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Books

- Bowersox, Donald J., Closs, David J., (1996), "Logistical Management." Tata McGraw, Hill
- Hunker, H.L. and A.J. Wright (1963), "Factors of Industrial Location in Ohio," Ohio State University.

Contributions to books

- Sharma T., Kwatra, G. (2008) Effectiveness of Social Advertising: A Study of Selected Campaigns, Corporate Social Responsibility, Edited by David Crowther & Nicholas Capaldi, Ashgate Research Companion to Corporate Social Responsibility, Chapter 15, pp 287-303.

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- Schemenner, R.W., Huber, J.C. and Cook, R.L. (1987), "Geographic Differences and the Location of New Manufacturing Facilities," Journal of Urban Economics, Vol. 21, No. 1, pp. 83-104.
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Conference papers

- Chandel K.S. (2009): "Ethics in Commerce Education." Paper presented at the Annual International Conference for the All India Management Association, New Delhi, India, 19–22 June.

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- Kelkar V. (2009): Towards a New Natutal Gas Policy, Economic and Political Weekly, Viewed on 11 September 2009 http://epw.in/epw/user/viewabstract.jsp

STRATEGIC MARKETING PRACTICES ON THE PERFORMANCE OF FIRMS IN NIGERIAN OIL AND GAS INDUSTRY

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this thesis is to investigate the impact of strategic marketing practices on the performance of firms in the downstream sector of the Nigerian oil and gas industry. The specific objectives of the study include the exploration of the possible differences in organizational structure and strategies adopted and how they affect the performance of Nigerian oil and gas marketing companies; showing how the strategy of marketing mix (product, price, place and promotion) influence or affect the diversification and concentration of Nigerian oil and gas marketing companies' performance; determining how the industry environmental performance indices can affect the various strategies and factors of Nigerian oil and gas marketing companies. This study adopted a survey research methodology to examine the strategic marketing practices of Nigerian oil and gas marketing companies in an attempt to attain their desired level of performance. Three hundred and forty one (341) respondents were chosen from the target population of two thousand three hundred (2300) through stratified random sampling. Out of the 341 copies of the questionnaire given out, two hundred and eighty six (286) copies representing 83.87% responses were received for analysis.

Two hypotheses were formulated from the research questions. Analysis of Variance, Pearson Moment Correlation Analysis, Factor Analysis among other statistical tools were used in testing the hypotheses. The overall results suggest that strategic marketing is a driver of organizational positioning in a dynamic environment, and that it helps to enhance the development of new product/service for existing markets. These findings, along with other interesting findings of the study, are discussed. From the empirical and anecdotal managerial evidence as well as from the literature implications are drawn for the efficient and effective strategic marketing practices in the Nigerian oil and gas industry. Based on the findings of the study, the concepts and principles of total quality management within a holistic framework it is recommended that (i) efforts should be made by organizational marketers towards understanding the relevant economic factors that affect both clients' behaviour and the strategic options that may be adopted to cope with such behaviours; (ii) oil and gas marketing academics should endeavour to study holistically the relevant business functions and activities which may enhance or hinder the understanding and application of relevant modern management concepts and principles to oil service marketing; (iii) in a constantly changing business environment, firms can adopt different strategic marketing practices since the yardstick is the enhancement of business performance.

KEYWORDS

Dynamic environment, Strategic Marketing, Strategies, Performance, Resources.

INTRODUCTION

To achieve a set of organizational goals and objectives, companies conceptualize, design, and implement various strategies. These strategies can be corporate, business, or functional. Marketing strategies constitute one of the functional strategies amenable to application by contemporary companies in order to enhance performance. Marketing has been defined and conceptualized in various ways, depending on the author's background, interest, and education (Osuagwu 1999). For example, marketing can be seen as a matrix of business activities organized to plan, produce, price, promote, distribute, and megamarket goods, service, and ideas for the satisfaction of relevant customers and clients. Achumba and Osuagwu (1994) also posit that marketing is important for the success of any organization, whether service- or product-oriented. Bolaji (2003) argues that the oil and gas service sector constitutes a service industry that has currently been changed by aggressive strategic marketing behaviour. According to (Okoroafo 1993), indigenous Nigerian oil and gas marketing companies were not profoundly entrepreneurial at the beginning for the following reasons: lack of trained manpower, poor infrastructural development, lack of adequate or sufficient capital base on the part of the indigenous oil and gas marketing companies and intense competition from superior foreign companies. Therefore, early indigenous Nigerian oil and gas marketing companies were operated by regional governments entrusted with ownership responsibilities. The relatively good performance of these regional oil and gas marketing companies, in addition to the liberalized regime of governments of the day pertaining to regulations in the oil and gas industry, resulted in the proliferation of oil and gas marketing companies. This proliferation forced the oil and gas marketing companies to design and implement efficient and effective marketing strategies, in addition to other strategies that could rescue the Nigerian economy out of the woods.

However, with the few functional and reasonably competitive oil and gas marketing companies in Nigeria, low indigenous/local investment, and little foreign investment in the Nigerian economy, existing oil and gas marketing companies in Nigeria compete fiercely for available businesses. This has, consequently, led to the design of all forms of marketing strategies by Nigerian oil and gas marketing companies in order to survive, grow, and achieve their set goals and objectives. The petroleum industry is considered to be one of the largest and most powerful industries in the global market with its operations covering every corner of the globe and with the world's energy heavily dependent on oil and gas products (Amnesty International 2004). Today, activities in the petroleum industry are composed of various procedures including exploring, extracting, refining, transportation and marketing of the petroleum product.

The sensitivity of petroleum resource is clearly reflected in the fact that it has remained or continued to be the goose that lay a golden eggs for the Nigerian economy as well as the supreme foreign exchange earner contributing over 80% of government revenues and helps the development of Nigeria's infrastructures and other industries (Anya 2002; Chukwu 2002; Gary and Karl 2003). In view of the critical importance of the sector to the nation's economy and its capacity to generate far-reaching multiplier effect, the grooming of highly skilled indigenous manpower to participate keenly in the activities of the sector to redress the foreign dominance becomes imperative (Baker 2006). The rapid development of an indigenous technical workforce has become more compelling than ever before against the background of the expected imminent injection of massive investment in the sector. With a current production capacity of about 30 million barrels per day (bpd), Nigeria plans to increase her production capacity to about 40 million bpd by 2010 (Utomi 2001; Obi 2003; Mathiason 2006). Already, Nigeria is the leading oil and gas producer in Africa, currently ranked the seventh highest in the world (NNPC 2004; The Guardian 2006).

