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Sensing Capability and Organizational Competitiveness of Manufacturing Firms in South-South, Nigeria

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Abstract: *This study examined the relationship between sensing capability and organizational competitiveness of manufacturing firms in south-south, Nigeria. The cross-sectional survey was adopted. The study population was managerial staff of quoted manufacturing firms in south-south of Nigeria. A sample size of two hundred and twenty-one (221) managers and supervisors were drawn from the population. The simple random sampling technique was utilized in the study. However, only one hundred and ninety-eight (198) copies of questionnaires retrieved were completely filled and used for the study. The Spearman's Rank Correlation was used to analyse the relationship between sensing capability and organizational competitiveness. The result of the bivariate analysis revealed that sensing capability had a significant positive relationship with the measures of organizational competitiveness (product quality and speed of product/service delivery). The findings led to the conclusion that sensing competence is important in improving the competitiveness of listed manufacturing enterprises in Nigeria's South-South. The study suggested, among other things, that manufacturing firm management should perform environmental assessments on a regular basis in order to find and explore new prospects that will improve the firm's competitiveness.*

Keywords: *Sensing Capability, Organizational Competitiveness, Product Quality, Speed of Product/ Service Delivery*

INTRODUCTION

The high uncertainties that are associated with firm's operation in this contemporary turbulent environment has forced many firms to start re-strategizing, given that the world is presently going through a challenging time. The business environment is fast changing like never before, and many organizations are closing down already as a result of the complexity of their environment. The present pandemic has altered the smooth operation of many businesses, and forcing them to manage to remain afloat or even fold up.

The unemployment rate in Nigeria is reported to have risen to 33.3 percent, translating to 23.2million people, the second highest on Global list (Bloomberg, 2021). Worsening poverty poses a great deal of risk to the democratic process and the security of the nation. And the manufacturing sector which has the

potential to be the highest contributor to job and wealth creation remains challenged and overwhelmed by weak and frail performance outlook.

The Chairman, MAN Apapa Branch, Mr Frank Ike Onyebu, stated recently that many manufacturing companies are folding up while several others are relocating to other countries. Hence, operators are persistently mounting pressure on the federal government to declare a state of emergency in the manufacturing sector. Presently there is weak global competitiveness of domestic firms and declining profit margin by investors in the country (Adekoya, 2020). The Director-General of the LCCI, Muda Yusuf, agrees that Worsening poverty poses a great deal of risk to the democratic process and the security of the nation, as strong economy driven by the private sector is fundamental to the building of strong democratic structures and processes. There is no doubt that the manufacturing sector is the highest contributor to job and wealth creation, skill development and technology acquisition. Clearly the manufacturing sector of Nigeria is weak and also showcases frail performance outlook. More so, the high cost of production incurred by manufacturers in the country has made Nigerian manufactured products mostly un-competitive. These problems need to be addressed urgently to enable the manufacturing sector contribute its quota to national development. Ekugbe (2021), noted that the manufacturing sector which has the potential of contributing more than 25 per cent to Nigeria's GDP, is currently doing less than 10 per cent.

The Manufacturers Association of Nigeria (MAN), in a bid to resuscitate the sector from impending total collapse recently urge government to grant manufacturers waivers from all demurrages payable between February and July 2020, because of the lockdown directives of Government and others associated with COVID-19 pandemic. The manufacturing sector's growth, which should augment other sectors' effort to improve employment and create economic opportunities has tapered off in recent years (Afolabi, 2021).

Organized labour in the food, beverage and tobacco sector, under the aegis of Food, Beverage and Tobacco Senior Staff Association, has warned against the excessive taxation of manufacturing sector already, contending that should the government go ahead with the imposition of the excise duty on food, beverages and Tobacco sub-sector, the sector could collapse (Ahiuma-Young, 2021). Clearly the manufacturing sector needs urgent attention as it is currently struggling to survive.

The President of the Manufacturers Association of Nigeria (MAN), Ahmed Mansur, at the 33rd yearly general meeting of the Anambra, Ebonyi and Enugu chapters of the association, held in Enugu, stated that the 10 per cent contribution of the manufacturing sector to the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) undesirable, as against China which have a manufacturing sector which contribute up to eighty percent (80%) to the nations GDP, considering that manufacturing is the bedrock of any thriving economy and major provider of employment and economic growth (Njoku, 2021). However, the Nigeria manufacturing firms is yet to develop some dynamic capability that will help them to reap the benefit of globalisation. Hence it is thus important that these manufacturing firms possess high dynamic capability as such will help them in withstanding unforeseeable turbulence and thus increase their performance. Despite the various studies on how to tackle the problem of poor performance of this sector, the problem still persist as many of the firms still operates below capacity, while some are relocating to other countries. It

is on this premise that this study examines how sensing capability of an organization relates with organizational competitiveness of manufacturing firms in Nigeria.

Aim and Objectives of the Study

The aim of this study is to examine the relationship between sensing capability and organizational competitiveness of Quoted Manufacturing Firms in South-South, Nigeria. The specific objectives are:

1. Investigate the relationship between sensing capability and product quality of quoted manufacturing firms in South-South, Nigeria.
2. Evaluate the relationship between sensing capability and speed of product/ service delivery of quoted manufacturing firms in South-South, Nigeria.

Research Questions

The following research questions guide the study

1. What is the relationship between sensing capability and product quality of Quoted Manufacturing Firms in South-South, Nigeria?
2. What is the relationship between sensing capability and speed of product/ service delivery of Quoted Manufacturing Firms in South-South, Nigeria?

Research Hypotheses

The following research hypotheses were formed to guide the study:

Ho_1: There is no significant relationship between sensing capability and product quality of Quoted Manufacturing Firms in South-South, Nigeria.

Ho_2: There is no significant relationship between sensing capability and speed of product/ service delivery of Quoted Manufacturing Firms in South-South, Nigeria.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Theoretical Framework

Game Theory

The pioneer of game theory is John Von Nenmann, a Princeton Mathematician. It is the science of strategy which attempts to find out logically and mathematically the actions "players' should adopt to get the best outcomes for themselves in a wide array of games. The game theory studied range from chess to child, rearing and from tennis to takeovers. (Dixit and Nalebuff, 2004) The game share the common feature of interdependence. The outcome, for each participant depends on the strategies of all. In the case of zero sum games, the interests of players totally conflict, one person's gain is another person's loss. In the early years of the game theory, the emphasis was majorly on game of pure conflict (i.e. zero sum games). It treated other games in a cooperative, from here the participants were supposed to choose and implement their actions jointly. In recent times, research has focused on games that are neither zero sum nor purely cooperative. The players choose their actions separately in these games, and their links to others involve elements of both competition and also cooperation. A game player must recognize his

interaction with other intelligent and purposive people. His choice as a matter of fact, must allow both for possibilities for corporation and also for conflict. The importance of a game is the interdependence of the strategies of players.

Concept of Sensing Capability

According to Teece, (2017) sensing capability involves several activities like firm's scanning, searching and explorations of opportunities across technologies and markets. It also deals with investments in research activity, probing and reproving of technological possibilities within the environment. Improvement in sensing capability of a firm could lead to more technological advancement and innovations within the organization (Zhou et al., 2019) argued that sensing capability helps organization to understand the technologies that should be explored and also provide information on the market segments to be targeted or to serve (Teece et al., 1997). Sensing helps organization in understanding the market demands, and the responses that are likely to come from suppliers and potential competitors of the organization.

Agarwal et al (2003), posit that organizations that constantly engage in sensing the market stand a better chance of understanding the need of their customers and meet such needs through engaging in innovations and productions because they allow for sensing, learning and interpreting the signals reflecting the emerging environmental changes in the activities of companies. Johnson, (2017) indicates that sustainability-oriented knowledge is assimilated due to internal capabilities. These capabilities, including the top management support, shared vision and room for learning, provide the necessary infrastructure for developing knowledge on environmental and sustainability-related issues. Sehnem, (2016) points to the relationship between awareness, knowledge and sustainability practices. She indicates that lack of knowledge and awareness impede the adoption of sustainability practices.

Concept of Organizational Competitiveness

The term competitiveness is commonly used in fields such as economics or politics, it does not have a standardized definition. On the contrary, its meaning can vary greatly according to context and perception. The notion of competitiveness should be seen as the ability of companies, sectors, regions, countries and supranational areas to generate relatively high income from production factors and a relatively high level of employment under conditions of permanent submission to international competition (Kuźmiński et al, 2020). Similarly, Shved and Bila (2017) saw shaping a high level of competitiveness of companies, sectors, entire economies or its regions is one of the most important challenges of the modern economy and economic theories describing it. Competitiveness has also been described and understood as an attribute of a company expressed in terms of its operational effectiveness, and efficiency (Kuźmiński et al, 2020). As for Ambastha and Momaya (2004), competitiveness is the ability of a company to design, manufacture and sell better products and services than those offered by competitors, taking into account price and non-price quality criteria in the assessment. Lisowska (2013) views the competitiveness of small and medium-sized enterprises as the ability to take quick and adequate actions to manage resources efficiently. In the case of business competitiveness, we can define it as the ability of organizations to produce goods or services with a favorable quality-price ratio that guarantees good profitability while achieving customer preference over other competitors. The competitiveness of an enterprise should be understood as a proper feature of the

enterprise, playing an important role in formulating the enterprise's development strategy (Ungerman et al., 2018; Kuźmiński et al, 2020).

Concept of Product Quality

Bhasin, (2020), listed the seven factors that determine product quality in a firm: checking for the conformance, checking whether the product is fit for the purpose, paying heed to the feedbacks, checking the reliability of the products; analyzing the efficiency of the product and ensuring better user experience with the product. Bhasin (2020), argue that product quality is a practice of making the product flawless and useful in order to meet expectations of the consumers. Product quality is not static term, rather it is dynamic and it is evolved to meet the requirements of the products.

Consumers are the ones that decide the business of the firm. Satisfying the requirements of the consumers put an organisation on the path of progress. Bhasin, (2020), listed three process of maintaining product quality as; before production; during production process; and after production process. For Ferdinand (2019), product quality is described as the degree to which products elegantly meet user needs and it encompasses the following: complete, opinionated, usable, Polished, and efficient.

