

IMPACT OF MARKET SEGMENTATION ON CUSTOMER SATISFACTION IN MTN NIGERIA LIMITED, LAGOS

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Abstract

The broad objective of this study was to examine the effect of market segmentation on customer satisfaction in MTN Nigeria Limited. The study adopted cross-sectional survey method. The population of the study included all MTN subscribers within Lagos, Nigeria. Through a purposive sampling method 50 individual subscribers and 35 corporate subscribers making a total of 85 subscribers were selected to participate in the research. Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) was adopted for data analysis. The results of correlation analysis indicated that Geographical segmentation, Demographic segmentation, Psychographic segmentation and Behavioural segmentation were all positively and significantly correlated with customer satisfaction. The result of regression analysis revealed that geographic segmentation tends to have negative impact on the customer satisfaction while demographic, psychographic and behavioural segmentation were found to have positive effect on customer satisfaction. However, only geographic, demographic and psychographic segmentation were found to have statistically significant effect on customer satisfaction in MTN. The study concludes that market segmentation has the potential to predict customer satisfaction.

Keywords: Impact, Market Segmentation, Customer Satisfaction, MTN Nigeria Limited, Lagos.

1.0 Introduction

The dynamics of the business environment for the telecommunications industry as well as the dynamics of the customer satisfaction are not debatable. It is therefore very important for telecommunications firms to respond to the changing needs of the customer and the business environment. The proliferation of telecommunications firms in Nigeria means stiffer competition among these firms for the acquisition and retention of customers and it also means that customers now have a choice. Dissatisfied customers are therefore more likely to unsubscribe from one firm and subscribe to another. Suffice it to say that poor market segmentation causes considerable damage to the goodwill of telecommunications firms and this eventually lead to customer dissatisfaction.

Furthermore, there has been a general public outcry and dissatisfaction of the level of service delivery by MTN telecommunications ranging from poor network coverage, call dropping, higher charges and delayed response to customer complaints (Mugasha 2019). This increasing dissatisfaction by customers of MTN covers the four main segments of the company's subscribers in sectors such as banks, schools, insurance companies, multinational companies, government ministries and agencies that are subscribers to the MTN network.

In spite of promotional marketing strategies employed by MTN Nigeria Limited such as aggressive sales tactics, telemarketing, direct mail, doorstep selling, radio advertisements, television advertisements (Eribake 2019), the company continues to register a lot of complaints from the four board segments of customers for the poor quality of internet and mobile phone services offered to them. Since 2008 -2020, MTN Nigeria has registered a downward trend in company sales from 78% and has consistently been fluctuating between 57% and 68%. Such decline in company sales has led to the reduction in profit levels but at the same time leading to the escalation operational costs and even more dissatisfaction by the four main segments of customers.

From a theoretical standpoint, research on the relationship between market segmentation strategies and customer satisfaction has often focused more on other factors or variables such as diversification, job satisfaction and work engagement in other regions of the world. In this light, there is a growing body of literature on the interface between market segmentation and customer satisfaction in Ghana (Boateng 2021), Sri Lanka (Premkanth 2018), Uganda (Kasadha2021; Mugasha 2019), Malaysia (Abdulaziz, Rani and Azizan 2018), Indonesia (Ali 2019), Columbia (Asiedu 2016) and Kenya (Gichuru and Limiri 2017). However, there is a dearth of research that examines the interface between market segmentation and customer satisfaction—particularly in the telecommunications sector—in Nigeria.

Customer satisfaction can be defined as a measure of how products and services supplied by a company meet or surpass customer expectation. Customer satisfaction is a measure on the number of customers or percentage of total customers that exceeds specific satisfaction goals in term of reported experience with a firm, its products or its services (rating) (Faris, *et al.* 2010). Customer satisfaction is in fact a deeply held commitment of customers to prefer products or services of a particular organization in future despite situational constraints or marketing influences to cause the switching behaviour (Clarke, 2021).

Market segmentation, on the other hand connotes the subdividing of a heterogeneous market into homogeneous subsets called segments, within which customers have the same or similar requirements satisfied by a distinct marketing mix. Boateng (2021) stresses that Market segmentation is one of the fundamental principles of marketing. Put differently, market segmentation involves the grouping of customers together with the aim of better satisfying their needs whilst maintaining economies of scale. The basic tenet of market segmentation is that a heterogeneous group of customers can be grouped into homogeneous groups or segments exhibiting similar wants, preferences, and buying behaviour. The process of market segmentation enables companies to target specific market segment(s), design more suitable marketing mix variables (price, product, promotion, and distribution), and develop more effective positioning strategy.