In addition to the above, Nigeria which is widely referred to as a gas province, has natural gas reserves that triple crude oil reserves, being estimated in excess of 187.5 trillion standard cubit feet(scf) (Africa Oil and Gas 2004). The foregoing underscores the vast investments and potentials of the Nigerian petroleum sector, and therefore calls for commensurate investments in the development of the Nigerian human capital base. The Federal Government has stated that one of its objectives is to achieve 50 per cent local content in the oil and gas sector by 2010. Adegbulugbe (2002) observes that Nigeria began exporting oil in 1958 with crude oil production of 5000 barrels per day (bpd) rising by 1979 to a peak of 2.3 million bpd. Currently, Nigeria's crude oil production is about 1.5 million barrels per day(bpd) and is expected to rise to 2.5 million bpd . Nigeria is the 13th largest oil producer in the world and 6th largest oil producer among the Organisation of Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC). Determined by crude oil reserves and output, gas reserves and output, refinery capacity and product sales volume, Nigeria ranks first in Africa in oil production. It ranks 5th in gas reserves which makes the country more of a gas rather than an oil country (CBN 2002). Indeed, Nigeria is often described as a gas zone with some oil in it. However, gas resources are largely untapped and Nigeria's gas reserves place it among the top ten countries in the world in that category (Assael 2000 ; Ekpu 2004). Assael (2000) and Ekpu (2004) also observe that other energy resources such as hydro power, wind energy, and coal, which is produced in Enugu and Benue States abound in the country. Nigeria is in fact the only coal-producing West African nation. About 43% of Nigeria's natural gas is associated with oil which according to (Ekpu 2004) is unfortunately largely flared to the detriment of the economy. Energy consumption is in the area of petroleum products, which according to (Assael 2000; Dixton et al 2005), accounted for between 70% and 80% of total energy consumed in Nigeria between 1970 and 1980, the major consumers being the transportation, household and industrial sectors.

This study is intended to expand the body of knowledge in respect of the application of strategic marketing practices to the oil and gas sector especially in a developing economy like Nigeria that earns over 80% of her foreign exchange from oil and particularly, as the Federal Government is putting in place policies and strategies to improve the oil sector's contributions to the Nigeria economy (Garuba 2006).

STATEMENT OF RESEARCH PROBLEMS

The problem statement, according to (Wiersma 1995), describes the content for the study and it also identifies the general analysis of issues in the research necessitating the need for the study (Creswell 1994). The research is expected to answer questions and provide reasons responsible for undertaking the particular research (Pajares 2007). The problem of this study is to measure, analyse and establish the impact of organization expenditure on oil and gas industry performance variables which include effect of structure/strategies, the diversification and concentration, environmental performance indices and goal actualization of the organization objectives. Many research efforts in the area of marketing practices in developing economies have dealt with macro issues and emphasized the management of company's structure and strategies, conduct and performance of marketing activities as they relate to performance indices such as market share, growth, efficiency and well being of consumers and clients (Boyd et al 1994; Baker 1995; Bauer 1998; Samli and Kaynak 1994) lament that the key defect with this static and macroanalysis of marketing practices in developing economies is that it minimizes the impact of marketing environment on the achievement of performance measures. Also, although some research efforts have been undertaken to explain marketing practices in developing economies at the organizational level (Westfall and Boyd 1990; Samli 1994; Wadimambiaratchi 1995 ; Cravens et al 1990), many of these research efforts do not provide answers to issues pertaining to the impact of company's structure and strategies on the performance of mineral prospecting industries particularly the oil and gas marketing companies. The deregulation of the Nigerian economy through the Structural Adjustment Programme (SAP) affected the oil and gas sector in Nigeria in many ways (Miles and Snow 1978 ;Umunnaehila 1996). These include the diversification and concentration of marketing activities and the need to apply the marketing mix elements such as price, place, product, and promotion to meet the needs and wants of customers and also survive in intense competition within and outside the Nigerian oil and gas industry. The restructuring policy of SAP, brought deregulations in the sector and encouraged many new oil and gas marketing companies to enter into the oil and gas industry. This resulted in oil and gas companies seeking for clients and designing services that would meet clients' needs and wants. Consequently, the Nigerian oil and gas companies incorporated the usage of various market mix elements to improve their market outreach/ coverage, new product ratio, price positioning, competitive orientation,etc to survive and grow (Umoh 1992; Udell 1998; Osoka 1996 ; Adler 1997 ; Johne and Davies 2002). The poor condition of some oil and gas marketing companies in Nigeria is a function of some interrelated problems. According to (Sheng 1999 ; Day and Reibstein 1997 ; Kim and Mauborgne 1998 ; Johne 1999 ; Kandampully and Duddy 1999), the causes of the oil and gas marketing companies failure or poor performance, are due to microeconomic or macroeconomic factors (performance industry environmental factors indice coupled with the management of marketing content and product marketing). Mamman and Oluyemi (1995) ;McDonald (1996) and Creveling (1994) have, however, posited that oil and gas companies poor performance in Nigeria is a function of industry environmental factor indices and marketing of oil and gas services. Faced with the compelling need to achieve their organizational goal, oil and gas companies in Nigeria must explore new avenues, approaches, strategies or practices to achieve their set goals and objectives. Generally, marketing strategy deals with adapting the marketing mix elements to environmental factors. It evolves as a result of the interplay of the marketing mix elements and the environmental factors, which impact on these elements (Scnars 1991; Li et al 2000 ; Aristobulo 1997; Jain 1993 ; Mavondo 2000). Therefore, the function of marketing strategy deals with determining the nature, strength, direction, and interaction between marketing mix elements and the environmental factors in a particular situation (Jain and Punj 1987; Osuagwu 2001; 2001; 2004). However, achieving efficient and effective product marketing strategy by an organization is difficult, as a result of the ambiguity and instability of environmental factors (Brownie and Spender 1995). The peculiarities of oil and gas marketing services may create or set modalities for goal actualization parameters that are different from those found in the marketing of tangible products. The peculiarities may, also, require unique inter-industry/marketing commitment and approaches. However, marketing concepts, principles and goals are of relevance in the marketing of oil and gas service. Sound and robust marketing commitment on the part of organization and sales-people are important to the survival and growth of the oil and gas industry, considering the subtle, unstable and seemingly hostile business environments in which contemporary business organizations operate (McDonald 1996; Creveling 1994). In order to formulate and implement effective and efficient goal actualization and inter-industry marketing commitment in product distribution, oil and gas companies should have a thorough and continuous understanding of the relevant environment that impacts on their marketing strategies (McDonald 1989; 1992 ; 1996).