Concept of Speed of Product/ Service Delivery

It has been noted that customer's today is value-oriented and they seek result and service process quality that far exceed the price and acquisition costs they incur for the service (Hesk et al., 1997; Fazlzadeh, 2012). Speed of service delivery is concerned with the firm's delivery speed as slow delivery often means loss of interest and business. High service value lead to customer loyalty according to the finding of Hallowell, (1996), when customers receive a higher service value from one service provider they are more likely to the display loyalty, relationship continuance, increase scale of scope of relationship and recommendations. Lau, (2000), asserts that service providers are expected to increase their service value as customers today appear to be very knowledgeable in seeking out new service alternatives and will defect if they are just merely certified.

Fazlzadeh (2012), opined that service providers need to think about how to retain customer's active relationship through high-quality and fast service product delivery. Serving customers will result in higher productivity providers as customer will become familiar with an organization's service delivery system when the customer is impressed with a firm's delivery system such customer can contribute to the productivity gain of the firm service delivery system by making suggestions for improvement (Lau, 2000).

METHODOLOGY

A cross sectional survey which is an aspect of quasi experimental design was adopted in this study. The cross sectional survey provides a snap-shot of the outcome and the characteristics associated with it at a given point in time. In line with the assertion of cooper and Schindler, (2006), this design is most appropriate for research in the field of administrative sciences, where, manipulation of the variables limited, since the researcher has no control over them. The target population of this study are the fourteen (14) quoted manufacturing firms in south-south Nigeria

according to the Nigerian Stock Exchange (https://ngxgroup.com/exchange/trade/equities/listed-companies/). The six states that make up the south-south include Akwa Ibom State, Cross River State, Rivers State, Bayelsa State, Delta State and Edo State. However, the accessible population will cover 496 managers and supervisors of the fourteen (14) quoted manufacturing firms.

Table 1: Names of Quoted Manufacturing firms and Sample Size of Each Manufacturing firm

S/N	Names of Quoted Manufacturing Firms	Population	Sample Size
1	BUA FOODS PLC	54	24
2	CHAMPION BREW PLC	32	14
3	GUINNESS NIG PLC	32	14
4	INTERNATIONAL BREWERIES PLC	61	27
5	VITAFOAM NIG PLC	54	24
6	AUSTIN LAZ	39	18
7	BERGER PAINTS PLC	46	20
8	BETA GLASS PLC	28	12
9	BUA CEMENT	23	10
10	CUTIX PLC	42	19
11	DANGOTE CEMENT PLC	15	7
12	LAFARGE AFRICA PLC	22	10
13	NOTORE CHEMICAL IND. PLC	17	8
14	JOHN HOLT	31	14
	TOTAL	**496**	**221**

Source: Research Data, 2021

The sample size for this study was deduced using the Taro Yamane sampling formula (1968). Hence, 221 managers and supervisors are chosen as representatives of the 14 manufacturing firms. However, a sample of 221 were drawn from the 496 representatives of the firm using the Taro Yamane sampling formula, (1968).

Spearman's Rank Correlation was used to analyze the data for this study with the aid of Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 21. The spearman's rank order was utilized to test the relationship between integration capability and the measures of organizational competitiveness. The spearman is considered appropriate owing to its flexibility across both interval and ordinal scaled data, as well as its non-parametric quality. Spearman Rank order correlation coefficient (Rho) is the statistical technique for the bivariate hypotheses testing; it is a non-parametric test and is symbolized as "rho" or "p". The Spearman's rank-order correlation was used in this study because it tests the strength of relationship between two ranked variables. The tool is used where the two variables are presented in an ordinal scale. This study instrument adopts the ordinal scale, thus the use of the Spearman's rank-order correlation.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

A total of two hundred and twenty-one (221) copies of the questionnaire were administered, of these 221 copies distributed, only 204 copies, representing 92% of distributed copies of the questionnaire, were retrieved. Out of the 204 copies collected, 6 copies (3%) were observed to be invalid by the nature of responses, which were linked to duplicated options, omissions of key

questions in the questionnaire. Only 198 copies (90%) of the questionnaire were observed to be properly filled and valid for subsequent usage in the study.

Table 2: Demographic (Descriptive) Data Analysis

Gender	**Response Rates**	**Percentage (%)**
Male	140	70.7
Female	58	29.3
Total	**198**	**100%**
Age of the Respondents	**Response Rates**	**Percentage (%)**
Less than 35 Years	41	20.7
36-45 Years	63	31.8
46-55 Years	75	37.9
Above 55 Years	19	9.6
Total	**198**	**100%**
Educational Qualification	**Response Rates**	**Percentage (%)**
HND/OND	5	2.5
First Degree	94	47.5
Masters	92	46.5
Ph.D	7	3.5
Total	**198**	**100%**

Source: Research Data, 2021

Table 2 show the gender characteristics of the respondents. The respondents comprised of more males than female participants. The male participants occupied 70.7% (140 respondents) of the population, while the female participants occupied 29.3% (58 respondents) of the population. This implies that most workers of quoted manufacturing firms in South-South, Nigeria are male. A significant gender disparity is observed.

In Table 2 the age distribution of the respondents is presented. It shows that respondents between the ages of 46-55 years and those 36-45 years occupy a greater percentage of the participants occupying 37.9% (75 respondents) and 31.8% (63 respondents) respectively, then those less than 35 years (41 respondents; 20.7%), and finally those above 55 years (19 respondents, 9.6%). Overall, the study observed that the study respondents are largely between the ages of 36-55 years.

The illustration in table 2 shows that most respondents (94 respondents; 47.5%) have First Degree; following this is the respondents having Master's Degree (92 respondents; 46.5%); followed by respondents having PhD (7 respondents; 3.5%); then those with HND/OND (5 respondents; 2.5%). Overall, the study discovered that a majority of the study respondents have significant educational experience especially First Degree.

Hypotheses Testing

The Spearman Rank Order Correlation was used to test the correlations and strength of relations. This technique is valid in light of the need to determine how Integration Capability relates with

Organizational Competitiveness in an organization. The criteria used are the coefficient to determine the direction of relationship (where > 0.5 is positive and < 0.5 is negative) and the significance level to know how significant this observed relationship is.
The decision rule is:
$p < 0.05$ significant level = accept the alternate hypotheses
$p > 0.05$ significant level = accept the null hypotheses
A total of twelve bivariate hypotheses were tested.

Ho_1: There is no significant relationship between Sensing Capability and Product Quality of quoted manufacturing firms in South-South, Nigeria.

Table 3: Sensing Capability and Product Quality

Correlations

			Sensing Capability	Product Quality
Spearman's rho	Sensing Capability	Correlation Coefficient	1.000	.597**
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.	.000
		N	198	198
	Product Quality	Correlation Coefficient	.597**	1.000
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.
		N	198	198

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).
Source: SPSS Output, 2021

The result of the analysis in Table 3 shows a significant level $p < 0.05$ (0.000< 0.05), this means that there is a significant relationship between Sensing Capability and Product Quality. A correlation value of $r = 0.597$ implying that there is a strong positive relationship between Sensing Capability and Product Quality. This entails that as one variable increases the other increases, that is, a positive impact of Sensing Capability will lead to a corresponding increase in the level of Product Quality. The study therefore observes that there is a strong positive and significant association between Sensing Capability and Product Quality. In light of this, the study therefore rejects the null hypothesis and accept the alternate hypothesis that that *there is a significant relationship between Sensing Capability and Product Quality of manufacturing firms in South-South, Nigeria*.

H_{02}: There is no significant relationship between sensing capability and speed of product/ service delivery of quoted manufacturing firms in South-South, Nigeria.

Table 4: Sensing Capability and Speed of Product/ Service Delivery

Correlations

			Sensing Capability	Speed of Service Delivery
Spearman's rho	Sensing Capability	Correlation Coefficient	1.000	.370**
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.	.000
		N	198	198
	Speed of Service Delivery	Correlation Coefficient	.370**	1.000
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.
		N	198	198

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Source: SPSS Output, 2021

The result of the analysis in Table 4 shows a significant level $p < 0.05$ ($0.009 < 0.05$), this means that there is a significant relationship between Sensing Capability and Speed of Product/ Service Delivery. A correlation value of $r = 0.370$ implying that there is a positive relationship between Sensing Capability and Speed of Product/ Service Delivery. This entails that as one variable increases the other increases, that is, a positive impact of Sensing Capability will lead to a corresponding increase in the level of Speed of Product/ Service Delivery. The study therefore observes that there is a positive and significant association between Sensing Capability and Speed of Product/ Service Delivery. In light of this, the study therefore rejects the null hypothesis and accept the alternate hypothesis that that *there is a significant relationship between Sensing Capability and Speed of Product/ Service Delivery of manufacturing firms in South-South, Nigeria*.

Discussion of Findings

Positive Relationship between Sensing Capability and Product Quality of Quoted Manufacturing firms in South-South, Nigeria

The outcome of the analysis on how Sensing Capability relates with Product Quality revealed that there is a noteworthy relationship between Sensing Capability and Product Quality, given the p-value of 0.000 which is less than the level of significance of 0.05 ($p=0.000 < 0.05$). The hypothesis which was given in null form was thus rejected and the alternate hypothesis was accepted. The correlation value (rho) was 0.597. This indicate a positive relationship between Sensing Capability and Product Quality among employees of manufacturing firms in South-South, Nigeria. The positive relationship implies that the Product Quality increases when there is an increase in Sensing Capability. In essence, when Sensing Capability is low, such could hinder Organizational Competitiveness in the form of Product Quality in manufacturing firms. Furthermore, the coefficient of determination (r^2) was 0.356. This denotes that a unit change in Sensing Capability in manufacturing firms will account for up to 35.6% total variation in Product Quality among the employees. Hence, Sensing Capability is an essential factor in organisations

that help increase Product Quality. This finding concurred with that of Teece (2007), O' Reilly and Tushman, (2008) and Wilden et al., (2013) who opined that sensing capability helps organization to seize opportunities presented by the market which involves the evaluation of existing and emerging capabilities, resulting in products that will be accepted in the market. Hence, this study argues that organization with high sensing capability stands a better chance of improving their product quality, and this will lead to increase in their competitiveness.