As one of Nigeria's biggest telecommunications company, the market segmentation strategy employed by MTN multinational telecommunications company is the categorization of its customer base by geography, demography, psychographic and behavior segments respectively. This categorization is in tandem with the idea of market segmentation aptly captured by Arens (2020) as a marketing strategy that involves dividing a broad target market into subsets of customers who have common needs, then be designed and implemented to target the specific customer segments addressing needs or desires that are believed to be common in these segments using an appropriate media, (Arens 2020). Hence, MTN's services which cuts across broadband internet, television, vehicle tracking and mobile services is provided to customers on the segmented bases such as geography, demography, psychographic and behaviour with different specifications and delivery packages.

It is against this backdrop that this study seeks to examine impacts of market segmentation on customer satisfaction among MTN subscribers. Specifically, this study therefore takes a critical look at how the strategy of market segmentation of MTN services into four main bases of geography, demography, psychographic and behaviour has impacted on the customer satisfaction levels of the company's numerous subscribe

2.0 Literature Review

This section discusses the conceptual review of the constructs used in this study. It went further to review empirical studies that are relevant to this study. Lastly, the theoretical underpinning of the study was discussed.

2.1 Conceptual Framework

Market segmentation is the subdividing of a heterogeneous market into homogeneous subsets called segments, within which customers have the same or similar requirements satisfied by a distinct marketing mix (Armstrong and Kotler, 2005). Marketing mix refers to the 'tools' or means available to an organization to improve the match between benefits sought by customers and those offered by the organization. This is usually the appropriate mix of product features, price, place (service and availability) and promotion and is often referred to as the 4Ps. Market segmentation is one of the fundamental principles of marketing. The basic tenet of market segmentation is that a heterogeneous group of customers can be grouped into homogeneous groups or segments exhibiting similar wants, preferences, and buying behaviour (Dibb and Simkin, 1996). The process enables companies to target specific market

segment(s), design more suitable marketing mix variables (price, product, promotion, and distribution), and develop more effective positioning strategy. The concept of customer satisfaction has evolved as a widely used concept in contemporary times. In his marketing book *Marketing Metrics*, Paul Farris defined customer satisfaction as “the number of customers, or percentage of customers whose reported experience with a firm, its products, or its services exceeds specified satisfaction goals” (Farris *et al.* 2010). The above definition is also endorsed by the Marketing Accountability Standards Board as the standard definition of customer satisfaction. Two vital points that be deduced from Farris *et al.* (2010) definition of customer satisfaction is that: first, the definition made it clear that customer satisfaction is not just an abstract concept as a number range can be placed on it. Secondly, the definition talked about specified satisfaction goals which vary from product to product or service to service. On his part, Kotler and Keller (2006) defines customer satisfaction as a ‘person’s feeling of pleasure or disappointment, which resulted from comparing a product perceived performance or outcome against his/her expectations’ (Kotler and Keller (2006). Although Kotler used abstract terms like pleasure and disappointment, the definition is by no means ambiguous. It can be drawn from Kotler and Keller’s (2006) definition that customer satisfaction is a function of perceived performance and expectations.

2.2 Empirical Reviews

Numerous studies have exists in the growing body of literature to show the nexus between market segmentation and customer satisfaction in both the goods and services industry. Suffice it to assert therefore that market segmentation is customer-oriented philosophy. It is a technique of recognizing effectively the differences among customers. It is well-tested system for guiding marketing strategy. The benchmarking of competitors should not be overlooked in order to retain existing customers and attract potential ones. Weinstein (2020) advocates that service providers attempt to know who the better customers are through the use of demographic, geographic, psychographic and behavioral research. In doing so a profile of the “typical user” is determined. Such information then becomes very useful in the subsequent marketing effort. To retain customers and to gain a larger share of their business, service providers need to develop better understanding of the customers’ purchasing pattern. A study by Bayer (2020) examined impacts of customer segmentation on the telecommunications industry. The study employed four segmentation schemes, namely: customer value segmentation, customer behaviour segmentation, customer life cycle segmentation and customer migration segmentation. Findings of the study reveal that advanced use of segmentation strategy allows each customer to be part of a micro-segment which allows for precise targeting, with knowledge of what the retention and value drives are for each customer. The end result was higher retention and growth, with the parallel benefit of enhanced business planning and retention targets may be assigned to each segment (Beyer 2020). In the same vein, a study conducted Aheleroff (2018) examined customer segmentation for a mobile telecommunications company based on service usage behaviour. The study discusses how to cluster mobile customers by billing systems and call details records, and analyse their customer behaviours. The study reveals that customer life cycle segmentation effectively captured the subscribers into four loyal groups (Aheleroff 2018). Similarly, a study by Daudi (2019) on the marketing strategy based on customer behaviour and marketing segmentation on telecoms in Tanzania examined marketing segmentation in telecommunications companies such as VODACOM, AIRTEL, TIGO, TTC and ZANTEL.