Today, obtaining and retaining a dominant position in the market has become very difficult due to the vast spread of products and services and the aggressive competition on one side and increasing customers demand on the other side. Also rapid transitions of information age and appearance of new economies set forth customer as a valuable asset and communicating successfully with (internal and external) customers is an essential part of doing business which create competitive advantage in the external environment and enhance inter-industry marketing commitment in internal environment, in a manner that all of the resources and technologies of an organization should combine with internal and external customers in order to have a sustainable competitive advantage and organizational commitment. Successful organizations are those that integrate efficient and effective management in internal and external dimensions through external relationship management and enhancement of inter-industry marketing commitment and goal actualization among internal and external customers. Internal marketing paradigm is a mechanism for the managers to analyze the organizational issues which need to be addressed in implementing marketing strategies. It is therefore, imperative for organizations to establish an important framework of legitimacy for new directions and transformations and accommodate the constant process of change management and knowledge management.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The main focus of marketing activities of oil and gas marketing companies is the identification and satisfaction of clients' needs and wants. These objectives can be attained by identifying the likely marketing mix variables and strategies, including relevant environmental impacts on them. There is, therefore, the need to carry out this research given the enormity of the problem facing the oil and gas industry. Specifically the study sought to investigate the following:

1) To explore the possible differences in the organizational structure and strategies adopted and how they affect the performance of Nigerian oil and gas marketing companies.

2) To show how the strategy of the marketing mix(product, price, place and promotion) influences and affects the diversification and concentration of Nigerian oil and gas marketing companies.

RESEARCH HYPOTHESES

The following null hypotheses are considered in this study:

a) The organizational structure and strategies adopted do not affect the market share of Nigerian oil and gas marketing companies.
b) Marketing mix strategy , diversification and concentration adopted do not yield higher rate of performance of Nigerian oil and gas marketing companies' .

LITERATURE REVIEW

DEVELOPMENT OF MARKETING PRACTICES

Marketing strategies and tactics are concerned with taking decisions on a number of variables to influence mutually-satisfying exchange transactions and relationships. Typically, marketers have a number of tools they can use, these include megamarketing (Kotler 1996) and the so-called 4Ps of marketing (McCarthy 1995), among others. Marketing seems easy to describe, but extremely difficult to practice (Kotler and Connor 1997). Organizational managers in many firms have applied the so-called marketing concept, which may be simple or complex. The marketing concept and variants like the total quality management concept for example, are essentially concerned with satisfying clients' needs and wants beneficially. Developing and implementing efficient and effective marketing strategies which incorporate relevant dimensions of the marketing concept involve the organic tasks of selecting a target market(customers/clients) in which to operate and developing an efficient and effective marketing ingredient combination. Marketing thought, with its practice, has been moving speedily into the service industry (Kotler and Connor 1997). Literature, partly, centres on the discussion of whether physical product marketing is similar to, or different from, the marketing of service and concludes that the differences between physical product and service might be a matter of emphasis rather than of nature or kind (Creveling 1995). Marketing is one of the salient and important organic functions which help to service organizations to meet their business challenges and achieve set goals and objectives (Kotler and Connor 1997). The word " service" is used to describe an organization or industry that "does something" for someone, and does not " make something" for someone (Silvestro and Johnston 1990). "Service" is used of companies or firms that meet the needs and wants of society such organizations are essentially bureaucratic (Johns 1990). " Service" may also be described as intangible its outcome being perceived as an activity rather than as a tangible offering. The question of the distinction between services and tangible products is based on the proportion of service components that a particular offering contains (Johns 1990).

A service may therefore be seen as an activity or benefit which can be offered to an organization or individual by another organization or individual and which is essentially intangible. It is a separately identifiable but intangible offer which produces want-satisfaction to the client, and which may or may not be necessarily tied to the sale of a physical product or another service (Osuagwu 1999). Services include a wide range of activities and form some of the growing sectors of the economies of developed and developing countries. Services include professional services (legal, accounting, medical, management consulting, etc), general services (insurance, postal, telephone, transportation, internet ,tourism, etc), maintenance and repair services, and services from marketing researchers and product manufacturers, among others. Oil and gas service is not a tangible thing like food, clothing and car. Sound and robust marketing strategies are important to the survival and growth of any business, including oil and gas business, considering the increasingly subtle, unstable and seemingly hostile business environments in which contemporary business organizations operate (McDonald 2004 and Creveling 2005). Therefore, in order to formulate and implement efficient and effective marketing strategies, business organizations should have a thorough and continuous understanding of the relevant environment that impacts on their marketing strategies. According to (Schnars 1991), marketing strategy has been a salient focus of academic inquiry since the 1980s. There are numerous definitions of marketing strategy in the literature and such definitions reflect different perspectives (Li et al 2000). However, the consensus is that marketing strategy provides the avenue for utilizing the resources of an organization in order to achieve its set goals and objectives. Generally, marketing strategy deals with the adapting of marketing mix-elements to environmental forces. It evolves from the interplay of the marketing mix elements and the environmental factors (Li et al 2000). Therefore, the function of marketing strategy is to determine the nature, strength, direction, and interaction between the marketing mix- elements and the environmental factors in a particular situation (Jain and Punj 1997). According to (McDonald 1992), the aim of the development of an organization's marketing strategy development is to establish, build, defend and maintain its competitive advantage. Managerial judgment is important in coping with environmental ambiguity and uncertainty in strategic marketing (Brownie and Spender 1995). Marketing strategy development has the following peculiarities:

1) It requires managerial experience, intuition and judgment (Little 1990; Mintzberg 1994a; 1994b; 1996; Brownlie and Spender 1995; McIntyre 1992; Alpar 1991).

2) It carries a high level of uncertainty and ambiguity (Brownlie and Spender 1995).

3) It is business sphere knowledge- intensive (McDonald and Wilson 1990; Duberlaar et al 1991).

4) It entails a broad spectrum of strategic information (Mintzberg 1994b ; Berry 1997).

5) It is a process which usually involves subtle decision making by organizational managers based on exhaustive examination of relevant environments and a synthesis of essential and useful pieces of information (Mintzberg, 1994a and 1994b);

6) It is specifically concerned with devising an approach by which an organization can effectively differentiate itself from other competitors by emphasizing and capitalizing on its unique strengths in order to offer better customer/client value over a long period of time (Jain and Punj 1997). However, it is difficult for an organization to achieve an efficient and effective marketing strategy (Li et al 2000). As a result of the ambiguity and instability of environmental factors, strategic marketing may be a difficult task for organizational strategists. Many factors prevent organizational managers from designing and implementing efficient and effective marketing strategies (McDonald 1992). The fact is that environmental factors generally interact in an astonishing manner and affect the efficiency and effectiveness of managers in strategic marketing issues (McDonald 1989; 1996). Against this background, the present research attempts to assess the marketing strategies of Nigerian oil and gas marketing companies, the impacts of environmental factors on such strategies and the effectiveness of the marketing strategies. The oil and gas industry seems to have witnessed some form of corporate performance over the years which can be attributed to their distict level of market share (Okwor 1992; Falegan 1991 ; Daniel 1998 ; Olawoyin, 1995 ; Ogunrinde 1990).