Positive Relationship between Sensing Capability and Speed of Product/Service Delivery of Quoted Manufacturing firms in South-South, Nigeria

The findings in the seventh hypothesis revealed that Sensing Capability relates significantly with Speed of Product/ Service Delivery with p-value of 0.000 less than 0.05 level of significance. The correlation value (rho) was 0.370. This shows a high level of correlation among Sensing Capability and Speed of Product/ Service Delivery. The positive link implies that the higher Sensing Capability in the manufacturing firms, the more the Speed of Product/ Service Delivery among the employees. In other words, reducing Sensing Capability will subsequently reduce the Speed of Product/ Service Delivery in the manufacturing firms. Similarly, the coefficient of determination (r^2) was 0.137. By implication, a unit change in Sensing Capability will result in 13.7% variation in Speed of Product/ Service Delivery. Thus, firm's ability to sense the environment and market will help improve organizational competitiveness. Hence previous research was confirmed and extended. This study is in line with that of Lau (2000) who posited that positive growth and profitability of an organization depend on how well the delivery system functions and it also determines whether customers will give positive referrals to potential customers, this however is possible through the ability of the firm to sense the market needs. So, we argue that the ability of a firm to constantly sense the market environment and discover changes that have taken place will help them to design an effective product delivery system that will serve their customers well and in turn increase the firm's competitiveness.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The ability of the manufacturing firms to consistently sense the variation in customer preference will make them get more innovative and produce high quality product that can help enhance the competitiveness of the firms. When the manufacturing firms are fast in detecting changes in the industry that could affect the performance of the organization, such organization is able to put relevant mechanism in place in order to handle the various changes and such sensing capability will go a long way towards enhancing the satisfaction of clients. Furthermore, the speed of service and product delivery of the quoted manufacturing firm can be enhanced through effective sensing capability of the organization. The manufacturing firms that also wishes to maintain a competitive position must also ensure that they are sensitive to the operations of their rivalries as such will enable them know how to develop relevant innovative action in order to enhance their competitiveness.

This study recommends as follows:

1) Manufacturing firm management should undertake environmental assessments on a regular basis in order to discover and explore new prospects that will improve the firm's competitiveness.
2) Manufacturing firm management should be able to notice big developments in the industry in order to move quickly to improve the firm's competitiveness.

3) Manufacturing companies should include some level of flexibility into their operations in order to respond quickly to difficulties and boost their competitiveness.

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Agripreneurship Marketing and Economic Recovery in Post COVID-19 Era in Ikwerre L.G.A. in Rivers State

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Abstract: *This study aims at investigating the extent to which agripreneurship marketing practices influences economic recovery in Ikwerre L.G.A in Rivers State. The problem that necessitates this study is the issue of economic downturn within the context of Ikwerre L.G.A in terms of food shortage and hike in prices of food items coupled with increasing rate of unemployment in this L.G.A. Drawing from Discovery Learning Model theory, this paper suggests agripreneurship marketing practices as a way out of these challenges. The population of the study comprised of 265,400 residents of Ikwerre L.G.A as identified in National Population Commission of Nigeria and National Bureau of Statistics. Using Taro Yamen sampling formula, a sample size of 399 was generated, while convenient sampling technique was used to conveniently select the sample from the population and a copy of questionnaire was administered to each of the respondents to the tune of 399. Upon retrieving the copies of questionnaire, 363 representing 91% was valid and was used for the analysis. Pearson moment correlation coefficient was used to test the stated hypotheses. The findings of study revealed that agripreneurship marketing has a significant positive impact on economic recovery in terms of increasing GDP and creating employment. Based on the findings, the researchers recommends that the youths of Ikwerre L.G.A. should learn and adopt agripreneurship marketing practices such as snail, fish farming, goat rearing, feed production etcetera since it will enable them increase agricultural produce capacity and make profits while being self-employed. Secondly, government should help in creating centers where young farmers could be educated on agripreneurship marketing practices and its benefits. Lastly, government should also partner with some private enterprises to establish Agri-clinics within Ikwerre L.G.A*

Keywords: *Agripreneurship, Economic Recovery, Employment, Increased GDP*

1.0 INTRODUCTION

Individuals empowering themselves to be employees of labor helps a society grow. The economies of developed societies are mostly run by private entrepreneurs who do businesses and pay taxes to government to carry out social projects such as road constructions, building of hospitals and other social amenities. They also turn employees of labor whereby lifting greater percent of the work force from unemployment while restoring the economy of a given place.

The advent of Covid-19 pandemic has crippled several economies of the world which includes that of Ikwerre Local Government Area in Rivers state in Nigeria. Garg (2020) asserts that covid-19 has infected more than 5 Million individuals and has caused about 1.3 Million casualties globally so far. The first and second wave of the virus coupled with insecurity challenges in Nigeria have disrupted business operations and increased cost of living to the detriment of the average citizenry. Nigeria is facing shortage of food production, and to make

matters worse, several employees of government and private organizations are being laid off due to the economic downturn, which informs this study. The average animal protein intake in Nigeria is low, and the conventional sources of animal protein in Nigeria such as beef, goat meat, pork, fish, and poultry etcetera are sky rocketing beyond the reach of common populace, due to their high price, caused by economic down-turn (Olayide, 2004 cited in Babatunde et al., 2019). This issue of economic challenges and shortage of food if not addressed properly will lead to greater hardship and starvation among the average citizens of Nigeria.

One way of recovering the economy of Nigeria and addressing the shortage of food circulation mostly in Ikwerre Local Government Area in Rivers State is through entrepreneurial practices such as Agripreneurship Marketing which encourages innovative individuals to indulge in small scale agricultural production and marketing in areas such as poultry, fish farming, snail farming, goat rearing, food crop and fruits production in order to increase the production and availability of food produce in the market space, which as well creates employment. Agripreneurship according to Global Forum for Rural Advisory Services (2021) refers to entrepreneurship in agriculture. Agripreneurship according to Bairwa et al. (2014) is the profitable union of agriculture and entrepreneurship. It refers to entrepreneurial venture within the agricultural sector which brings about food-producing business being started for profit (Strategic Direction, 2018). The Ikwere Local Government Area in Rivers state is one of the food hubs of the state. Despite being blessed with mineral resources such as crude oil, their main economy is basically an agrarian economy. They are known for farming and food productions such as processed garri, palm oil and other farm produce sold in the major city of Port Harcourt, other parts of the state, and as well as neighboring states. The agricultural production processes utilized in this L.G.A are traditional practicing methods which do not add innovative methods.

Some major problems encountered by local famers includes the fact that they often lack modern experiences, access to services, individuals, or markets, and skills to have realistic chances to succeed as entrepreneurs (Wongtschowski et al. 2013). In addition, they are being influenced by external, systemic factors, such as regulations and policies of government, economic and social barriers, (Kahan 2012). These constraints also affect rural farmers within the context of Ikwerre Local Government Area of Rivers state. Majority of the youths are not taking agriculture production and marketing as a major business endeavor to earn a living. A shift from subsistent agriculture practice to agribusiness is a crucial method of revitalizing Ikwerre L.G.A agriculture and makes it more lucrative and as well a profitable venture. Bairwa et al. (2014) asserts that agripreneurship have the possibility of contributing to a length of economic and social development which includes employment generation, poverty reduction, income generation, improvements in health, nutrition, and overall food security in the national economy.

This study identified the existence of scarce empirical research work on agripreneurship marketing and economic recovery in the post covid-19 era within the context of Ikwerre Local Government Area of Rivers state, which creates a gap that this study tries to fill. It is against this backdrop that the study empirically investigates our subject matter so as to fill the identified gap.

2.0 Review of Related Literature

2.1 Theoretical Foundation

The theoretical underpinning to this study is the Discovery Learning Model theory by Jerome Bruner (1961) which is a method of Inquiry-Based Instruction that encourages learners to build on previous knowledge and experiences, use their imagination, intuition and creativity, and as well search for new information to ascertain facts, correlations and new truths (Pappas, 2014). According to the theory, local farmers need to improve and build on their existing knowledge about farming by adding new information and methods (agripreneurship) in order to ascertain facts such as economic recovery.

This study trying to look at the use of agripreneurship marketing practices which adopts new methods of rearing poultry birds, snails, fishes, use of biologically enhanced seedlings and plants and mechanized practices of enhancing agro production capacity to check on its influence of economic recovery in Ikwerre Local Government Area of Rivers State is in line with Discovery Learning Model, hence the study is underpinned to the theory.

2.2 Concept of Agripreneurship Marketing

The term entrepreneur according to Eze and Chinedu-Eze (2016) originated in France in 17th and 18th century. Agripreneurship as a word emanates from the concept of entrepreneurship. It signifies entrepreneurship within the agriculture sector (Rathore et al., 2020). Entrepreneurship could be seen as a concept that boarders transforming a vision or ideas into a 'new business setup", or the act of expanding an already existing business by a person, team of individuals, or an established business (Reynolds *et.al.,* 1999 cited in Rathore et al., 2020). Entrepreneurs are basically creative, bear risks, take advantage of opportunities and can change business strategies quickly in order to adapt to changing environments (Kahan, 2012). Gaddefors and Anderson (2017) defined entrepreneurship as the creation or extraction of value, which is seen as change, generally entailing taking risk far more than what is normally encountered in starting up a business, which may include other values than simply economic ones. Entrepreneurship could be used in agricultural practices which are called agripreneurship.

According to Bairwa et al. (2014), entrepreneurship has connection with finding means and ways of creating and developing profitable farm business. They further argued that the term agripreneurship and entrepreneurship are frequently utilized in the context of small business formation in agriculture and education. Dollinger (2003) defines agripreneurship as the creation of innovative economic business for the purpose of growing or gaining under conditions of uncertainty and risk in agriculture. While Strategic Direction (2018) defines it as referring to entrepreneurial venture within the agricultural sector which brings about food-producing business being started for profit. An Agripreneur according to Rathore et al. (2020) is an entrepreneur whose principal area of venture is agriculture or allied sectors.

Agriprenuership is a term commonly used within the domain of education and small business formation in agriculture (Tripathi & Agarwal, 2015; Bairwa, 2014). Eze and Chinedu-Eze (2016) considered agripreneurship as a concept that is specific to agriculture and draws heavily from entrepreneurship. It could be seen as a profitable marriage of entrepreneurship and agriculture and speaks about agribusiness development in agriculture and allied sectors (Bairwa, 2014;

Uneze, 2013). An agripreneur hence, is a person who executes a number of activities in agriculture and allied sector to become an agripreneur (Eze & Chinedu-Eze, 2016). An agriprenuer for instance, might begin an agro business, swap the business direction, or add an innovative procedures that are of value addition (Tripathi & Agarwal, 2015). Therefore, an agriprenuer always tries engaging in new products development, processing and marketing since such persons are never satisfied with the conventional methods of doing things (Uneze, 2013; Tripathi & Agarwal, 2015; Bairwa, 2014).

