Strategic Orientation and Service Quality of Mobile Telephone Network (MTN) in Selected States in Nigeria

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ABSTRACT

Strategic orientation is an important factor for organizations, sustainable competitive advantage, firm growth and financial performance. Strategic orientation is capable of creating organisational direction by charting the course of the firm's effort, by focusing the effort through promoting coordination, by providing people with an easy way to understand the organisation and by providing consistency and reducing ambiguity. However, the significant effect of strategic orientation is yet to be felt by telecommunication sector which has been attributed to privation of unstable performance in services quality. Extant studies on the performance of telecommunication companies have attempted to elucidate on the challenges of telecommunication and the attendant supposed solutions, conversely, most of the extant research focus more on developed countries than developing countries such as Nigeria. Hence, this study examined the effect of strategic orientation onservice quality of Mobile Telephone Network (MTN) in selected States in Nigeria. Survey research design was adopted. The first population was 357,325 selected Tertiary Institution Students, while the second population was 76 Top management MTN Staff. A sample size of 499 for the student population was determined using Cochran formula, while 76 MTN staff was determined viacensus method. Multistage sampling was adopted. A validated questionnaire was used to collect data. Cronbach's alpha reliability coefficients for the constructs ranged from 0.79 to 0.92. The response rate was 89.9%. Data were analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistics. Findings revealed that strategic orientation dimensions (customer orientation, technology orientation, marketing capabilities, market orientation) had significant effect on service quality of Mobile Telephone Network (MTN) in selected States in Nigeria($Adj.\ R^2$ = 0.641; $F_{(4,69)}$ = 33.600, p= 0.000) as regards to staff and strategic orientation dimensions also had significant effect on service quality of Mobile Telephone Network (MTN) in selected States in Nigeria($Adj.\ R^2$ = 0.719; $F_{(4,438)}$ = 284.041, p= 0.000) as regards to customers. The study concluded that strategic orientation dimensions (customer orientation, technology orientation, marketing capabilities, market orientation) had significant effect on customer experience of Mobile Telephone Network (MTN) in selected States in Nigeria. The study recommends that Telco companies should increase their commitment in adopting strategic orientation practices to the entire telco process and also embrace the adoption of technology orientation in order to accomplish continued and sustained service quality at all times.

KEYWORDS: Customer orientation, Technology orientation, Marketing capabilities, Market orientation, Service quality

1. INTRODUCTION

Telecommunication industry is a core component of modern economic lifestyle and has a major effect on economic growth and development. Telecommunication industry has experienced a rapid technological breakthrough and growth in the last two decades. Nowadays, mobile network technology has progressively spread worldwide positively affecting economic activities, thus enhance business performance (Williams, Shaw & Allen, 2017). Telecommunication industry provides a technological foundation for societal and business communications which plays an increasingly vital role in enabling the participation and development of investors in developing local business to global economy. Despite the tremendous contribution of telecommunication industry to business performance, most telecommunication businesses in developed, emerging and developing economies still record unstable performance due to volatile services and poor quality of services(Gupta, Drave, Dwivedi, Baabdullah & Ismagilova, 2020).

Globally, telecom operators in the digital age are facing growing challenges due to internet-based networking platforms such as Weixin, Weibo and Twitter that have drastically reduced the conventional revenues of telecommunications providers for SMS and voice calls (Dastmalchian, Bacon, McNeil, Steinke, Blyton, Kumar &

Varnali, 2020). The decline in performance of fixed lines has been especially strong in countries where the traditional cable infrastructure is not well developed. However, this reality is more evident in most developing economies. In Africa, telecommunications industry has been undergoing major reforms since the 1980s, especially in the past few years. The telecommunication sector performance is the result of a combination of factors such as regulatory governance and incentives, competition, ownership, and political stability (Cacciolatti & Lee, 2016). However, limited network access coverage remains a key barrier to mobile internet adoption. In Nigeria, the rate of network coverage is still adjudged to be very poor even in the urban areas when compared to other nations of the world (Pantano, Priporas, Sorace & Iazzolino, 2017). Lack of adequate network coverage and capacity are the leading causes that affect service quality in Nigeria cellular networks, as it is one of the factors influencing subscribers' decision to switch from one service provider to another (Bankole, Ogundipe, Ogundepo, Oghogho, 2020). Despite having moderate network coverage in urban areas, the network capacity is still limited with respect to the various networks in Nigeria. However, network related problems such as network outage, call dropout are among the reasons why subscribers switch among network service providers (Danish, Ahmad, Ateeq, Ali & Humayon, 2015).