DEFINITION OF STRATEGIC MARKETING

The early strategic marketing - performance studies date from the time of rapid expansion of formal strategic marketing in the 1960s (Henry 1999). Although same studies employed diverse methodologies and measures, they shared a common interest in exploring the financial performance consequences of the basic tools, techniques, and activities of formal strategic marketing i.e. systematic intelligence-gathering, market research, SWOT analysis, portfolio analysis, mathematical and computer model of formal planning meetings and written long- range plans. The studies did not generally examine the relationship between performance and the extent of formal planning; variously referred to as “comprehensiveness, rationality, formality, or simply, strategic marketing”. According to Allison and Kaye (2005), strategic marketing is making choices. It is a process designed to support leaders in being intentional about their goals and methods. Differently expressed, strategic marketing is a marketing management tool and like any tool, it is used for one purpose only namely to help an organization to do its job better. Hence, strategic marketing is a systematic process by which an organization agrees on and builds commitment among key stakeholders to priorities that are essential to it and are responsive to the environment. Bryson (2004) observes that strategic marketing is a disciplined effort to produce fundamental decisions and actions that shape and guide what an organization is, what it does, and why it does it, with a focus on the future. Woodward (2004), argues that strategic marketing is a process by which one can envision the future and develop the necessary procedures and operations to influence and achieve the future. Organizations can develop a planning process based on six simple questions. Realistic answers to these can help to guide the owners and managers of any business or organization toward a successful future.

Strategic marketing, according to (Berry 1997), is the process of determining (i) what your organization intends to accomplish and (ii) how you will direct the organization and its resources towards attaining the goals set over the coming months and years. In other words, strategic marketing is a tool for finding the best future for your organization and the best path to reach the desired destination. Higgins and Vincze (1993); Mintzberg (1994); Pearce and Robinson (1994) are of the opinion that strategic marketing can be defined as the process of using systematic criteria and rigorous investigation to formulate, implement, and control strategy, and formally document organizational expectations. Kudler (1996), views strategic marketing as the systematic process of determining the firm's goals and objectives for at least three years into the future and developing the strategies that will guide the acquisition and use of resources to achieve the set objectives. Steiner (1997), sees strategic marketing as the process of determining the mission, major objectives, strategies and policies that govern the acquisition and allocation of resources to achieve organizational aims. Strategic marketing has come to be "inextricably interwoven into the entire fabric of management", it is not seen as separate and distinct from the process of management. Bradford and Duncan (2000), argue that strategic marketing is an organization's process of defining its strategy and making decisions on allocating its resources to pursue this strategy, including its capital and people. The outcome is normally a strategic plan which is used as a guide to define functional and divisional plans, technology, marketing among others. Hunsaker (2001) observes that strategic plans apply to the entire organization. Paley (2004), sees strategic marketing as representing the managerial process for developing and maintaining a strategic fit between the organization and changing market opportunities.

Gup and Whitehead (2000), on other part, see strategic marketing as the formulation of a unified, comprehensive and integrated plan aimed at relating the strategic advantages of the firm to the challenges of the environment. Anderson (2004), states that strategic marketing is the logical and systematic process by which top management reaches a consensus on the major strategic direction of the company. He enumerate major characteristics of strategic marketing as:

a) a process of deciding in advance what will be done, when and by who, and how it will be done:
b) the future impact of current decisions,
c) an integral part of the management process, and
d) a structure of plans integrating major objectives, strategies, policies and functions of the organization.

Finally, he states that for strategic marketing to succeed, an appropriate climate must exist, top management must be committed and involved, and there must be a disciplined but flexible planning approach. He further observes that line personnel must participate, performance standards for monitoring and evaluation must be established and planning must be integrated with decision making. Paley (2004), advocating the adoption of strategic marketing in solving organization's problems, remarks that the organization which does not plan for its future does not deserve any future. Citing the work of (Ansoff 1988), he contrasts strategic marketing with long- range planning and concludes that both concepts are not synonymous. He argues that long- range planning is based upon the extrapolation of past situations, a questionable premise on the ground that present conditions are not the same as those of the past. Ulrich & Barney (1984), further criticize the traditional extrapolation techniques of long range planning and suggest the use of scenario analysis which encourages broad and creative thinking about the future. The authors cite the work of (Wing 1997), which contest that traditional forecasting techniques are based on the assumption that tomorrow's world will be much like today's. Commenting on 'New Age' Strategic marketing Ginsberg (1997) explains that the present complex environment is characterized by side effects, time delays, non-linearity and multiple feedback processes. He then concludes that traditional strategy tools are no longer adequate in designing superior strategies. He consequently advocates the use of the holistic systems approach as opposed to the esoteric ways of the 'old'. Ansoff (1988), reports that newly invented strategic marketing displaced long range planning because of the growing discontinuity of the environment.

Hinterhuber (1992), argued that a manager is not necessarily a strategist and that a manager's vision is also not an entrepreneurial vision. Realizing however that strategic marketing process does not specify how plans should be translated into action, the issue of strategic marketing implementation led to the evolution of strategic marketing management.

EMPIRICAL STUDIES ON STRATEGIC MARKETING

Various studies have examined the relationship between strategic marketing and performance in the manufacturing industry (Crysler 1998 ; Rajaratnam and Chonko 1995 ; Sampson and Showalter 1999), and the service industry (Cleverley and Harvey 1992; Crysler 1998; Eastaugh 1992; Lackmann 2003; Luhby 1999 ; Mckee et al 1996 ; Short et al 2002; Smith et al 1992). Only very few studies have been done on the oil and gas industry (Cleverley and Harvey 1992 ;Eastaugh 1992 ; Mckee , Varadarajan and Vassar 1996; Short, Palmer and Ketchen 2002 ; Smith, Piland and Funk 1992) and there is little or no discussion of the impact of strategic marketing on the performance of participants in the downstream sector of oil and gas in Nigeria.

Most of these studies relating to strategic marketing and performance in the oil and gas industry have been undertaken almost exclusively within the United States context (Cleverley and Harvey 1992; Eastaugh 1992 ; Short, et al 2002 ; Smith, et al 1992).Given that the Nigerian oil and gas industry is considerably different to that of the United States, this study was designed to examine whether the performance of downstream sector in Nigeria is influenced by their strategic marketing activities. These findings are supported by strategy and performance literature that has found that strategic marketing influences an organization's performance (Armstrong 1991; Chang et al 2003 ; Cleverley and Harvey 1992; Das 2001; Eastaugh 1992; Johnson and Scholes 2002 ; Miller and Roth 1994); Morgan et al 1987 ; Watkins 2003). In the same vein, (Miller and Roth 1994) claimed that strategic marketing activities are widely believed to improve the performance of organizations. Schmenner (1995), also concluded that some strategic marketing activities affect turnover, productivity, and financial performance of organizations. Johnson and Scholes (2002), found that strategic marketing activities have the most significant effects on firm's outcomes such as productivity, turnover, and performance.

