of organizations should at intervals conduct studies through their Research and Development (R & D) departments to find out customers degree of acceptance or rejection of their offerings for strategy formulation and implementation.
vi. Management team of organizations should regularly monitor and manage their SWOT analytical tool to always:
    i. Identify their strengths and put them to maximum use.

ii. Identify their weaknesses and know how to overcome and manage them.
iii. Identify their opportunities and know how to exploit them maximally, and
iv. Identify their threats and know how to avoid them or manage their negative consequences for those that cannot be avoided in today's competitive business environment

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