MTN Nigeria has also been significantly impacted by the recent recession and rapid currency depreciation (Khdour & Al-Raoush, 2020). The company is one of the largest revenue generators for its South African parent company, which reported that revenues from its Nigerian arm stood at R36bn ($2.8bn) in 2017, equal to 27.2% of total revenue that year. MTN's Nigerian operations were impacted by currency depreciation in 2017, however, with revenues falling by 23.6% from R47.1bn ($3.6bn) in 2016, as the naira depreciated by 11.4% against the South African rand (Lartey, Meng, Wang & Osei-Mireku, 2020). MTN Group reported that total capital expenditure in Nigeria rose from R8.7bn ($671.9m) in 2016 to R9bn ($695.1m) in 2017, although 2018's planned capital expenditure was forecast to fall to R6.92bn ($532.9m) (Al-Weshah, Al-Manasrah & Al-Qatawneh, 2019).Limited domestic network connectivity is a primary challenge facing infrastructure companies and broadband expansion in the country, and in November 2017 local media stated that Nigeria's submarine cable system remains underutilized, largely as a result of limited fibre networks hindered by right-of-way (ROW) issues (Alqahtani & Uslay, 2020). This is despite significant levels of investment in infrastructure, including Ntel's $600m South Atlantic 3 fibre-optic cable, MTN's $650m West Africa Cable System, Dolphin Telecoms' $700m Africa Coast to Europe cable, MainOne's $300m cable and Globacom's $800m Glo-1 cable (Ullah, Iqbal & Shams, 2020).

The telecommunication industry is operating in a highly competitive environment and the interest, time and level of commitment to strategy development depend a great deal on the level and degree of competitiveness of the particular industry or environment in which businesses operate (Delshab, Kerwin & Cegarra-Navarro, 2020). A firm's strategic orientation reflects the strategic directions implemented by a firm to create the proper behaviors for the continuous superior performance of the business (Taneva-Veshoska, Drakulevski & Trajkovska, 2016). Strategic orientation is important in finding out the organization's

chances and abilities support environment and to secure competitive advantage for itself (Tutar, Nart & Bingol, 2015). The choice of strategic orientation is often based on the tangible and intangible resources the company possess (Na, Kang & Jeong, 2019). In practice, this implicates that the strategic orientation generally reflects the beliefs and mental models of the senior executives in the company (Pantano, Priporas, Sorace & Iazzolino, 2017). However, some strategic orientations are constraining while others are considered as a supportive setting for a firm's capabilities to be more dynamic in responding to customer needs as well as environment changes (Bankole, Ogundipe, Ogundepo, Oghogho, 2020). Strategic orientation development is by nature complex, thus it must have clear priorities in order to be manageable (Tutar, Nart & Bingol, 2015).

In the recent years, teleco managers are becoming increasingly aware of the need to create value for their customers in the form of providing quality services. Network services quality constitutes a crucial factor that influences the customers' willingness to repeat the experience or to recommend it to their friends or colleagues (Gupta, Drave, Dwivedi, Baabdullah & Ismagilova, 2020). Pantano, Priporas, Sorace and Iazzolino(2017) emphasized thatservice quality is successful when it is capable of promoting customer engagement and creating memories within them. For this study, the major elements that directly affectsservice quality are customer orientation, technology orientation, marketing capabilities and market orientation will be the consequence from this interaction. Building service quality becomes the foremost priority for marketing managers of the telecommunication service provider. This is a way to secure customer loyalty, expand the customer base, increase the company's performance, ensure the company survival and create a deeper connection with its customer on a personal level in the years ahead (Nobar & Rostamzadeh, 2018).Customers dwindling service quality with telecommunications services provision in Nigeria is not unconnected with the perception that some mobile operators are declaring substantial profits annually while providing poor quality services and charging high tariffs for their services (Williams, Shaw & Allen, 2017).