One of the clearest demonstrations of the causal effect of strategic marketing activities on performance comes from a study of a five year survival rate of 136 non- financial companies that initiated their public offering in the U.S stock market in 1988. By 1993, only 60 percent of these companies were still in existence. The empirical analysis revealed that with other factors such as size, industry, and even profits statistically controlled, both the value the firm placed on resources such as whether the company cited employees as a source of competitive advantage and how the organization reward people such as stock options for all employees and profit sharing were significantly related to the probability of survival. Empirical research began to examine the performance and consequences of formal strategic marketing e.g (Thune and House 1990). Over 40 strategic marketing-performance studies have appeared since that time. However, in recent year this line of research has slowed to a trickle, and with good reason. Previous studies lacked theoretical grounding, produced a bewildering array of contradictory findings, drew heavy criticism for inadequate methodologies, and has little or no discernable net impact on strategic marketing management research or practice (Shrader et al 1984 ; Schmenner 1995). Nonetheless, it seems evident that the planning –performance relationship bears significantly on strategic marketing research and practice, and that scholars should not abandon this line of enquiry altogether. This study reevaluates the strategic marketing-performance research; the impact of strategic marketing practice on the participants in the downstream oil industry.

The result from past researches suggested that the intensity with which organizations engage in the strategic process has a direct positive effect on organization's performance, and mediates the effect of managerial and organizational factors on organization's performance. Results also indicated a reciprocal relationship between strategic marketing intensity and performance (Smith et al 1992). There is a constant need for organizations, especially oil industries to think strategically about what is going on (Schmenner 1995). This appears to be precisely what organizations, in particular have begun to do in recent years. In response to increasing complexity and change in the oil industry, organizations have turned to strategic marketing. The relatively new trend towards strategic marketing in organizations is viewed as a move designed not only to help them negotiate their environment more effectively, but to improve their financial performance as well (Bird 1991; Das 2001). Subsequently, the consideration of such factors in the present study is viewed as a significant issue that holds implications for future research as well as for strategic marketing management.

METHODOLOGY

A cross- sectional survey was selected for this study because it was easy to undertake compared to longitudinal survey and the result from the sample can be inferred to the larger population. In addition, some extraneous factors could have manifested in the observed change other than the independent variable concerned. The target population in the study was the employees of product pipeline marketing companies in Lagos, Nigeria. A structural questionnaire was used to collect data from the respondents. The questionnaire was developed to capture the information on the level of respondents, knowledge on the main purpose of performance of appraisal system and a assessment of the awareness of performance appraisal by the university. The questionnaire was pre-tested with respondents in other product marketing company, to authenticate reliability. The pre-testing was done to avoid any possible influence on trial respondents before the actual survey. The analyzed data was presented using descriptive statistics, frequency tables, Analysis of Variance, and Correlation coefficients. Descriptive statistics allow the generalization of the data to give an account of the structure or the characteristics of the population as represented by the sample.

POPULATION OF THE STUDY

The subject for the research study consists of a stratified simple random sample of marketing executives in Nigerian oil and gas marketing companies. The Nigerian oil and gas year book of 1999 provided the list of Nigerian oil and gas marketing companies from where the random sample was drawn. The respondents consist of Assistant General Managers, Senior Managers, Managers, Assistant Managers, and Officers responsible for marketing activities in their respective oil and gas marketing companies. The population shows that the estimated registered oil and gas marketing companies in Nigerian is put at two thousand five hundred (2500).

SAMPLE SIZE DETERMINATION

One important step when conducting a survey is to select the sample size. The larger the size of the sample the greater its precision or reliability, but there are constraints to be dealt with. The constraint are time, staff and cost. The sample size of this study is determined by the one postulated by Guilford and Fruchter (1973) which is assured to be best suited for this study. The population statistical formula is as follows:

n= N

$1+(Ne)^2$

Where:

n= The desired sample size to be determined

N= Total population

e= Accepted error limit 0.05 on the basis of 95% confidence level

Where

N= 2300, e=0.05, n=sample size

Therefore n= $\frac{2300}{1+2300(0.05)^2} = 341$ respondents

DATA ANALYSIS, FINDING AND DISCUSSIONS

Table 1: Descriptive Statistics of Perception placed on Oil and Gas Marketing Strategy Variables (n=286)

Variables	Mean	Standard Error	Standard Deviation	R_2	Cum. High(%)	Cum.Low(%)
Unstable, rapidly changing environments provide more opportunity	5.50	.22	.71	.50	40.0	60.0
Lowest cost relative to competitors	4.30	.37	1.16	1.34	80.0	20.0
Company reactive than proactive	2.70	.47	1.49	2.23	30.0	70.0
Identifies causes of problems before making strategic decisions	4.0	.39	1.25	1.56	70.0	30.0
Speed of product/service development is an important priority	5.10	.23	.74	.55	70.0	30.0
Work hard in maintaining lowest cost possible	5.10	.23	.74	.55	70.0	30.0
Faster in responding to competitors action	5.00	.30	.94	.89	90.0	10.0
Make profit by delivering above average quality	4.50	.50	1.58	2.50	80.0	20.0

product/services						
Access longterm implications of change in technology	3.50	.60	1.90	3.61	50.0	50.0
Places strong emphasis on research and development	3.60	.50	1.58	2.49	70.0	30.0
Frontload production by building capacity ahead of sales	4.20	.36	1.14	1.29	60.0	40.0
Develop product/services faster than competitors	4.40	.60	1.89	3.60	70.0	30.0
Taking relational advantage of economies of scale is an important goal	3.60	.40	1.27	1.60	50.0	50.0
Product/services far exceeds competitions	4.10	.41	1.29	1.66	70.0	30.0
Structure makes it difficult for competitors to come easily	3.30	.58	1.83	3.34	60.0	40.0
Structure lets someone else break new new grounds	3.30	.56	1.77	3.12	50.0	50.0
Enforce legal provision in order not to be in conflict with environment	3.90	.59	1.85	3.43	60.0	40.0
Anticipates how competitors might respond to strategic actions	3.70	.37	1.16	1.34	60.0	40.0
Assess longterm forecast of sales	3.50	.62	1.96	3.83	90.0	10.0
Places emphasis on legal or regulatory matters	3.20	.61	1.93	3.73	50.0	50.0
Set guidelines on how key operations are to be carried out	3.60	.63	2.00	4.00	50.0	40.0
Places emphasis on meeting clients satisfaction	2.70	.58	1.84	3.35	50.0	40.0
Government policy has encouraged the industry	3.30	.65	2.05	4.22	50.0	50.0

to make profit						
Structure enable to build a strong product/brand image	3.40	.60	1.89	3.60	60.0	30.0
Invest in high visible projects with chances of high returns	2.80	.68	2.14	4.61	40.0	60.0