Findings from the cross-sectional study revealed the possibility of explaining customers' buying behaviour and satisfaction through the market segment, attitudes towards telecoms companies and services provided by the companies (Daudi 2019). On his part, Kasadha (2018) in his study titled "Market segmentation and customer service at orange telecom-Uganda" employed the cross-sectional research design was employed to collect primary data using self-administered questionnaires. Drawing on four main dimensions of market segmentation; namely: geographic, demographic, psychographic and behavioural segmentations, findings from the study revealed that Orange telecom has segmented its market according to population, age groups, gender, time, level of use, attitude though some respondents disagreed with the assertion that orange telecom segments its customers according to their level income and earnings (Kasadha 2018). Based on the foregoing review of empirical studies, the following hypotheses were formulated:

H0₁: Geographical segmentation has no significant effects on customer satisfaction in MTN

H0₂: Demographic segmentation has no significant effects on customer satisfaction in MTN.

H0₃: Psychographic segmentation has no significant effects on customer satisfaction in MTN

H0₄: Behavioural segmentation has no significant effects on customer satisfaction in MTN.

2.3 Theoretical Framework

This study adopts the Dynamic Capabilities Theory (DCT) to establish the interface between the variables in the study. Dynamic Capabilities Theory (DCT) is defined as the firm's ability to integrate, build and reconfigure internal and external competencies to address rapidly changing environments (Teece, Pisano & Shuen, 1997). Dynamic capabilities thus reflect an organisation's ability to achieve new and innovative forms of competitive advantage given path dependencies and market positions. The concept of dynamic capabilities as the ultimate source of competitive advantage is at the forefront of strategy research (Hou & Chien, 2010). Applying the Oliver (1977) Dynamic Capabilities Theory (DCT) to this research on the impacts of market segmentation on customer satisfaction shows that MTN telecommunication network introduced the market strategy of classifying the company's customers into four broad segments on the basis of geography, demography, psychographic and behaviour respectively, so as to capture their specific needs in a fast changing market environment. This is widely believed to be done with the aim of improving targeted service delivery to meet specific demands with the ultimate goal of yielding maximum profit and capture the competitive market.

3.0 Methodology

The study employed a cross-sectional survey research design in which data was collected within a short period of time to examine the impacts of market segmentation on customer satisfaction among the geographic, demographic, psychographic and behavioural segments of MTN subscribers in the capital city of Lagos, Nigeria. The population of this study include MTN subscribers. The sample size for this study was 85 respondents drawn from the four broad segments of subscribers of the MTN mobile telecommunications network in the city of Lagos, Nigeria. The Purposive sampling technique was used to select the research participants. Primary source of data collection was utilized for this study and the data was collected through administration of closed end structured questionnaire. Furthermore, customer satisfaction was measured using 11 items developed by Boateng 2011). Additionally,

market segmentation was measured using 20 items developed by Sri Lanka Premkanth (2012). Specifically, geographic was measured using 4 items, demographic was measured using 7 items; psychographic was measured using 4 items and behavioural segments was measured using 5 items scale. All the items were measured on a six-point likert scale ranging from Strong disagree (1) to strongly agree (6). SmartPLS 3.0 was used to compute the two basic models of Partial Least Square (PLS) path modelling (e.g. measurement model and structural model).

4.0 Result and Discussion

The results of this study discuss the main association between market segmentation variables and customer satisfaction among MTN subscribers in Lagos. It further presents the regression result to know which of the dimensions of market segmentation predict customer satisfaction. The correlation and regression results are presented in tables 4.1 and 4.2 respectively.

Table 4.1: Correlation Result

Construct	CS	GS	DS	PS	BS
Customer Satisfaction	1				
Geographic Seg.	0.96	1			
Demographic Seg.	0.643	0.613	1		
Psychographic Seg.	0.537	0.487	0.694	1	
Behavioural Seg.	0.682	0.621	0.594	0.695	1

The results of correlation analysis indicated that Geographical segmentation (GS), Demographic segmentation (DS), Psychographic segmentation (PS) and Behavioural segmentation (BS) were all positively correlated with customer satisfaction (CS) and significant at the 5% level of significance. This indicated that the more MTN market is segmented, the greater the customer satisfaction of the subscribers.