Multiple evidences from the strategic orientation literature indicate that theoretical development on the adoption of multiple strategic orientations has failed to catch up with contemporary organizational practices (Pscheidt-Gieseler, Didonet, Toaldo & Martins, 2018). Although many studies in the Management literature incorporated strategic orientation (Bankole, Ogundipe, Ogundepo, Oghogho, 2020; Cacciolatti & Lee, 2016; Sulaimon, Ogunkoya, Lasisi & Shobayo, 2015; Tutar, Nart & Bingol, 2015), the effect on organizational performance and the relationship between strategic orientations remains unclear. Some extant study found positive connections between orientations and organizational performance. However, the majority of the studies (Buzzao & Rizzi, 2021; Cacciolatti & Lee, 2016; Danish, Ahmad, Ateeq, Ali & Humayon, 2015; Dastmalchian, Bacon, McNeil, Steinke, Blyton, Kumar & Varnali, 2020) only researched the direct relation between a specific orientation and performance discarding variables such as customer orientation, market orientation, market capabilities and technology orientation that may potentially affect the relation between orientation and service qualities.

This studyaddressed the aforementioned gaps in literature on strategic orientation and firm's service quality.The

telecom industry is an interesting industry to study, not only due to its volatile nature in terms of technological breakthrough and its policies, but also due to the high growth rate of this industry over the past few decades and the significant contribution of the industry to the economies of nations. Based on these aforementioned, the study examined the effect of strategic orientation dimensions (customer orientation, technology orientation, marketing capabilities and market orientation) on service qualities of Mobile Telephone Network (MTN) in selected states in Nigeria.

2. Literature Review

Strategic orientation refer to the manner in which a firm adapts to its external environment (Chahal, Dangwal, & Raina, 2016).Strategic orientation is viewed as principles that direct and influence the activities of a firm and generate the behaviours intended to ensure the viability and performance of the firm (Hawrysz, 2020). Strategic orientation is the philosophy of enterprises which represents their attempts to reach higher performance and shows how a job may be performed with a set of values and beliefs. Strategic orientation is a group of value that consistently becomes the strategic guide for company in responding to the uncertainty of the environment faced by the company (Matsuno & Mentzer, 2015; Bodea & Dutu, 2016).Strategic orientation as an option that can create capabilities dynamically in a constantly changing business environment and enable companies to respond quickly to these changes (Buzzao, & Rizzi, 2021).

Customer orientation refers to a company's understanding of its buyers to be able to create continuously value for them (Lee, Che-Ha & Alwi, 2020). Baber, Kaurav and Paul (2020) define customer orientation as "the organization-wide emphasis on evaluating and addressing customer needs". Customer orientation is an activity that directs the organization to understand the desires that customers express to get satisfactory products and services (Mediano & Ruiz-Alba, 2019). Customer orientation is the extent to which the organization commits its efforts to meet the customers' needs and expectations in respect to the quality of service provided, being customer focused includes gathering information from the customers in order to fully understand their needs and eventually satisfy them (Chu, Wang & Lado, 2016).

Technology is an important method for connecting customers and organizations. Organizations use technology to improve their ability to collect customer information (Nobar & Rostamzadeh, 2018). Furthermore, an organization that is guided by technology has the opportunity to accumulate vast technological knowledge stores by past experience and processes which might be used to its advantage (Amulya, 2013). A technology oriented firm seeks to acquire new and advanced technologies to develop new processes, products, and services, even though the rate of technological change within its industry might affect its technological adoption or development (Bartz, 2017). Technology orientation is defined as a firm's inclination to introduce or use new technologies, products, or innovations. It suggests that customer value and the long term success of the organization depends on new innovations, technological solutions, products, services, or processes. Kyengo, Ombui and Iravo (2016) stated that an organization's technical skills, R&D resources, and technological base can be central in bringing innovative, better designed products into the

market. As a result, a technology oriented organization is proactive in acquiring new technology and applying the latest technologies to develop new products/services or supporting applications.