Drawing on the above definitions, we align with the definition by Eze and Chinedu-Eze (2016) and define agripreneurship marketing as the integration of entrepreneurial and innovative business ideas and skills into agriculture to produce better results. An agriprenur can produce and sell local feeds for farm poultry, indulge in catfish farming, snail farming, goat rearing and sales of the meats to the market. Several financial benefits have been recorded for engaging in both snail and fish farming which are basic essential food consumed in our society. Babatunde et al. (2019) asserts that snail marketing can engage several individuals as an empowerment programme, since it does not require high level of education or special skill. Cat fish pepper soup is a special delicacy which is highly sought after in most part of Nigeria including Rivers state, and an agripreneur engaged in product and sales of catfish to restaurants and markets stands a better chance of generating high profit from the business. Also selling of locally made feeds for poultry animal is another area of generating income rather than waiting for white collar jobs or government to provide jobs.

Individuals involved in agricultural practices mostly within the southern part of Nigeria are gradually realizing that they cannot afford to keep looking at the government for each and every thing. They have seen that self-reliance is the key, and besides with the dynamic global agricultural scene in light of World Trade Organizations round of talks, over-dependence on the traditional methods of farming and on traditional crops will not suffice. Entrepreneurship in agriculture sector or agripreneurship is the order of the day. Otache (2017) made arguments for use of an agripreneurship development strategy in training new entrepreneurs in agriculture with the aim of injecting sustainable growth into Nigeria's economy as well as helping the country get out of recession.

Bairwa et al. (2014) states that in the face of increasing poverty and unemployment in the rural areas coupled with slow growth of agriculture, there is the urgent need for entrepreneurship in agriculture in order to generate more productivity and profitability in agricultural business. Hence, agripreneurship programs are imperative to developing entrepreneurs and management workforce that will cater for agricultural Industry across the world (Bairwa *et al*., 2014b). Singh (2013) argues that agripreneurship is to a great extent influenced mostly by the economic situation, culture and education. Agripreneurs educated on poultry, fish and snail farming, goat rearing, poultry feed production etcetera can add value to the society and to themselves by the large scale production and sales of these poultry animals and products.

Figure 2.1: Fish, Snail farming and Goat Rearing

Source: Rf Staff (2021); Agency Report (2020); Agbota (2017); Garrigus (2021).

Agripreneurship marketing practices apart from poultry, fish and snail farming, goat rearing, feed production and the sales of its proceeds, also includes the use of biologically enhanced seedlings and plants to grow better and healthier farm produces that are resistant to certain bacterial and diseases which destroys farm crops and harvests. It also includes the use of mechanized farming practices which facilitates large scale farming and harvest for sales in the local markets.

Figure 2.1: Agri-biotechnology

Source: Eze and Chinedu-Eze (2016).

Also, it entails the practice of researching and discovery of medical solutions for health challenges of poultry animals and both plant and pest control mechanisms.

Figure 2.2: Agri-Clinic Centre

Source: Nishtha (2019); Eze and Chinedu-Eze (2016).

2.3 Concept of Economic Recovery

An economic recovery according to Warner (2020) is when an economy after a recession bounces back and starts expanding again. Tracy (2020) saw it as a period of economic expansion, typically after a recession. Economies of countries move in stages and, once they have fallen into a recession, they eventually enter a phase of recovery before starting the cycle again.

Normally, during recession employment levels fall, discretionary income falls, and overall consumer spending falls, leading to tough times for most companies, which in turn lay off more workers and reduce overall consumer spending further (Tracy, 2020). Few businesses expand and few consumers buy, which lowers the demand for loans. Interest rates usually fall as a result during a recession (Tracy, 2020). But during an economic recovery, there is an increase in gross domestic product (GDP), unemployment level falls, while incomes rise, as the economy rebounds.

2.3.1 Measure of Economic Recovery

Several variables have been used as measures of economic activities. Oshodi (2021) measured economic recovery using gross domestic product (GDP). Fisher (2020) listed the following as economic indicators: **Gross Domestic Product (GDP), employment level, the stock market**, **consumer price index (CPI)**, **producer price index (PPI)**, **balance of trade**, **housing starts, interest rates**, **currency strength**, **manufacturing activity, income and wages, consumer spending.**

In this study, we selected increased GDP and employment as our measures for economic recovery.

2.3.1.1 Increased Gross Domestic Product (GDP)

The gross domestic product could be seen as the measurement of the total goods and services produced within an economy such as a national or state economy (Plaehn, n.d.). Eurostat (2019) defined GDP as the sum of all added values generated in an economy, and the added value signifies the value of goods and services that was produced less the value of the goods and services needed to produce them. The GDP for a country is the economic output measured over one year. Gross domestic product according to Plaehn (n.d.) is viewed as the broadest measurement of economic activity. Hence an increase in the GDP of Ikwerre local government at this period of covid 19 pandemic is a signal of economic recovery from the depression faced at the moment.

2.3.1.2 Employment

Employment could be viewed as an agreement reached between a person and another entity that specifies the responsibilities, rule of engagement, payment terms and conditions, and is recognized by the government (My Account Couse, 2021). It also could be seen as the relationship between two parties, mostly based on a contract where work is paid for (Dakin & Armstrong, 1989).

In simple terms, employment means the idea that a person has entered into a form of written or verbal commitment with an entity, which is known as the employer, under certain stipulations such as payment, schedule, etc. Hence who ever that is being employed by another is called an employee. An employee contributes expertise and labor to an endeavor of a person conducting a business or an employer (Archer et al., 2017). When there is recession employment level drops and most establishments lay off some of their workers. But when the economy recovers, there tends to be an increase in employment of labors. An individual can also be self-employed

whereby he or she works for him or herself without depending on an employer paying them salary over job done. Smith (2020) asserts that an individual is self-employed if they work for themselves as freelancers or business owners, running the business themselves while being responsible for its success or failure. Self-employment could be achieved through indulging in entrepreneurial practices.

2.4 Agripreneurship marketing and Economic recovery

Most studies have empirically proven that entrepreneurship practices which includes agripreneurship greatly influences economic recovery in terms of growth and employment. Obayelu et al. (2019) conducted an empirical study on the effect of agripreneurship on employment and income generation in cattle fattening business in Nigeria. The study was carried out in Biu Local Government (LGA) in Southern Borno State of Nigeria, which has a total projected population of 246,900. The study utilized a two-stage sampling procedure in purposefully selecting a sample of 141 youths. Primary data collection method was also used whereby copies of questionnaire were adopted. The analytical technique used for the study was descriptive statistics such as frequency table. The study found out that agripreneurship positively influences employment and income generation.

Afolabi (2015) investigated the impact of entrepreneurship in fostering economic growth and development in Nigeria. The research methodology used was the narrative textual case study (NTCS) method. However, the study also utilized interviews. Simple percentages, graph and chart were used to analyze and interpreting the generated data. The study found that entrepreneurship positively enhances economic growth and development primarily by generating employment and foster the growth of micro, small and medium enterprises in Nigeria.

Also, Asc (2006) and Ahiauzu (2010) found out that there is a significant positive relationship between entrepreneurship practices and economic growth, while Henderson (2007) discovered that entrepreneurship is more frequently recognized as a basic engine of economic growth. Afolabi (2015) argues that by joining together innovative ideas with existing resources, entrepreneurs add value through the creation of new jobs, the commercialization of new products, and through building of new businesses. The Global Economic Monitor shows that nations with higher levels of entrepreneurial activity benefits strong economic growth, and entrepreneurs are the link between new ideas and economic growth (Afolabi, 2015).

Based on foregoing, we propose the following set of hypotheses:

Ho_1: There is no significant relationship between agripreneurship and increased GDP in post covid 19 era in Ikwerre local government area of Rivers state.

Ho_2: There is no significant relationship between agripreneurship and employment in post covid 19 era in Ikwerre local government area of Rivers state.

2.5 Operational Conceptual Framework

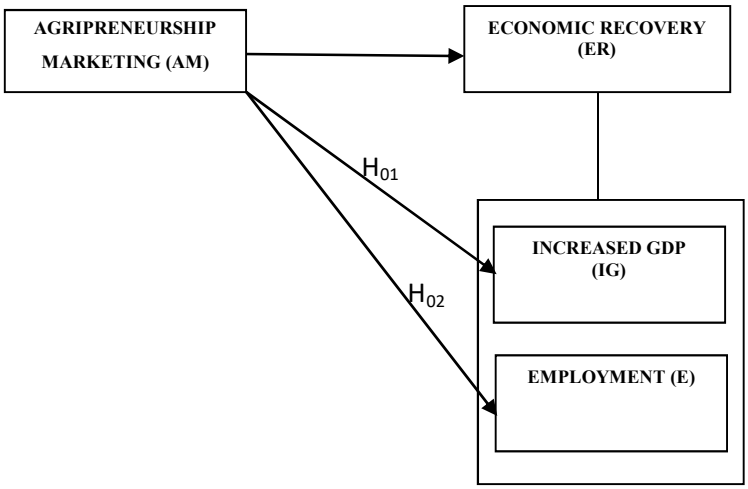

Figure 2.1: Operational Conceptual Framework for the Relationship between Agripreneurship Marketing and Economic Recovery.

Source: Review of Related Literature.

3.1 Research Methodology

Social scientists have an objective (Positivist) and subjective (Idealist) views of their subject matter (Burrell & Morgan, 2006), and these are; ontological, epistemological, human nature and methodology. The objectivist conducts research based on scientific approach while idealist sees research from the non-scientific angle.

Our philosophical stands in this study took a realist viewpoint and a positivist epistemology. Hence, the study utilized quantitative research method thereby adopting a cross-sectional survey research design. The study tried to investigate the impact adoption of agripreneurship marketing has on economic recovery of Ikwerre Local Government Area in Rivers State, hence our target population comprised 265,400 individuals as identified in National Population Commission of Nigeria and National Bureau of Statistics.

In order to determine our sample size from the population of 265,400 we deployed the Taro Yamen formula.

The formula is stated below.

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

$$n = \frac{265{,}400}{1 + 265{,}400\ \ (0.05)^2}$$

$$n = \frac{265{,}400}{664.5}$$

Approximately = 399

Where

N = sample size sought

e = Level of significance

n = Population size

Therefore, 399 residents indulged in farming activities within Ikwerre Local Government Area constituted the sample size for this study. Using convenient sampling techniques, the researchers purposefully administered 399 copies of questionnaire to residents of Ikwerre L.G.A., out of which three hundred and sixty three (363) copies of questionnaire were valid and used for the analysis.