Table 1 shows the descriptive statistics of perception placed on dimensions of oil and gas marketing strategies. Many of the marketing strategy variables showed above average perceptions. However, some of the variables received slow average perception. This means that relatively low perception were placed on dimensions of organisation structure and investment in high visible projects, in addition to low perception placed on meeting clients satisfaction (mega marketing). In contemporary terms, it may be said that the concepts and principles of total quality management (TQM) and megamarketing have not been adequately emphasized in Nigeria's oil and gas industry. Often, Nigerian oil and gas clients complain about the poor quality of services rendered by oil and gas marketing companies, particularly with respect to follow- up and comprehension of oil and gas policy terms and conditions. According to (Median 1999; McColl-Kennedy and Fetter 1999), identification and satisfaction of oil and gas clients' needs and wants should be the emphasis of oil and gas marketing companies. These objectives are partly achievable through reasonable emphasis on the marketing–mix combinations of products, pricing, promotions, distribution, and megamarketing strategies, among others. The highest marketing strategy emphases were placed on "rapidly changing environment provide more opportunity, and speed in product/service development. In the Nigerian oil and gas industry, aggressive salesmanship activities are undertaken by oil and gas sales agents/representatives in order to win new clients/market. Also, price negotiations may be tailored towards what the prospective client can afford to pay.

Table 2: Reliability Coefficients of Research Measures (Cronbach's Alpha)

S/N	Variable Measure	Cronbach's Alpha Coefficients
1	Management of Marketing strategy	0.76
2	Oil and Gas Performance Measurement	0.73
3	Effect of Environmental factors on marketing strategies	0.65
4	Organizational structure and strategies	0.84

Table 2 above shows Cronbach's alpha coefficients of the major research measures. " Management of marketing strategy contructs" and "Oil and gas performance measurements" met Nunnally's (1978) internal consistency (reliability) standard for newly- developed research measures, while "Effect of environmental factors on marketing strategies" failed to meet Nunnally's (1978) standard for reliability. Specifically, Nunnally (1978) recommended 0.70 Cronbach alpha value (internal consistency) for newly developed research instruments. Therefore, subject to the specific and usual limitations associated with this type of research, the research instrument appears reliable and valid.

This study has provided empirical evidence pertaining to the perception placed on oil and gas marketing strategies, and oil and gas performance measures and impact of environmental factors on such strategies. The research findings show that product and mega marketing strategies received relatively low perception. These findings have managerial and research implications.

Table 3: Descriptive Statistics of Effectiveness of Strategic Marketing Using Qualitative Measures of Performance (n= 286)

Variables	Mean	Std. Dev.	Variance	Skewness
Company makes profit by selling large quantities of goods/services	5.17	.96	.89	-.1.27
Experience to cut costs is an important goal	4.67	.99	.99	-.79
Sales executive move faster than competitors in responding to customers needs	4.93	.98	.87	-.99
Develops an exhaustive set of alternatives before making improvement management decision	4.79	.89	.79	-.69
Demands better services provided by customers	4.17	1.23	1.29	-.39
Emphasize opening up new branches	4.69	1.23	1.27	-.32
Ability to gain market share is high	3.57	1.39	1.79	-.34

Table 3 presents the descriptive statistics of the effectiveness of strategic marketing practices of the studied oil and gas industry. The finding shows that strategic marketing practices have been reasonably effective in oil and gas industry, with strategic marketing effectiveness being very high from the analysis above. The essence of strategic marketing is to achieve set objectives, and these objectives can be measured in terms of profit, market share, marketing cost, gross earnings, capital employed, asset quality, quality of marketing management, liquidity, turnover of marketing staff, and management of departmental crisis. The effectiveness of strategic marketing practices in the studied oil and gas industry is encouraging. These are the CAMEL measures of performance. According to (Umoh 1992; McDonald 1996), the effectiveness of oil and gas strategies determines the survival and growth of downstream sector in Nigeria, especially in an ever- changing environment. Effective oil and gas management through strategic marketing assists in the employment of capital raised, and manages the oil and gas asset portfolio in viable business options so that the assets are seen to be performing and yielding returns. The marketing strategies of oil and gas, in order to show reasonable levels of effectiveness along the CAMEL measures, have to emphasize a marketing management team with foresight, experience, and commitment towards the survival and growth of the oil industry, among others. Oluyemi (1996), posit that the most widely accepted measure of performance of oil and gas industry is current profitability, which is measured in terms of return on assets and return on equity. Nigerian oil and gas industry that creates comparatively large amounts of value (in relation to its equity) through it strategic marketing practices can be said to show high level of effectiveness. And as Table 3 shows, the studied oil and gas industry's have shown appreciable levels of effectiveness using the identified measures of performance.

Table 4: Comparison of Environmental Characteristic [a]

Dimension of the Environment	Company A Total Mean	Company B Oando Mean	Company C Texaco mean	Company D Agip Mean
Markets				
Product diversity	4.64	4.29***	3.22	3.12
Geographical diversity	5.40	4.22***	2.34	3.21
Level of product information	4.89	4.80	4.33	4.02
Diversity of promotional media	4.92	4.46*	4.06	3.42
Competition				
Intensity of rivalry	5.69	5.36**	4.34	4.54
Inability to influence market conditions	4.21	3.60***	3.34	3.18
Average profitability of the principal market	4.32	4.26	4.21	4.65
Entry barriers to the principal market	4.69	5.42***	4.32	4.24
Constraints imposed by inter-industry relationships with major stockholders	2.84	3.09	3.33	3.24
With major distributors and customers	2.76	3.78***	3.43	3.11
With major suppliers-subcontractors	2.49	3.71***	3.34	3.54
With government	4.38	3.27***	3.12	3.43
With competitors	2.14	2.64***	2.42	2.56
Ability of labour market				
For managers	3.64	1.79***	3.11	3.23
For technological experts	3.47	1.99***	2.23	2.65

Notes: $_a$. The higher the mean score, the more typical is the characteristics

* Significant at 0.5 level by t-test of means

** Significant at 0.1 level by t-test of means

*** Significant at.001 level by t-test of means

From the above table, there is also a significant difference in labour market-ability between the four companies. Total firms face a less mobile labour market than oando, Texaco and Agip firms. Not new, the findings is consistent with the prevalent view that the Total labour market is less mobile because of its many tangible incentives incorporated into their employment system. The strengths and range of constraints imposed by interrelationships with other organizations are also different in Total and other oil and gas companies under study. Oando and other oil and gas firms face stronger constraints imposed by government and regulatory bodies, while Total firms feel the constraints imposed by their relationships with distributors, customers, suppliers and competitors to a greater degree than Oando, Texaco and Agip firms. This result suggests that Total companies create closer inter-organizational networks with various kinds of organizations. The networks, although constraining decisions within organizations, may have a number of benefits including risk-sharing and long term stabilization of business. The strong constraints imposed by the government upon oil and gas companies probably stem from the relatively adverse historical relationship between business and government in Nigeria as well as from motives to protect the public and promote competition.