The development of key marketing capabilities is regarded as one of the main avenues by which firms can achieve innovation and competitive advantage (Weerawardena, 2013; Weerawardena & O'Cass, 2014). According to Vorhies (2019), marketing capabilities are not resources in themselves but integrative processes whereby the collective knowledge, skills, and resources of a firm are applied to take care of the market-related needs of the business. Ultimately, marketing capabilities enable the business to add value to its goods and services, adapt to market conditions, take advantage of market opportunities, and overcome competitive threats (Nobar & Rostamzadeh, 2018). Marketing capabilities allow the organizations to better understand the current and future needs of their customers in order to better serve them and also to reach new customers as well as to effectively analyze the competition. Marketing capabilities reflects the organizational ability to connect and serve certain customer groups. Such capabilities allow companies to create profitable relationships with customers and maintain the customer base already achieved, which in turn impacts on organizational performance (Guo, Xu, Tang, Liu-Thompkins, Guo and Dong, 2018).

Market orientation is regarded as a crucial strategy or capability that helps organizations stay competitive in today's uncertain business environment (Jacobs & Wallach, 2019). Market orientation is considered both a marketing concept and a management strategy. According to various scholars, practitioners, and researchers (Anim, Agbemabiese, Acheampong, Adams & Boakye, 2018; Bhatia, Li, Peng & Sun, 2013; Krzakiewicz & Cyfert, 2019) market orientation assists in developing marketing knowledge, superior performance, and competitive advantage. Various definitions have been suggested for market orientation by different scholars in the marketing literature. Cacciolatti and Lee (2016) defined market orientation as a managerial decision making practice with a commitment shared within the organization. Dalvi and Seifi (2014) referred to market orientation as the organization-wide generation of market intelligence pertaining to current and future customer needs, dissemination of the intelligence across departments, and organization wide responsiveness. Diaw and Asare (2018) explained market orientation as composed of three dimension: customer orientation, competitor orientation, and inter-functional coordination.

Service quality is a "measure of how well the service level delivered matches the customer expectations". (Mubashir & Majeed, 2018, P.58).According to Stamenkov and Dika (2015), service quality is the capacity to provide uninterrupted services with exceptional sustainable quality over a long period of time. Service quality is a function of the differences between expectation and performance along the quality dimensions (Hassan, Malik, Imran, Hussain & Javaria, 2017).Additionally, Poku, Ansah and Lamptey (2015), defined service quality as "the overall evaluation of a specific service firm that results from comparing that firm's performance with the customers' general expectations of how firms in that industry should perform".Service quality is a concept that has aroused considerable interest and debate in the research literature because of the difficulties in both defining it and measuring it with no overall consensus

emerging on either (Wisniewski, 2016). Service quality can thus be defined as the difference between customer expectations of service and perceived service. If expectations are greater than performance, then perceived quality is less than satisfactory and hence customer dissatisfaction occurs (Lewis & Mitchell, 2017).

2.1. Underpinning Theory

This study is anchored on configuration theory as baseline theory for this study. Established by Walker and Ruekerts (1987). The configuration theory appreciates that a firm's level of leverage will influence its ability to build, integrate and reconfigure internal and external capabilities so as to address the rapidly changing business environments. Configuration theory therefore refers to an organization's ability to produce new and innovative forms of competitive advantage given market positions and path dependencies (Johnson, Sholes and Whittington, 2008). Eisenhardt and Martin (2000) explain the importance of configuration of the firm resources to adapt to the fast changing environment and therefore in business environments that are fast changing dynamic capability view explains the formation of firm's level of competitiveness. This is because, they are considered a transformer for converting resources into improved performance. King and Tucci (2012) found that firms can increase the probability of success in new market exploration, and the arrangement to integrate industry development during product development.

Amit and Schoemaker (2013) noted there is the need to grow a more cost effective process than competitors to reconfigure and transform their resources. Therefore, reconfiguration is generally considered a key orientation for monitoring market and development trends, and for timely feedback through resource alteration. Similarly, Zhou and Wu (2010) posit that having flexible strategies that deal with the varying use and reconfiguration of resources strengthens the positive effects of strategic orientation and thus improves firm performance. The configuration theory, though it appreciates the need for a firm to align its resources with a view to creating the necessary synergy, it fails to appreciate the role of adjusting the firm's operations to the demands of the market that are ever changing. The configuration of internal resources should be guided by the level of competition in the market and not only the available resources in the market. Thus, the configuration theory was deemed suitable in studying the effect of strategic orientation dimensions on customer's experience of Mobile Telephone Network (MTN) in selected states in Nigeria.