The Instrument for data collection was a nineteen (19) item questionnaire which was used to elicit data on the study variables. Our scales of measurements were validated via an expert checking while Cronbach's Alpha test was used to check for its reliability. In checking of the reliability, a pilot survey of six respondents where used to test the copies of questionnaire for consistency before been deployed to the respondents. Their reliability coefficients are above 0.70 benchmark recommended by Nunnally (1978).

Table 3.1 Reliability Statistics

S/N	Construct	No of items	Cronbach's Alpha
1.	Agripreneurship	6	0.913
2.	Increased GDP	6	0.843
3.	Employement	6	0.867

Source: SPSS Output on Data, 2021.

4.1 ANALYSES OF DATA

4.1 Results

399 copies of the questionnaire were purposefully distributed to residents indulged in farming activities within Ikwerre Local Government Area as identified in National Population Commission of Nigeria and National Bureau of Statistics. Due to mistakes and incomplete responses, 22 copies accounting for 5% were dropped; while 14 copy representing 4% was lost in transit. Hence, the total response rate that formed the basis of our analysis was 363 representing 91%. We adopted Pearson moment correlation coefficient to analyze the relationships between the study variables. Tables 4.1-4.3 show the tests of the hypotheses.

Table 4.1: Questionnaire Administration and Responses

	Number Involved	Percentage (%)
Distribution	**399**	**100**
Useful Copies Returned	**363**	**91%**
Discarded Reponses	**22**	**5%**
Lost in Transit	**14**	**4%**

Source: Field Survey, 2021.

Decision Rule

Reject the null hypothesis (H_0) and accept its alternative (Ha) if p-value < 0.01 for 2 – tailed test and conclude that significant relationship exists.

H_{o1}: There is no significant relationship between agripreneurship marketing and increased GDP in post covid 19 era in Ikwerre local government area of Rivers state.

H_{a1}: There is a significant relationship between agripreneurship marketing and increased GDP in post covid 19 era in Ikwerre local government area of Rivers state.

Table 4.2: Correlations Analysis on Agripreneurship and Increased GDP

Variables 1	Statistics	Agripreneurship Marketing (AM)	Increased GDP (IG)
Agripreneurship Marketing (AM	Pearson Correlation	1.000	.962**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.	.000
	N	363	363
Increased GDP (IG)	Correlation Coefficient	.962**	1.000
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.
	N	363	363

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).
b. Listwise N = 363
Source: SPSS Output (based on 2021 Field Survey Data)

Table 4.2 above shows the outcome of the analysis using the SPSS version 20.1. The Pearson moment correlation coefficient is estimated as 0.962**. This suggests that a significant positive relationship exists between agripreneurship marketing and increased GDP. Since the p-value (0.000) < 0.01, we reject the null hypothesis and conclude that a significant relationship exists between the two variables.

Ho_2: There is no significant relationship between agripreneurship marketing and employment in post covid 19 era in Ikwerre local government area of Rivers state.

Ha_2: There is a significant relationship between agripreneurship marketing and employment in post covid 19 era in Ikwerre local government area of Rivers state.

Table 4.3: Correlations Analysis on Renewable Solar Energy and Environmentally Friendly

Variables 1	Statistics	Agripreneuship Marketing (AM)	Employment (E)
Agripreneurship Marketing (AM)	Pearson Correlation	1.000	.868**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.	.000
	N	363	363
Employment (E)	Correlation Coefficient	.868**	1.000
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.
	N	363	363

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).
b. Listwise N = 363
Source: SPSS Output (based on 2021 Field Survey Data)

Table 4.3 above analysis indicates that the correlation coefficient (r) is 0.868. This implies that a very strong relationship exists between agripreneurship marketing and employment. Also, the

sign of (r) value is positive, indicating a direct link between the variables. Since the probability value (p-value) = 0.000 < 0.01, we conclude that a significant positive relationship exists between agripreneurship marketing and employment.

Table 4.4 Summary of Test Hypotheses

S/N	HYPOTHESES	(r)	P – VALUE	DIRECT	DECISION	CONCLUSION
H_{O1}:	There is no significant relationship between agripreneurship marketing and increased GDP	0.962**	0.00	+VE	Reject	Significant
H_{O2}:	There is no significant relationship between agripreneurship marketing and employment	0.868**	0.00	+VE	Reject	Significant

Source: Research Findings Based on SPSS Output

4.2 Discussion of Findings

The aim of this study was to investigate the extent to which agripreneurship marketing relates to economic recovery. Agripreneurship marketing was discovered to have a significant positive relationship with the measures of economic recovery (increased GDP and employment). This finding was generated from the outcome of the statistical test of hypotheses H_{o1} and H_{o2} respectively. The test of H_{o1} shows that agripreneurship marketing attracts a significant positive correlation coefficient (r = 0.962, p-value < 0.01). That is, the more the youths of Ikwerre L.G.A adopts agripreneurship marketing practices such as fish farming, snail farming, goat rearing, local feed production, the use of biologically enhanced seedlings and plants, and modern mechanized farming practices, the more the food produce they will have for sale in the market space and an increase in GDP.

Test of H_{o2} reveals that agripreneurship marketing results in a significant positive correlation coefficient (r = 0.868, p-value < 0.01). Thus, increase in agripreneurship marketing will bring about an increase in youths being self-employed.

Hence, agripreneurship marketing was discovered to have a positive impact on economic recovery in terms of increasing the gross domestic product (GDP) of Ikwerre L.G.A, and the creation of employment for its teaming youths and people. This finding is in line with Obayelu et al. (2019); Afolabi (2015); and Ahiauzu (2010) who found out that there is a significant positive relationship between entrepreneurial practices such as agripreneurship marketing and economic growth, employment and income generation.

5.1 Conclusion

From the review of literature findings, we were led to conclude that: Agripreneurship marketing positively influences economic recovery in terms of increasing GDP and the creation of employment.

5.2 Recommendation

This study hence recommends that:

1. The youths of Ikwerre L.G.A. should learn and adopt agripreneurship marketing practices such as snail, fish farming, goat rearing, feed production etcetera since it will enable them increase agricultural produce capacity and make profits while being self-employed.

2. Government should help in creating centers where young farmers could be educated on agripreneurship marketing practices and its benefits.
3. Government should also partner with some private enterprises to establish Agri-clinics within Ikwerre L.G.A

5.3 Contribution to Knowledge

The study provided empirical evidence supporting the link between agripreneurship marketing and economic recovery in post covid 19 era in Ikwerre local government area of Rivers state. It has added to existing body of knowledge by providing a model of the relationship between agripreneurship marketing and economic recovery in Ikwerre local government area of Rivers state as shown below.

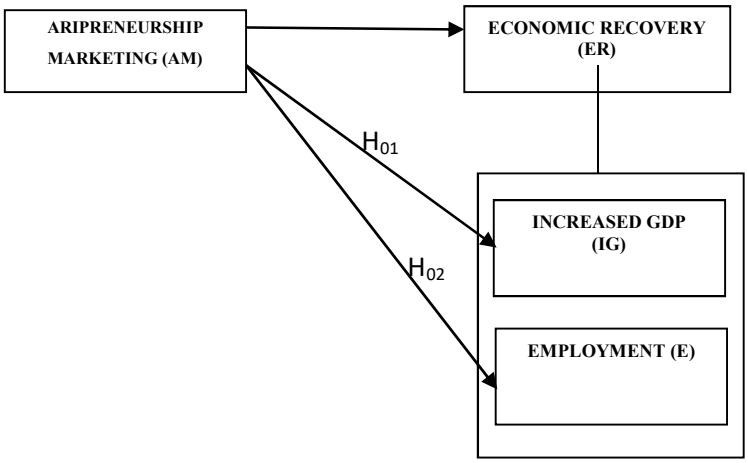

Figure 5.1: Heuristic model for the Relationship between Agripreneurship Marketing and Economic Recovery

Source: Researchers Conceptualization.

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Appendix A

Population of People in Ikwerre Local Government Area as listed in National Population Commission of Nigeria (web), National Bureau of Statistics (web). http://www.citypopulation.de/php/nigeria-admin.php?adm2id=NGA033013

Population

The population development of Ikwerre as well as related information and services (Wikipedia, Google, images).

Name	Status	Population Census 1991-11-26	Population Census 2006-03-21	Population Projection 2016-03-21
Ikwerre	Local Government Area	125,385	188,930	265,400

Ikwerre

265,400 Population [2016] – *Projection*
667.5 km² Area
397.6/km² Population Density [2016]
3.5% Annual Population Change [2006 → 2016]

Ikwerre, Rivers State: LGA in Rivers State, Nigeria – Inception: 1991

Nigeria	**Federal Republic**	**88,992,220**	**140,431,790**	**193,392,500**

Source: National Population Commission of Nigeria (web), National Bureau of Statistics (web).

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Active Viral Marketing and Brand Performance of Soft Drink Companies in Port Harcourt

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Abstract: *This study examined active viral marketing and brand performance of soft drink companies in Port Harcourt. .Its aim was to examine the relationship between the variables using soft drink companies in Port Harcourt as the database. This was triggered by some scholar's view of the positives obtainable in the adoption of active viral marketing strategy and the observed prevalent nature of some soft drink brands underperformance. The study adopted a correlational research design and used questionnaire as the study instrument. The population of the study consists of the two soft drink companies in Port Harcourt quoted by Nigerian Stock Exchange (2019). With the use of simple purposive sampling method, five (5) elements (Managers) were selected from each of the two (2) companies. That made the number of respondents ten (10). The Spearman Rank Order Correlation was employed as the statistical tool for testing the direction and strength of the relationship between the variables. All the statistical analyses were done with the aid of SPSS version 22.0. The study found that active viral marketing has a positive and statistically significant relationship with brand performance. The study concludes that viral marketing is an imperative for a positive brand performance and that brand performance depends on how appropriate the viral message is applied. The study recommends that soft drink companies in Port Harcourt that seek to promote a positive brand performance should engage in active viral marketing.*

Keywords: *active viral marketing, brand performance*

INTRODUCTION

The fortunes of a firm rely on how well its brands perform in the marketplace as this is a priority to the attainment of marketing goals (Gupta & Zeithaml, 2006). An optimal brand performance begins with the awareness of the brand and its functions, before it can move to recall at the point of purchase. In achieving this, the main traditional methods were through word of mouth and print ads, however, technological advancement brought about other forms of marketing, especially mass marketing. First of all, radios were used to reach thousands of listeners. And then came the television that served a larger audience. Today, the internet has taken over as the new generation marketing methods (Wilson, 2012). In today's marketing, the internet plays a major role in building the reputation of a brand. Organizations now communicate with their customers differently from the past as the emergence, spread and universality of the internet has transformed and altered the relationship between organizations and customers (Singha, Vero-Jackson, and Cullinane, 2008). The internet has also helped in relocating companies and consumer relationship to an interactive level, so that brand is built by the creation and sustenance of a long term relationship with the customer (Richardson & Domingos, 2012). At the turn of the

21st century, organizations realized that traditional marketing techniques were not as effective as before, and something had to be done in order to reach potential buyers on a larger scale (Keller, 2002). Soon enough, marketers realized the potential that word-of-mouth had in an online environment, and started contributing to the early emergence of viral marketing (Hassan, 2018).