Table 4.2: Summary of Regression Result

Variables Regressed	Beta coefficient	t-value	P-value	Result
(Constant)	3.053	9.97	0.003	
Geographic Segt.	0.117	0.791	0.000	Significant
Demographic Segt.	0.950	0.405	0.001	Significant
Psychographic Seg.	0.760	0.307	0.000	Significant
Behavioural Segt.	-0.970	-1.03	0.120	insignificant
R- squared	0.766			
Adjusted R- squared	0.707			
F-Statistic	13.07			
Durbin Watson	1.63			

Predictors: geographic, demographic, psychographic and behavioural segments

Dependent Variable: Customer Satisfaction

The result in Table 4.2 shows that the co-efficient of determination (R^2) overall has a value of 0.766. This means that geographic, demographic, psychographic and behavioural segments

could explain about 76.6 % variance in customer satisfaction of MTN subscribers in the capital city of Lagos, Nigeria while the remaining 23.4% can only be accounted for by other factors that are not captured in this model. It can be inferred that market segmentation in MTN can to a large extent influences satisfaction of its subscribers. The corresponding t- statistic for each of the above variables include 0.791 for geographic segments of MTN, 0.405 for demographic segments of MTN, 0.307 for psychographic segments of MTN and -1.013 for behavioural segments of MTN, all of which have a significance of 0.000, 0.001, and 0.00 respectively. Furthermore, geographic, demographic, and psychographic segments have significant effect on customer satisfaction of MTN subscribers in Lagos ($p < 0.05$) while behavioural segments has an insignificant effect on customer satisfaction of MTN subscribers in Lagos ($p > 0.05$). More also, the F-value of 13.07 is significantly at 5% level indicating the fitness of this model. Finally, the Durbin Watson statistics was 1.63 indicating absence of auto serial correlation and fitness of the model of this study.

4.1 Discussion of Findings

The study found that geographical segmentation has significant effects on customer satisfaction in MTN. This finding is in congruence with Haley (1968) who found that geographic segmentation is a good predictor of consumer satisfaction. However, it is in contrast with Weinstein (2002) who found that geographic segmentation has an insignificant positive effect on customer satisfaction. The study further found that demographic segmentation has significant effects on customer satisfaction in MTN. The finding agrees with Weinstein (2002) but in contrast with Schoenwald (2001), Schultz (2002) and Morgan (2003) who maintained that demographic segmentation does not have any significant effect on customer behaviour and satisfaction. In addition, the study found that Psychographic segmentation has significant effects on customer satisfaction in MTN. The finding agrees with Weinstein (2002) but in contrast with Yankelovich and Meer (2006), and Mitchell (2006). Finally, the study found that behavioural segmentation has no significant effects on customer satisfaction in MTN. The finding slightly agrees with Weinstein (2002) who found out that Behavioural segmentation has statistically significant impact on customer satisfaction. In summary, the four types of segmentation were found to be correlated with customer's satisfaction. However, geographic, demographic and psychographic segmentation were found to have statistically significant positive effect on customer satisfaction in MTN. These findings are expected due to the huge success recorded by MTN campus booster, a special plans that double your data as you use them in campus with complimentary voice bonus to make on net voice calls. The package was target at young people between the ages of 18 to 25 years old who are students in tertiary institutions. This group usually rely only on the stipends given to them by their parents or guardians. They are characterise by frequent data used to stay in touch with friends and families as well as to solve their assignments. Some of them also use social media to buy and sell merchandise to support their upkeep. MTN, haven identified this unique needs created a product to suit their needs and income. The package endeared MTN to several students and raised the number of frequent users of their services by a significant percentage.

5.0 Conclusion and Recommendations

The general objective of the study was to investigate how market segmentation can improve customer satisfaction at MTN telecom. The results of correlation analysis indicated that

Geographical segmentation, Demographic segmentation, Psychographic segmentation and Behavioural segmentation were all positively correlated with customer satisfaction. The study found that while geographic segmentation tends to have negative impact on the customer satisfaction, demographic, psychographic and behavioural segmentation were found to have positive effect on customer satisfaction. However, only Demographic and psychographic segmentation were found to have statistically significant effect on customer satisfaction in MTN. Therefore, it was concluded that market segmentation can predict customers' satisfaction. It is therefore recommended that MTN adjust its marketing strategy to reflect the findings of this study as doing so will not only increase their customers' satisfaction, but also improve their operational efficiency, improve customer retention, reduce marketing expenses, and ultimately increasing their profitability.

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