3. Methodology

Survey research design and census method was used for the study. The survey research design is appropriate because it enables the researcher to collect data that represents the perception and view of people across a large geographical area, which in this case are selected Tertiary Institution Students and Top management MTN Staff. The adoption of this design is consistent with the studies of Feng, Wang, Lawton, & Luo, 2019; Lee, Che-Ha & Alwi, 2020; Peterson & Crittenden, 2020; Chu, Wang & Lado, 2016;Mediano & Ruiz-Alba, 2019. Therefore, this study followed suit by employing survey research design in this study. The unit of analysis of the sample for the study were Tertiary Institution Students and Top management MTN Staff. The justification for the adoption of survey research design is based on the

assumption that the group of the population under study is

heterogeneous in its characteristics that is people of different ages, behaviour and opinion are represented within the study population. The appropriateness of survey research design lies in its ability to make scientific robust position on the respondents in one moment.

The first population of the study was 357,325 selected tertiary institution students, while the second population was 76 Top management MTN Staff. A sample size of 499 for the student population was determined using Cochran formula, while 76 MTN staff was determined viacensus method. Multistage sampling was adopted. A validated questionnaire was used to collect data. Cronbach's alpha reliability coefficients for the constructs ranged from 0.79 to 0.92. The response rate was 89.9%. Data were analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistics.

A structured questionnaire was adapted from previous studies such as Lee, Che-Ha & Alwi, (2021); Adams, Freitas and Fontana (2019); Morgan, Feng and Whitler (2018); Devece, Llopis-Albert and Palacios-Marques, (2017); Akintokunbo (2018) along the constructs with sections capturing demographic information, strategic orientation dimensions (customer orientation, technology orientation, marketing capabilities and market orientation) and service quality which was measured as a whole using a likert scale ranging from very high (6) to very low (1). The researchers developed a structured model for the study using the main constructs, and the data was analysed using multiple regression analysis.

Model Specification

In order to determine the effect of strategic orientation (X) on service quality(Y), an econometric model was developed.

$$Y = f(X)^n.$$

Hence the model was structured as such;
x_1 = Customer Orientation (CO)
x_2 = Technology Orientation (TO)
x_3 = Marketing Capabilities (MC)
x_4 = Market Orientation (MO)

4. Results and Discussion

The objective of the study examined the effect of strategic orientation dimensions on service quality of MTN in selected States in Nigeria. Multiple regression analysis was used to test the hypothesis with service qualityas the dependent variable, and strategic orientation dimensions as the independent variable. The data for strategic orientation dimensions were generated by adding all the responses of all items for customer orientation, technology orientation, marketing capabilities and market orientation, while that of service qualitywas generated by adding scores of responses of all items for the variable. Data from five hundred and seventeen (517) respondents were analysed.

To test the hypothesis (Strategic orientation dimensions have no significant effect on service quality of MTN in selected States in Nigeria), multiple linear regression analysis was used. The independent variable of the study was Strategic orientation dimensions while the dependent variable was service quality. Data from five hundred and seventeen (517) respondents were gathered and analyzed using SPSS version 25 software. The results of the multiple linear regression analysis are shown in Table 1.

Restatement of Hypothesis One for MTN Staff

H01: Strategic orientation dimensions have no significant effect on services quality of MTN in selected States in Nigeria.

To test hypothesis one, multiple regression analysis was used. The independent variable was strategic orientation dimensions while the dependent variable was services quality. In the analysis, data for strategic orientation dimensions were created by adding together responses of all the items under the various dimensions to generate independent scores for each dimension. For services quality, responses of all items the variable were added together to create index of services quality. The index of services quality (as dependent variable) is thereafter regress on scores (index) of strategic orientation dimensions (as independent variables). The results of the analysis and parameter estimates obtained are presented in Table 1a.