Active viral marketing is essentially a marketing strategy that actively utilizes pre-existing social networks such as; social networking sites, video sharing sites, email providers, online forums and blogs. It typically provides something free of charge and valuable to consumers, which encourages them to forward and spread the marketing message to others. Viral content typically takes its form as an advertisement in the format of a viral video, song, picture, meme or a message (Rechman and Stewart, 2013). It also attracts smaller organizations and companies because it has a reputation of being effective and it is a relatively cheap alternative to traditional marketing media. In a bid to achieve their goals, many firms are seen to employ active online viral marketing as one of their key marketing strategies. An example of this can be seen in the 'share a coke initiative' that went viral. According to Muala (2018), viral marketing uses the instincts of humans in communicating, sharing of knowledge and socializing. The advantage of using viral marketing is that, people these days tend to spend more time online by the use of friends-based social media, even more than watching television. This marketing strategy is capable of penetrating the social network of any individual as easily as one mouse click that shares information to friends in the circle (Lescovec, Adamic, and Huberman, 2007). In a situation where the ad is noticeable, well designed and attractive, then distribution can be made to other social networks. With this, it spreads online like a viral contagion replacing word of mouth to word of mouse. When this is effectively done, Almuala (2018) explains that positive brand performance is inevitable. This is so because viral marketing creates a better visibility of the brand. To this end, this study will be on the path of contributing to knowledge by determining the relationship between active viral marketing and brand performance, with soft drink companies as the database.

The soft drink market in Nigeria has continued to grow, having millions of daily drinkers and sales worth billions of dollars per year. The fast growing population of Nigeria, its climate and urbanization drives a continuing demand for soft drinks. Some of these locally made drinks are seen to have gained a widespread acceptance. This is evident in the presence of these brands in grocery stores of even developed countries. That notwithstanding, Soft drink companies in Nigeria are seen to be faced with fierce competition among players as brand owners struggle to be heard in a marketplace surrounded by an alarming rate of new product introduction and modification of existing ones. "The uncertain and dynamic nature of the marketplace has brought challenges to brands in the soft drink sector" (Goldsmith, 2017), ranging from low brand awareness, salience, and patronage, (Ojoma and Bello, 2017). This observed prevalence of poor performance may be attributed to the brand owner's inability to inculcate active viral marketing strategy in their marketing plan. This assumption is based on the conviction that viral marketing is effective in unsolicited electronic referrals that creates awareness, triggers interest, and generate the adoption of products. Even in fierce competitions, successful viral campaigns are seen to help companies stand out (Granata and Scoozzeze, 2017). Based on the foregoing, the study sought to find out the relationship between active viral marketing and brand performance of soft drink companies in Port Harcourt.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Theoretical Foundation

Viral Loop Marketing Theory

Developed by Adam Penenberg in 2008, the theory describes the ways cultural products or networks are led to popularity. According to Lane (2017), viral loop marketing theory is a theory that explains how users of a product are its primary marketers. Viral loops are included in companies marketing strategies because of their desire to get their marketing messages to consumers with minimal cost. Usually the adoption of viral marketing and viral loop theory by small to medium sized businesses is tied to their significantly smaller budgets compared to bigger businesses (Hassan, 2017). The benefits associated with using viral loops are mainly gotten out of its low cost – high spread factor, which exposes a large audience to a company's marketing message. With this, using viral expansion loops are seen to be convenient ways of tackling the struggles marketers face when picking out the elements of content that become viral. The most important aspect of the Viral Loop marketing theory is the creation of viral expansion loops. These loops are in three categories; User Actions, Notifications and Conversion. These loops rely on their users sharing and re-posting a marketing message to their own network.

Uses and Gratifications Theory (U&G Theory)

This theory was developed by Elihu Katz and Jay Blumler in 1974. It focuses on interactive communication as emphasis is laid on the sender and the message. This theory is used to understand motivations for using a media, it focuses on individual's use and choice of media (Blumler & Katz, 1974), it views individuals as purposive and active, specifying that people select media based on needs. It asks the reason people attend to media content and what they get from it. The theory shows that motivations influence individual behavioral intention through attitude (Miller and Berry, 1998). It is seen that consumer needs and motivations induces message virility. Today, the appearance of computer-mediated communication has brought about the significance of uses and gratifications. Understanding what motivations drive consumer behaviors will enable marketers to seek effective marketing messages that can satisfy targeted or desired motivations and thus influence forwarding behaviors that will birth a positive brand performance on the long run. The content of the viral marketing campaigns may likely encourage transmission and consumers may vary in their motivations to pass on viral marketing campaigns.

Active Viral Marketing

Active viral marketing involves an online viral marketer's proactive action to connect and engage with customers (both potential and actual) so as to build trust and relationship that will trigger a following on the long run (Baggozi and Nyer, 1999). Hence, online promotions or adverts are directly sent from a marketer to customers, and they are encouraged to pass it on to their friends or close associates. It is also seen that active viral marketing requires action from the marketer. This may also mean networking with other businesses or working on building referral pool. It also involves advertising selectively so as to drive in new businesses. Granata and Scoozzeze (2017) opined that active viral marketing "is purposeful and deliberate," i.e. it requires efforts, skills and persistence. For an online viral marketing to be considered 'active' there will be an evidence of a call to action as well as the recipients' participation (Subramani &

Ratagopalan, 2003). Let's take for instance, any type of content on the internet where contestants are given a condition to like and share a comment on a specific social media page before they can enter. The result of this will be an explosive spread that can be termed 'wildfire'. Active viral marketing is seen to be based on the recommendation of the application or services by the user to send the advertising message to others which requires a conscious act. An example of this is to press a "send to friend" button. In active viral marketing, marketers also use rewards to motivate users so as to achieve virility. According to Turnbull and Wheller (2001), "active viral marketing also means that users are actively asked to spread messages and in turn, promised to receive rewards". For instance, marketers can give customers that spread messages, discounts when purchasing their product.

In active viral marketing, the users share the content themselves in order to communicate it, their own comments are added among others. In this way, users will in turn use the content to reach out to other users. According to Petrescu (2012), the possibility to spread advertising messages easily must be given in an active viral marketing, if there must be a success. Oftentimes, there seems to be obvious possibilities to recommend to friend, through email, a message, or an article on websites. He also noted that social communities like Facebook and other business platforms have provisions to offer an invitation to friends to use the platform. In some cases, the forward content may only be viewed after an active subscription and therefore requires friends or business partners to register beforehand". The user here automatically becomes an advertising ambassador for a company and its services. The user in this case is partly conscious of this state, and also partly unconscious of it.

Brand Performance

Performance is often used as a dependent variable in most marketing literature (Tran Quan Ha Minh, 2006). The performance of a brand points out how successful a brand is in the marketplace and seeks to evaluate the strategic successes of a brand (Kapferer, 1997). Brand performance describes how well the product or service meets customers' more functional needs. According to Chaudhuri, and Moris (2001), brand performance is the result of desirability and profitability in a brand. Brand performance is seen to deliver top line growth while reducing costs so as to improve the bottom line. Some researchers looked at the performance of brand in two parts. They are the brand market performance and brand profitability performance. They conclude that the brand profitability performance is an exposition of the financial share of a brand in relation with the retailing profits. This is evaluated using the profit and the margin of profit. On the other hand, brand market performance considers the market demands and evaluates the indices such as sale levels and market share (Baldauf Artur, Cravens Karen S., and Binder Gudrun, 2003).

There are some indices proposed by Aaker (1996) to evaluate brand performance which are related to the evaluation of market behavior. He considered the market share, price and distribution coverage as the indices of brand performance measurement and he also pointed out that the brand performance measurement using the market share often provides a widespread and sensible reflection of the condition of a brand or its customers. When a brand has a relative advantage in Consumer's mind, its market share should increase or at least not decrease. He also points out that the market share or the sale related information is widely affected by distribution coverage. If a brand has a main market or loses that or it is developing in a region, the sale will be largely affected. Keller and Lehman (2003) consider the price elasticity, price premium, market share, cost structure, profitability and the success in category extension as the main

indices of brand performance measurement. According to their research, the brand premium is in fact the added price that a customer pays for the brand of a product and the price elasticity is the increase or decrease of brand demand as a result of rise or decline in prices.

Market share is an index that measures the success of marketing programs in brand unit sales. Cost structure or the ability to reduce the expenditures of marketing programs of a brand is as a result of the prevailing customer mindset. In other words, because customers already have favorable opinions and knowledge about a brand, any aspect of the marketing program is likely to be more effective for the same expenditure level. In addition, according to Keller and Lehman, the profitability and the development of opportunities are other factors of performance measurement and demonstrate the brand success in supporting line and category extensions and new product launches to the related categories. It indicates the potential ability of a brand for development and increase of income flow. Chaudhuri and Morris (2001) concentrated on relative price and market share as the outcomes of the performance. They defined the relative price as the ratio of a brand price to that of the leading competitors. Meanwhile, they introduced the brand market share as the percentage of a brand sale to total sales of all brands of a product. Bradly and Hony.(2007) suggest that the effect of brand marketing should be assessed by mixed methods using financial and consumer -oriented measures. These two types of measures are interrelated because consumer-oriented measures (e.g. consumer based brand equity) are positively associated with financial performance measures (e.g. brand market share and revenue). Lee et al. (2008) support two types of brand performance measures: financial performance measures (e.g. sales growth, margin, market share, and return on investment) and customer-based performance measures (e.g customer acquisition, customer maintenance, customer satisfaction, brand awareness , brand recall, and brand salience).

Brand Awareness

Brand awareness refers to the capacity of consumers to recognize or remember a brand. There is an existence of a link between the brand and the product class, but the link does not have to be strong. Brand awareness begins with a process where the brand is just known to a particular level up till when it has gotten to a higher rank; it becomes the “top of mind” (Aaker, 1991). There are few purchase decisions that can be done without knowledge about the product. Moreover, without being recognized, learning about the character and advantages of the new merchandise will be difficult. Product identification makes it easy to create a new relationship to the product. Familiarity is what people like, and knowledge makes the product and brand more well-known and familiar.