To sum up, Total firms face a less diverse, less competitive, more volatile and high opportunity environment, and less mobility of market. They are, moreover, constrained by interrelationships with other organizations to a greater extent than the other oil and gas marketing firms under study. A firm must set operational objectives, the priorities of which are contingent upon the opportunities provided and constraints imposed by its environment matched against the internal capabilities of the organization.

HYPOTHESES TESTING

HYPOTHESIS 1

The first hypothesis tested in the study states that ' The organizational structure and strategies adopted do not affect the market share of Nigerian oil and gas marketing companies

Table 5: Mean and Standard Deviation on Company's Structure and Strategies Adopted and Market share Attained by Nigerian Oil and Gas Marketing Companies

Questions	Freq.	Mean	Standard Deviation
Company's structure and strategies adopted by Total firm	286	70.40	2.18
Company's structure and strategies adopted by Oando firm	286	68.40	1.18
Company's structure and strategies adopted by Texaco firm	286	42.64	1.22
Company's structure and strategies adopted by Agip firm	286	68.20	0.22

Oil and gas companies performance	286	64.40	1.16

Table 5 above shows the difference between means of company's structure and strategies and resultant market share of Nigerian oil and gas marketing companies. Total firm with a mean of 70.40 and standard deviation of 2.18 had a better structure compared with other counterparts in the industry with mean of 68.40 and standard deviation of 1.18 respectively. The Table also shows that with the mean of 64.40 and standard deviation of 1.16 when divided between the companies, the market share of Total was better than that of the other counterparts. The question then is, was the difference significant enough or was it the result of a sampling error? The answer is presented in Table 6.

Table 6: Summary of Analysis of Variance on Company's Structure and Strategies Adopted and Market share Attained by Nigerian Oil and Gas Marketing Companies Respectively

Source	TypeIII Sum of squares	Df	Mean square	F	Sig.
Corrected Model	294.808	9	32.644	35.415	.000
Intercept	1887.508	1	1887.508	1749.596	.000
Company Types	20.014	1	5.654	6.240*	.000
Company's structure &strategies	22.757	4	5.684	6.231	.000
Company Types* Company's structure & strategies	24.745	4	5.086	5.457	.001
Error	581.174	283	.816		
Total	5758.000	285			
Corrected Total	667.984	286			

Source: Field Survey, 2007.

$_a$R Squared= .382 (Adjusted R Squared=.361)* significant at 0.005 two tailed test.

The findings in Table 6 indicate that there was a significant difference in performance at f (4,285)= 5.457, at 0.05 significant level. This implied that the first hypothesis was rejected and the alternative hypothesis retained, which meant that the company's structure and the strategies adopted by Total yielded a better market share than that of their counterparts in the industry.

HYPOTHESIS 2

Marketing mix strategy, diversification and concentration adopted do not yield better performance of Nigerian oil and gas marketing companies.

Table 7: Mean and Standard Deviation on the Use of Marketing Mix Strategy, Diversification and Concentration of Nigerian Oil and Gas Marketing Companies Respectively

Questions	Freq.	Mean	Standard Deviation
Marketing mix elements adopted by Total firm	286	52.64	1.74
Marketing mix elements adopted by Oando firms	286	30.49	1.24
Marketing mix elements adopted by Texaco firm	286	23.34	1.20
Marketing mix elements adopted by Agip firm	286	20.28	1.13
Rate of diversification and concentration of marketing activities	286	45.30	1.52

Source: Field Survey, 2007.

Table 7 above shows the difference between means of diversification and concentration of marketing activities and the resultant performance of Nigerian oil and gas marketing companies in terms of the marketing mix elements employed. Total with a mean of 45.30 and standard deviation of 1.52 earned higher diversification on marketing activities with respect to the four elements of marketing mix than its counterparts when divided. Total's performance with the mean of 52.64 and standard deviation of 1.74 was also better. The question then is, was the difference significant enough or was it the result of a sampling error? The answer is presented in Table 8.

Table 8: Summary of Analysis of Variance on the Adoption of Marketing Mix Strategy, Diversification and Concentration of Marketing Activities on Oil and Gas Companies Respectively

Source	TypeIII Sum of squares	Df	Mean square	F	Sig.
Corrected Model	231.872	9	25.765	25.764	.000
Intercept	2469.746	1	2469.746	2469.626	.000
Company Types	3.724	1	3.724	3.742	.087
4Ps of marketing mix	26.264	4	5.110	5.142	.000
Company Types* 4Ps of marketing mix	9.101	4	1.666	1.676	.026
Error	423.207	283	.884		
Total	6347.000	285			
Corrected Total	588.002	286			

a R squared =.350 (Adjusted R squared=.247)* significant at 0.05 two tailed test

Source: Field survey, 2007.

Table 8 above shows that the competitive use of marketing mix elements by oil and gas marketing companies culminated in significant difference in diversification and concentration of marketing activities at f (4,285)= 5.142, at 0.05 significant level. The fact that these companies are significantly different in operation equally contributed to a significant difference in their diversification and concentration of marketing activities at f (1,285)= 3.742, at 0.05 significant level. The testing of the second hypothesis which combined the two variables together that the oil and gas marketing companies' use of the elements of marketing mix relative to their diversification and concentration of marketing activities yielded higher returns. The findings indicated that the second hypothesis was rejected and the alternative hypothesis retained, which meant that the use of marketing mix elements yielded higher returns for the oil and gas marketing companies respectively.

SUMMARY OF EMPIRICAL FINDINGS

(a) The result from the testing of Hypothesis 1 revealed a significant difference in performance at f (4,285) = 5.457, at 0.05 significant level. The result of ANOVA revealed that a positive relationship exists between organizational structure and strategies adopted and the performance of Nigerian oil and gas marketing companies .Thus, null hypothesis one was rejected.

(b) The result from the testing of Hypothesis 2 revealed that there is a significant difference in performance at f (4,285)=5.142, at 0.05 significant level. Thus, the null hypothesis two was rejected.

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

As stated earlier, the discussion of this study followed the hypotheses raised and tested and they are presented below:

HYPOTHESIS 1

The organizational structure and strategies adopted do not affect the market share of Nigerian oil and gas marketing companies..

The null hypothesis one which stated that" the organizational structure and strategies adopted do not affect the market share of Nigerian oil and gas marketing companies" was rejected. This implied that the organizational structure and strategies adopted by oil and gas marketing companies affect market share positively. Several empirical studies have concluded that an organizational structure and strategies adopted is indeed an important element in companies' success. (Barney 1991; Kinnear and Taylor 1993 ; Levie 2006), gave evidence that the level of organizational structure and strategies is positively related to company effectiveness, while (Hitt, Keats, and Demarie 1998 ; Grewal and Tansuhaj 2001 ; Finney et al 2005) reported that more successful companies have well defined organizational structures, in sharp contrast to less successful companies. Focusing on large firms, (Takeuchi and Quelch 1993); found a positive relationship between the unstructured organizational patterns and large firm financial performance. The findings by (Pelham and Wilson 1995; Baker 1995; Atkin and Skinner 1995 ; Majaro 1997; Borden 1993) underscore this finding, as they established that changes in the market environment, business strategy and organizational structure have impact on companies performance.