Table 1a: Summary Results of Regression Analysis of Strategic Orientation Dimensions on Services Quality of Mobile Telephone Network (MTN) of selected states in Nigeria

Model	B	T	Sig.	F(4,69)	R^2	Adj. R^2	F(Sig)
(Constant)	.548	.249	.804	33.600	.661	.641	.000[b]
Customer Orientation	.256	1.877	.065				
Technology Orientation	.216	1.746	.085				
Market Capabilities	-.003	-.030	.976				
Market Orientation	.478	3.479	.001				
a. Dependent Variable: Service Quality							
b. Predictors: (**Constant**), Market Orientation, Market Capabilities, Customer Orientation, Technology Orientation							

Source: Researcher's Field Survey, 2021

Table 1a presents the multiple regression results for the effect strategic orientation dimensions on services quality of MTN in the selected states in Nigeria. The results revealed that market orientation (β = 0.478, t = 3.479, p = 0.001) have positive and significant effect on service quality of MTN in selected states in Nigeria. However, customer orientation (β = 0.256, t = 1.877, p = 0.065) and technology orientation (β = 0.216, t = 1.746, p = 0.085) have a positive but statistically insignificantly effect on service quality of while market capabilities (β = -0.003, t = -0.030, p = 0.976) had negative and statistically insignificant effect on service quality of MTN in the selected states in Nigeria. This implies that only market orientation is a significant predictor of services quality in the study area.

The results further reveal that strategic orientation dimensions (customer orientation, technology orientation, marketing capabilities and market orientation) explained 64.1% of the variation in services quality of MTN in the selected States, (*Adj. R^2* = 0.641). However, the model did not explain 35.9% of the variation in services quality of MTN in selected States, implying that there are other factors associated with services quality of MTN in the selected States were not captured in the model. Also, the results of Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) for regression coefficients used to test the overall significance of regression model has the value of 33.600 with (4,69) degrees of freedom and p-value of 0.000 which was less than 0.05 ($F_{(4,69)}$ = 33.600, p= 0.000). This implies that the overall model was significant in predicting the services quality of MTN in the selected states in Nigeria. That is, services quality is affected by strategic orientation dimensions and the F value standing at 33.600. The result shows that at least one of the strategic orientation dimensions has a significant effect on services quality of MTN in selected states. In coming up with the final regression model to predict services quality of MTN in the selected States in Nigeria, the strategic orientation dimensions that are statistically significant and were retained in the model. The multiple regression model from the results is thus expressed as:

SQ = 0.548 + 0.478MO …………………………………………… Eq. (i)

Where:
SQ = Services Quality
MO = Market Orientation

From the above regression equation above, it was revealed that holding strategic orientation dimensions (customer orientation, technology orientation, marketing capabilities and market orientation) constant (at zero), services quality of MTN in selected States, will be 0.548. This implies that if customer orientation, technology orientation, marketing capabilities and market orientation take on the values of zero (do not exist), there would be 0.548 times level of repetition of the services quality of MTN in selected States in Nigeria. The model shows that a unit change in market orientation will lead to 0.478 unit change in services quality of MTN in selected States. The results reveal that market orientation (β = 0.478, t = 3.479, p = 0.001) was the most significant predictor (among strategic orientation dimensions) of services quality of MTN in selected States, Since at least one of the regression coefficients is significant at 5% significance level as indicated in the table above, the null hypothesis was rejected. Therefore, the null hypothesis one (H_{01}) which states that strategic orientation dimensions (customer orientation, technology orientation, marketing capabilities and market orientation) have no significant effect on services quality of MTN in selected States in Nigeria is hereby rejected.

Restatement of Hypothesis One for Students
H01: Strategic orientation dimensions have no significant effect on services quality of MTN in selected States in Nigeria.

To test hypothesis one, multiple regression analysis was used. The independent variable was strategic orientation dimensions while the dependent variable was services quality. In the analysis, data for strategic orientation dimensions were created by adding together responses of all the items under the various dimensions to generate independent scores for each dimension. For services quality, responses of all items the variable were added together to create index of services quality. The index of services quality (as dependent variable) is thereafter regress on scores (index) of strategic orientation dimensions (as independent variables). The results of the analysis and parameter estimates obtained are presented in Table 1b.