Keller (2008) defines brand awareness as “fostering people’s ability to recall or recognize the brand in sufficient detail to make a purchase”. He sees brand recognition as consumers having prior exposure to the brand, able to recognize the brand when given it as a cue. Brand awareness is seen as a prerequisite of peoples’ buying decisions (Lee et al, 2008). It has been held for a while now that generating and maintaining brand awareness one of the main goals of marketing. According to Mcdonald (2000), “the brands that enter consumer’s consideration set, is strongly affected by the brand awareness”.

Brand awareness helps a consumer get familiar with the brand, and recalls some favorable, strong, and unique brand associations. This focuses on the individual consumers and his

reactions to marketing of a particular product. Aaker (1991) presented three levels of brand awareness. Brand acknowledgement that involves the capacity of shoppers to recognize a certain brand among others i.e. Supported review, which involves a circumstance where individuals are asked to recognize a perceived brand name from a rundown of brands from the same item class. Brand review that has to do with a circumstance where a buyer is relied upon to name a brand in an item class. It is also referred to as "unaided review" as they are not given any piece of information from the item class. The third is top of psyche that is seen as the first brand that a customer can review among a given category of products.

Brand Salience

Typically, brand salience is seen to be "the prominence or level of activation of a brand in memory" (Alba and Chattopadlyay, 1986). This shows that brand salience involves easy accessibility of a brand in the memory of a consumer. Keller (2001) sees brand salience as "the aspect of the awareness of the brand e.g. how often and easily, is the brand evoked under various situations and circumstances?"

From a psychological point of view, brand salience is associated mostly with the level of degree; a brand stands out from its environment (Petrescu, 2012). In simple terms, some items are easily noticed, while some easier to retrieve from long-term memory, with this, there is a higher chance of entering working memory. Brand salience is seen to be often neglected in marketing literatures and research. Instead concepts such as brand image, attitude and recently brand equity are the prevailing ones. This is because "salience is conceptualized as Top of the Mind (TOM) awareness and thus, frequently used either interchangeably with, or as a subset of brand awareness" (Keller, 1993).

Increased salience is effective in retrieving probability of a brand in the choice of consumers. When solving a problem, consumers use the information most salient to them (Wyer and Srull, 1989, Domke, Shah and Wackman, 1998). The meaning of the concept stems from accessing the brand in memory through recall, associative strength, recall position, or the position in the consideration set of the consumer (posovac, sanbonmats and Fasio 1977, Fasion, Powell and Williams, 1989, Miller and Berry, 1998, Leong, Ang and Tham, 1996). According to Salancik & Conway (1975), salience has an effect on consumer judgment, as it is seen that consumers make judgments based on information salient to them at the decision arena. On a crowed shelf, Pechmann & Stewart (1990) posits that salient brands are more likely to be perceived.

Active Viral Marketing and Brand Performance

Studies (Bagossi & Nyer, 1999, Turnbull & Wheeler, 2009, Petrescu, 2012; Granata, & Scoozzeze, 2017) has indicated the relationship between active viral marketing and brand performance. Bagossi & Nyer (1999) in their study on Active Viral Campaign, they found that there is a positive relationship between those variables (Active Viral Marketing and Brand Performance). It was revealed in their findings that brand salience depends on the emotional attachment the customers have with the source of virility. Turnbull and Wheeler (2009), demonstrated in their study on agile viral campaign that brand positive performance finds its root in the volume of awareness customers have of the product. They concluded that the more a customer gets exposed to a campaign, the better the chances of recall in a purchase situation. Rice (2010) made a contribution on this when he stated that active viral marketing makes it

possible for a customer to be exposed to a campaign several times, because of the involvement of more than a friend or relative, that might pass on the campaign after being exposed to it.

Petrescu (2012) also made remarkable contributions when he indicated the association between viral marketing and brand success. This study on active viral advertising and brand salience carried out in Florida Atlanta, shows that there is a key relationship between active viral advertising and brand success as well as intentions. The study found out that consumer education plays a role in active viral process by triggering awareness and subsequently salience. Another remarkable contribution concerning the relationship between active viral marketing and brand performance was made by Granata and Scoozzeze in 2017. The duo studied the influence of active viral marketing in brand recall. The study was carried out in Cassinor, Italy. They concluded in their study that the easy and less cost pattern associated with active viral marketing process enables close associates to pass on messages easily and the result is the high tendency of customers receiving more messages concerning a brand. The overall outcome is the customer's brand recall that brings about a positive performance. This they stressed come as a result of the trust customers have on close associates.

METHODOLOGY

The aim of this study was to determine the relationship between active viral marketing and brand performance. The study adopted a correlational research design. The two soft drink companies in Port Harcourt quoted in the Nigerian Stock Exchange Report in 2019 constitute the population of the study. Given that the population is below thirty (30), implies that they were all considered. The purposive sampling technique was used to select five (5) managers each in the two (2) companies which amounted to ten (10 managers). This constitutes the total number of respondents that participated in the study.

Questionnaire was used as the instrument of primary data collection. Respondents were required to tick from 1-5 on a Likert scale, where 1= strongly disagree; 2= disagree; 3= neutral; 4= agree; and 5= strongly agree. To determine the reliability of study instrument, the Cronbach's Alpha Coefficient was used and the values were high, with a threshold of 0.7. The opinion of scholars and practitioners with relevant experience on the study constructs was used to validate the instrument.

Table 1: Range of Values and Degree of Relationship

Range of r values	*Degree of relationship of r*
± 0.80 to 1.00	Very strong
± 0.60 to 0.79	Strong
± 0.40 to 0.59	Moderate
± 0.20 to 0.39	Weak
± 0.00 to 0.19	Very weak

H Source: Adopted from Dunn (2001) degree of relationship categorization

DATA ANALYSIS AND REPORT

Table 2: Questionnaire Response

Questionnaire	Number	Percentage (%)
Distributed	10	100%
Retrieved	10	100%
Not retrieved	0	0%

Source: Questionnaire administration (2019).

Ten (10) copies of the questionnaire were distributed. The ten questionnaires representing 100% of the distributed questionnaire were used in the final analysis, while none was lost or rejected.

Table 3: Descriptive Statistics on the variables of the Study

Statistics

Statistic		**Active Viral Marketing**	**Brand Performance**
N	**Valid**	**10**	**10**
	Missing	**0**	**0**
Mean		**3.90**	**3.70**
Std. Deviation		**.738**	**.675**
Sum		**39**	**37**

Source: Simulation from SPSS Output of Data Analyses on the Relationship between Active Viral Marketing and Brand Performance (2019).

Table 3 above shows the descriptive statistics of the variables. The table reaveled that active viral marketing has a mean value of 3.90 and a standard deviation of .738, while brand performance had a mean value of 3.70 and a standard deviation of .675. the mean values of the variables are greater than 3.0 (the required average of a five point likert scale), indicating that the variables were accepted by the respondents to be obtained in the study firms.

Table 4: Correlation Analysis of Relationship between Active Viral Marketing and Brand Performance.

(Correlations)

Type	Variables1	Statistics	Active Viral Marketing	Brand Performance
Spearman's rho	Viral Marketing	Correlation Coefficient	1.000	.831**
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.	.
		N	10	10
	Brand Performance	Correlation Coefficient	.831**	1.000
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.
		N	10	10

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Source: SPSS Output of Data Analyses on the Relationship between Active Viral Marketing and Brand Performance (2019).

Table 4 reveals that the correlation coefficient of the relationship between active viral marketing and brand performance is 0.831**. This value indicates that a strong relationship exist between active viral marketing and brand performance. The positive sign of the correlation implies a positive relationship between the variables. That is to say that increase in brand performance is associated with an increase in active viral marketing, while the probability value of 0.000 indicates that the relationship between active viral marketing and brand performance is statistically significant.

Table 5: Correlation Analysis of Relationship between Active Viral Marketing and Brand Awareness

(Correlations)

Type	Variables1	Statistics	Active Viral Marketing	Brand Awareness
Spearman's rho	Active Viral Marketing	Correlation Coefficient	1.000	.816 **
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.	.000
		N	10	10
	Brand Awareness	Correlation Coefficient	.816**	1.000
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.
		N	10	10

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Source: SPSS Output of Data Analyses on the Relationship between Active Viral Marketing and Brand awareness (2019).

The information on Table 5 above reveals that the correlation coefficient of the relationship between Active Viral marketing and Brand awareness is 0.816**. This value shows that there is a strong relationship between Active Viral Marketing and Brand awareness. The positive sign of the correlation implies a positive relationship between the variables, i.e. increase in brand awareness is associated with an increase in Active Viral marketing, while the probability value

of 0.000 which is less than 0.001 indicates that the relationship between online viral marketing and brand awareness is statistically significant.

Test of hypothesis 1

Ho_1: There is no significant relationship between active viral marketing and brand awareness.

As explained in the Table 6, the significant/probability value is 0.000; this value is less than 0.05 level of significance, the researchers therefore reject the null hypothesis and accepts a significant relationship between active viral marketing and brand awareness.

Table 6: Correlation Analysis of Relationship between Active Viral Marketing and Brand salience

(Correlations)

Type	Variables1	Statistics	Active Viral Marketing	Brand Salience
Spearman's rho	Active Viral Marketing	Correlation Coefficient	1.000	.716 **
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.	.000
		N	10	10
	Brand Salience	Correlation Coefficient	.716*[a]	1.000
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.
		N	10	10

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Source: SPSS Output of Data Analyses on the Relationship between Active Viral Marketing and Brand salience (2019).

The information on Table 6 above reveals that the correlation coefficient of the relationship between Active Viral marketing and Brand salience is 0.716**. This value shows that there is a strong relationship between Active Viral Marketing and Brand salience. The positive sign of the correlation implies a positive relationship between the variables, i.e. increase in brand salience is associated with an increase in Active Viral marketing, while the probability value of 0.000 which is less than 0.001 indicates that the relationship between online viral marketing and brand salience is statistically significant.

Test of hypothesis 2

Ho_2: There is no significant relationship between active viral marketing and brand salience. As explained in the Table 6, the significant/probability value is 0.000; this value is less than 0.05 level of significance, the researchers therefore reject the null hypothesis and accepts a significant relationship between active viral marketing and brand salience.