HYPOTHESIS 2

The null hypothesis two which stated that" the marketing mix strategy , diversification and concentration of marketing activities does not yield higher rate of performance was rejected. This implies that the oil and gas marketing companies use of the elements of the marketing mix and diversification of marketing activities yield higher rate of performance. The earlier studies reported reasons to support this finding; the astmmetries in resource endowments across national boundaries were some of the reasons why oil and gas marketing companies use elements of marketing mix and diversification of marketing activities would yield more returns (McDonald 1992 ; Zeithmal 2000; Rindfleisch and Moorman 2003 ; Roehrich 2004 and Best 2005). Firms operating in foreign markets face disadvantages viz- a viz other competitors, such as the latter's greater familiarity with local conditions, political and exchange risks and the travel and communication costs incurred in conducting international business (Day 1994 ; Johnson et al 2003 ; Knorr and Mahoney 2005; Lazonick and Prencipe 2005; Cert et al 2006).

CONCLUSIONS

This section elaborates on the conclusion of the research. Based on the findings of this research, the following conclusions are warranted:

1. The evidence from findings suggested that oil and gas marketing companies have comparative advantages in adopting various marketing strategies using different technologies. Oil and gas marketing companies appeared to specialize in the use of traditional methods of marketing, which is based on "soft" information culled from close contacts by marketing and sales department rather than the use of the specialized strategic marketing methods that are based on "hard" quantitative information.
2. Most of the findings of the research are consistent with previous normative and empirical works. For instance, the companies face a less diverse, less competitive, more volatile and high opportunity environment, and a less mobility of market. They are however, constrained by interrelationships with other organizations to a greater extent.
3. The research instrument shows high validity and reliability.
4. This study has provided empirical evidence pertaining to the perception of oil and gas marketing strategies, and the industry environmental factors on such strategies..

MANAGERIAL AND RESEARCH IMPLICATIONS

The findings of this study have several managerial implications for Nigerian downstream oil and gas. First, Nigerian oil and gas managers are advised to place more emphasis on the adoption of various marketing strategies using different technologies. Second, all organizations face an external business environment that constantly changes. Changes in the business environment create both opportunities and threats to an organization's strategic development, and the organization cannot risk remaining static. It must monitor its environment continually in order to: build the business, develop strategic capabilities that move the organization forward, improve the ways in which it creates products/services and develops new and existing markets with a view to offering its customers better services.

Third, anticipating competitors' actions and reactions to the organizational' moves may be the key determinant of success for any marketing strategy. Fourth, with the competitive downstream oil and gas industry of today, participants can put more emphasis on relationship marketing to ensure effectiveness. This essentially entails personalizing the oil and gas services offered to clients, attending to clients' cultural and social activities, in relation to other non- business activities, which are of interest to clients.

Fifth, Nigerian oil and gas marketers should be sensitized to the importance of their offerings to their clients, including the impressions their clients have of those offerings. As oil and gas clients are demanding more quality from their petroleum product marketing companies (PPMC), it may be strategic to inject the idea of total quality management (TQM) and its variants among product marketers. Sixth, Nigerian oil and gas industry are well advised to consider the principles and concepts of synergy in their product service marketing. This may entail considering the implications of any marketing strategy decisions on the other organic business functions. Nigerian corporate marketing executives should make their marketing companies learning organizations. In such learning organizations, oil and gas marketing companies staff would always be inquiring into the total or systemic impacts of their business behaviours, instead of just concentrating on the local effects of their business behaviours (Chen 2004).

Effective downstream oil and gas marketing strategies in Nigeria may hinge on an intelligent understanding of beneficial marketing strategies, the relevant environmental factors that assist or hinder the efficacy of marketing strategies, and how marketing strategies and environmental factor singly or wholly determine product marketing companies' performance. Despite the satisfactory performance of Nigerian oil and gas marketing companies with their marketing strategies, as reported in this research, Nigerian oil and gas marketing managers are advised to undertake extensive marketing research and SWOT analysis. Instability of regimes and policies, and variations in other environmental factors can still pose challenges to product marketing companies' in Nigeria. It should be noted by Nigerian oil and gas marketing companies' managers that participants' reputation and good image, staff politeness and kindness, in addition to the managerial ability of corporate product marketing managers are the salient factors implicated in oil and gas marketing companies' efficiency and effectiveness (Chen 2004).

RECOMMEDATIONS, LIMITATIONS AND SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER STUDIES

This study indicates that strategic marketing practices have a significant impact on performance variables and that they interact with the different components to facilitate performance. It also indicates that different performance factors moderate strategic marketing practice. Therefore, organizations hoping to enhance corporate performance in a dynamic business environment should consider the following:

RECOMMEDATIONS

a) The concepts and principles of total quality management (TQM) are recommended for holistic study, in addition to contemporary marketing management issues such as relationship marketing, value analysis, business process re-engineering, megamarketing, re-marketing, co-marketing, bench marketing, and permission marketing, among others.
b) Efforts should be made by organizational marketers to understand the relevant factors that affect both clients' behaviours, and the strategic options to be adopted to cope with such behaviours.
c) Oil and gas marketing scholars or researchers should endeavour to study holistically the relevant business functions and activities which may enhance or hinder the understanding and subsequently applicability of relevant modern management concepts and principles to oil services marketing.

d) Firms that are not operating in a dynamic business environment need not adopt a strategic marketing practice as this may cause the firm to look inconsistent in the eyes of its customers and eventually reduce effective performance.
e) The need for the identification of options and resources and of capabilities of deployment constitutes an impetus to effective strategic marketing implementation, since the practice derives from capabilities in assembling and maintaining an appropriate resource portfolio and coupling the resource portfolio with the identification and recognition of options.

SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER STUDIES

This research leads to some observations that might be of interest to future researchers, as they represent the seeds from which future research can be developed.

a) This same research can be carried out in other nations so that a broad comparison of the concepts of strategic marketing as it affects firm performance can be made.
b) Research into the combined effects of strategic marketing practice and performance factors as mediators of firm performance relationship.
c) Research into the effects of key characteristics of industries environmental indices and marketing strategy could be carried out to further explain the differences in the firm's adoption of strategic marketing.
d) Finally, future research works are to be undertaken in order to refine the cobwebs found in the present research, and orient it to more specific contexts (business, time, location, etc) in Nigeria's oil and gas industry.

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