Table 1b: Summary Results of Regression Analysis of Strategic Orientation Dimensions on Services Quality of Mobile Telephone Network (MTN) of selected states in Nigeria

Model	B	T	Sig.	F(4,438)	R²	Adj. R²	F(Sig)
(Constant)	.456	.593	.553	284.041	.722	.719	.000b
Customer Orientation	.117	2.492	.013				
Technology Orientation	.188	4.270	.000				
Market Capabilities	.307	7.583	.000				
Market Orientation	.355	7.807	.000				
a. Dependent Variable: Service Quality							
b. Predictors: (Constant), Market Orientation, Market Capabilities, Customer Orientation, Technology Orientation							

Source: Researcher's Field Survey, 2021

Table 1b presents the multiple regression results for the combined effect strategic orientation dimensions on service quality of MTN in the selected states in Nigeria. The results revealed that customer orientation (β = 0.117, t = 2.492, p = 0.012), technology orientation (β = 0.188, t = 4.270, p = 0.000), market capabilities (β = 0.307, t = 7.583, p = 0.000) and market orientation (β = 0.355, t = 7.807, p = 0.000) have positive and significant effect on service quality of MTN in selected states in Nigeria. This implies that customer orientation, technology orientation, marketing capabilities and market orientation are significant predictors of service quality in the study area.

The results further reveal that strategic orientation dimensions (customer orientation, technology orientation, marketing capabilities and market orientation) explained 71.9% of the variation in service quality of MTN in the selected States, (*Adj. R²* = 0.719). However, the model did not explain 28.1% of the variation in service quality of MTN in selected States, implying that there are other factors associated with service quality of MTN in the selected States were not captured in the model.

Also, the results of Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) for regression coefficients used to test the overall significance of regression model has the value of 284.041 with (4,438) degrees of freedom and p-value of 0.000 which was less than 0.05 ($F_{(4,438)}$ = 284.041, p= 0.000). This implies that the overall model was significant in predicting the service quality of MTN in the selected states in Nigeria. That is, service quality is affected by strategic orientation dimensions and the F value standing at 284.041. The result shows that at least one of the strategic orientation dimensions has a significant effect on service quality of MTN in selected states. In coming up with the final regression model to predict service quality of MTN in the selected States in Nigeria, the strategic orientation dimensions that are statistically significant and were retained in the model. The multiple regression model from the results is thus expressed as:

SQ = 0.456 + 0.117CO + 0.188TO + 0.307MC + 0.355MO ………………….. Eq. (i)

Where:
SQ = Service quality
CO = Customer Orientation
TO = Technology Orientation
MC = Market Capabilities
MO = Market Orientation

From the above regression equation above, it was revealed that holding strategic orientation dimensions (customer orientation, technology orientation, marketing capabilities and market orientation) constant (at zero), service quality of MTN in selected States, will be 0.456. This implies that if customer orientation, technology orientation, marketing capabilities and market orientation take on the values of zero (do not exist), there would be 0.456 times level of repetition of the service quality of MTN in selected States in Nigeria. The model shows that a unit change in customer orientation, technology orientation, marketing capabilities and market orientation respectively will lead to 0.117, 0.188, 0.307 and 0.355 unit change in service quality of MTN in selected States. The results reveal that market orientation (β = 0.355, t = 7.807, p = 0.000) was the most significant predictor (among strategic orientation dimensions) of service quality of MTN in selected States, Since all of the regression coefficients is significant at 5% significance level as indicated in the table above, the null hypothesis was rejected. Therefore, the null hypothesis one (H_{01}) which states that strategic orientation dimensions (customer orientation, market orientation, marketing capabilities and technology orientation) have no significant effect on service quality of MTN in selected States in Nigeria is hereby rejected.

Discussion of Findings

The result of the multiple regression analysis on strategic orientation dimensions and service quality of MTN in selected States in Nigeria indicated that strategic orientation dimensions have a positive and significant effect on service quality. This result further specified that the responses of both MTN staff and the customers corroborates with the above result. This implies that on the overall that strategic orientation dimensions has a significant positive effect on service quality of MTN of selected States in Nigeriaespecially when customer orientation, technology orientation, marketing capabilities and market orientation were implemented. The result affirms the study of Adi, Ujianto and Nugroho (2018); Mahmoodean, Ashraf and Hassani (2014); Mueller, Walter, Georg and Gemuenden (2018); Ali, Lifu and Rehman (2016) that adoption of strategic orientation dimensions significantly affects service quality. Similarly, Rizan, Balfas and Purwohedi (2019); Al-Ansaari, Bederr and Chen (2015); Gupta and Gupta (2015) also confirm that strategic orientation dimensions have significant effect on the service quality and performance of service firms with results pointing to positive relationship. The finding further assert that certain customer orientation enhance strategic orientation thus improving service quality that will lead to performance.

Conceptually, past studies have substantiated that strategic orientation is the principles that direct and influence the activities of a firm and generate the behaviours intended to ensure the viability and performance of the firm (Hawrysz, 2020). In line with this, Matsuno and Mentzer, (2015); Bodea and Dutu (2016) also confirm that strategic orientation is a group of value that consistently becomes the strategic guide

for company in responding to the uncertainty of the environment faced by the company. Ali, Leifu and Rehman (2016) advised that organisations should adopt a strategic orientation to be able to predict the potential for external changes in the business environment and adapt to them. Naala, Nordin and Omar (2017) states that customer orientation is the most common orientation used by the company by making customer needs and better ease with the company in accordance with consumer tastes. Further opinion expressed by Singla and Kumar (2013) opined that customer orientation is more oriented with the company, understand or understand the needs and advantages and create customer satisfaction. So by creating customer satisfaction will affect in determining competitive advantage. Then Ahea, Ahea and Rahman (2016) states that customer orientation has an important role in service organizations and has products that are intangibility, heterogeneity, and inseparability. These characteristics make the service process an important role with the customer's perception of the value they receive. So from the theory put forward by Ahea, Ahea and Rahman (2016) can be concluded that efforts in improving customer value and competitive advantage in the company, so that needs to be considered is customer orientation, this is in accordance with the opinion put forward by Kaunyangi (2014) that customer orientation is related to the needs and customer desires are the main targets for successful marketing activities resulting in repeat purchases by consumers, as a commitment to understanding customers and always monitoring all customer needs and wants is a characteristic inherent in customer orientation. In line with this, Agu, Emezue and Okocha, (2019) found a strong significant positive result exist between strategic orientation and service quality. The study further revealed that strategic orientation influence firm service quality and overall performance.

Theoretically, the findings are validated by Resource based view advanced by (Barney, 1991) which asserts that it is advantageous for a firm to pursue a strategy that is not currently being implemented by any other competing firm. Such resources must be either rare or hard to imitate or not easily substitutable. The competitive strategies provide the firm's ability to recognize and utilize various resources to increase firm performance, hence the resource based theory is highly relevant to the study. While the configuration theory which is advanced by Walker and Ruekerts (1987) is in tandem with the above results and asserts that an organization will have superior performance if there is an appropriate fit between a firm's internal organizational characteristics and its strategic focus. It further posits that a match between marketing function and strategic function of a firm will lead to a firm's performance having a positive effect. The combination of both the RBV and the configuration theory are appropriate nexus in explaining the role of firm's strategic orientation on firm performance. There is therefore an agreement among these studies and the result of this current research that strategic orientation has a significant effect on service quality, as the various studies reviewed seem to have supported the positive association that exists between strategic orientation components and service quality.

5. Conclusion and Recommendations
This research examined the effect of strategic orientation dimensions on service quality. The results revealed that customer orientation, technology orientation, marketing capabilities and market orientation had significant and positive effect on service quality. Immediate contact commonly happens in the span of purchase, use, and service administration, which is normally instigated by the client. It is also noted that service quality emanates from a series of contacts among a consumer and a product, an organisation, or aspect of its company, which stimulates a response. Indeed, it has been established in extant literature that service quality is key in attracting and retaining both the existing and future customers especially when a consumer has any feeling or information acquisition as a result of some degree of dealings with diverse components of a setting generated by the service provider.

Theoretically, the outcome of this study is in line with the configuration theory which was the baseline theories for this study. The configuration theory was adopted to guide this study variables because its perspectives are tied to the focus of the study and the variables that were investigated. This research paper recommends that Telco companies should increase their commitment in adopting strategic orientation practices to the entire telco process and also embrace the adoption of technology orientation in order to accomplish continued and sustained customer experience. Further study should examine the influence of strategic orientation, organizational innovation capabilities and strategic planning on the performance of technology-based firms. Further research should also focus on analysis of the factors which are the antecedents of strategic orientation in order to make an in-depth analysis.

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