Discussion of Findings

The collected data were analyzed and were tested to determine the relationship between the variables of the study. Having identified the strength and direction of the relationship between the variables, the collected data were analyzed and hypothesis was tested to determine the relationship between the variables of the study. The study found that active viral marketing has a positive and statistically significant relationship with brand performance. The study equally

found that, there is a positive and strong relationship between active viral marketing and brand performance in soft drink companies in Port Harcourt. The findings of the study were validated by extant literature which reveals that the relationship between these variables (active viral marketing and brand performance) depends on the level of exposure of the customer to the brand (Waldow and Falls, 2012) and that marketers can continually use the power of active viral marketing to promote a brand (De Bruyn and Lilian, 2008). Viral marketing helps in customer attraction, increasing the level of loyalty, achieving a higher level of brand awareness, and recall at the point of purchase (Zarella, 2010). The current findings of the study are also corroborated by Hassan (2018) who states that active viral marketing keeps brand information fresh in the memory of customers more than other promotional tools. This triggers a positive brand performance as it is reflected in how many, how relevant and how fresh; the network of brand information is in the customer's memory.

Also, the study revealed that the easy and less cost pattern associated with active viral marketing process enables close associates to pass on messages easily and the result is the high tendency of customers receiving more messages concerning a brand. The overall outcome is the customer's brand recall (Granata and Scoozzeze, 2017). It was also revealed that viral marketing could be dangerous if not properly done. According to Paul (2007) "it is evident that the viral nature of the internet means that a negative comment on a viral campaign can spread faster than a fire in a match box and it is always very difficult to undo the damage done. This is dangerous for a brand's reputation since establishing the cost of damage before an event is not possible (Bradly and Honey, 2007). However, it was seen that active viral marketing goes a long way in making brands succeed in the area of creating awareness, recall and building salience if it is reliable, properly matched, and applied (Yang 2012) .

Conclusion and Recommendation

Based on the findings, the study concludes that active viral marketing is an imperative for positive brand performance i.e. brand performance depends on the virility of a firm's products. This is so because making a brand stand out in today's unpredictable, dynamic, and uncontrollable business environment that births an influx of varieties of brands every day, requires strategic activities like viral marketing. What it means is that firms that engage active viral marketing appropriately will make their brands stand out.

In other words, the study also concludes that active viral marketing relate to brand performance, and that brand performance also depends on viral marketing strategy. The study recommends that soft drink companies in Port Harcourt that seek to improve in their brand performance should employ active viral marketing as one of their top strategies. Since is a strategic imperative to survive, stand out, and gain an edge over competitors.

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New Product Planning and Marketing Performance of Breweries in South-South and South-East of Nigeria

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Abstract: *The study investigated the relationship between new product planning and marketing performance of breweries in South-South and South-East of Nigeria. The survey research design was adopted. The population for this study comprised all the brewery firms in South-South and South-East of Nigeria, which amounted to seven (7). The managing directors and the managers as well as their assistants in the production, marketing, customer care, R & D, and logistics/distribution departments in the seven breweries were used as the sample for the study. The managing directors as well as the managers in these five (5) departments together with their assistants in the seven breweries, which amounted to seventy seven (77), constitute the sample size for the study. The sample size therefore was seventy seven (77). Data were obtained through the questionnaire and analysed using Spearman Rank Order Correlation Coefficient with the aid of SPSS (22.0). The findings in this study revealed that there is a positive and significant relationship between new product planning and marketing performance. It shows that when plans are made on the nature and extension of product line (s) for instance, customers will be able to choose from the brands instead of looking at competitor's products. Based on the above, organizations were advised to pay a closer attention to the nature of plans to be executed before and during the introduction of new products.*

Keywords: *New Product Planning, Marketing Performance, customer satisfaction, customer loyalty*

INTRODUCTION

We are living in a world that is no longer facing a shortage of goods but a shortage of customers (Kotler 2000). This has drawn marketers attention to the importance of paying full attention to the products being produced. Surviving and remaining competitive in today's hyper-competitive marketplace require organizations paying full attention to their offerings. Because of the increase rate of change in the environment and globalization of economics, companies are seen to have given attention to the introduction of new products and the modification of existing ones. This is because single product lacks the needed attributes that customers seek and as a result they are no longer attracted to them, this in turn decreases revenue. For instance, in 2014, Guinness Nigeria Plc introduced Origin Bitters, in 2015 they came up with origin spirit mixed drink, and in 2016 Origin zero was introduced. All this is geared towards satisfying customers better than competitors so as to improve marketing performance.

The role of the product is pivotal in every organization because organizations are known for the products they offer. Before a company can be registered, the type of operation and line of business is expected to be properly articulated. Thus the survival and success of every organization depends on the type of product(s) it offers. As competition heightens in the business

world where every organization want to stand out and be heard, organizations are striving to come up with new products that will better satisfy or meet the needs of consumers out there. This is the reason an effective planning for a new product is required. Knowing what to produce, how to produce, for whom, when and where are some of the issues that comes to the fore in new product development process.

The brewery industry in Nigeria is among the fastest growing sectors of the manufacturing industry despite bashings that come from various religions and economic recession in the country. In a bid to meet the expectations of customers, the industry is saturated with different categories of products springing up every day so that the less affluent consumers who have a limited disposable income can purchase the cheaper brands. This made competition severe in the industry and the result is an era of mergers and acquisition which improved corporate performance as observed by Nwokah, et al (2009). Despite this, most firms in the industry still do not perform optimally. The managing director of Nigerian Breweries Plc, Michael Herkemil spoke to the Daily Sun in 2010 and confirmed that their challenge is customer satisfaction, this is very important since customer satisfaction is the key to a significant performance. Also, speaking to ThisDay newspaper in 2016, Egene gave a node that most firms in the industry have experienced a negative performance. Pabod brewery in Port Harcourt can be used as an example, despite its resuscitation; it is yet to leave up to expectation. The products of this company especially its grand beer brand has not really catch the fancy of their market, only its grand malt brand has managed to stay afloat in the market in Port Harcourt.

Inadequate or badly drawn plans that accompany the introduction of new products could be a reason why some firms in the industry are experiencing a draw back in their performance. Ezirim (2006) opined that a well- tailored plan of organization's product(s) is paramount to the prosperity of the organization, since the century is faced with rapidly changing technologies, shorter product life cycles and global competition that is ever increasing. Given the above situation discussed, it behoved on the researcher to investigate whether New Product Planning has affected Marketing Performance. The problem was addressed by studying breweries in South-South and South-East of Nigeria

LITERATURE RVIEW

Theoretical Foundation

Boston Matrix

In 1970, Bruce Henderson developed this model for Boston consulting group; it can also be called the BCG Matrix or Boston Box. The need for the analyses of business units or product lines, prompted him to develop this model.

The people responsible for products and strategies management often times look at their products and how they are positioned in the market and then make decisions on how to allocate resources to each of them using this model. The BCG matrix is used to analyse product portfolio performance, it shows products performance in terms of sales growth and market share index (Didia, 2004).The model is divided into four cells that represent four products with different characteristics based on market shares as well as market growth.

Stars: Products that fall in this category are those that are relatively new with a high market share as well as high market growth. Here products have rapid acceptance and more or less self-financing.

Question Marks: These products are in a high growth market with a low market share in order to attain dominance in its growth market, an amount of cash that is substantial is required.

Cash Cows: Products here are in a low growth market with a high market share, these products generate cash that will be enough to finance other.

Dogs: These products are in a low growth market with a low market share; they are near the end of life cycle and represent a cash drain to the organization.

The BCG model for instance is used as a guide for the application of strategies for newly introduced products and also strategies on how to use the resources obtained from a product or set of products, to finance another product or the modification of another product. In terms of modification, this model also helps in arming managers with the right decisions to take. This is done so as to enable the product (s) not to merely survive in the marketplace, but to also generate a substantial amount of cash.

Concept of New Product Planning

Products do not come into existence by miracle or magic. In a bid to satisfy the needs of individuals at a profit, companies engage in productive and feasible plans that brings offerings into existence. According to Onuoha & Anyanwu (1999), "product planning is concerned with the arrangement, mixing and pricing of both existing and new products to meet the firms present and future market requirement and competition and to maintain a viable product for the firm". New product planning can be said to be the estimate of the magnitude of potential markets, estimates of sales volume, budgeting of costs and other matters relating to the economics of making a new product (Maclayton & Nwokah, 2002). New product planning comprises activities responsible for making decisions on a product to be developed by an organization so as to match the wants and needs of customers. It is the process that converts an idea into a successful commercial product.

According to Beckham (1967) "product planning is concerned with the estimates of the magnitude of potential market, sales volume, budgeting and costs, and other matters relating to the economics of modifying a product line. Product planning is thus more than planning for the shape, colour or texture of the product but equally includes an estimate of the customers that may likely get their needs met by the product(s), an estimate of the volume of sales that will be made after the launch of the products, estimate of the cost of developing that product etc. For Stanton (1981) product planning is "embracing activities that enable a company to determine what products it will market". He said product planning embraced all the activities that border on which product should the firm make, should the company market more or fewer products?, what new uses are there for the product?, what brand, package and label should be used for each product?, how should the product be styled and designed, and in what sizes, colours and materials should it be produced?, how should the products be priced? Stanton (1981).

New product planning is also the evaluation of the range, mix, specification and pricing of new product in relation to present and future market requirements and competition. It is evident that

new product planning entails the assessment of new products with a view to maintaining a balance that will create better competitive values for the ultimate consummation of corporate goal (The National Economic Development Office, 1940).

Concept of Marketing Performance

Marketing performance is marketing's result or output compared against the set objectives. Sivadas & Dwyer. (2000) explained that measuring performance has been a central issue in marketing, and remains a vital concern for a majority of organizations. The marketing science institutes research priorities for 2002-2004 also confirmed this when 'Assessing Marketing Productivity and Marketing Metrics' was voted as the highest topic for academic study. Recently managers as well as academics have both been drawn to the topic with an urgency and scope previously unpredicted. According to Garvin (1987), the reason the measurement of performance suddenly captured an attention is because, information relating to marketing has been increasingly demanded, after a decade of downsizing, major organizations were reaching the points of diminishing returns which have led to a refocusing on marketing as a driver of future profit and growth, thirdly, a measure of business performance such as the balance scorecard has made the inclusion of marketing measures attractive in the overall assessment of business performance. Finally, marketing managers have become frustrated with other performance measures with little or no value on what they do.

Business performance measurement is receiving active investigation from both practitioners and academics, the attention given to it has made new reports and articles on the topic to appear at a rate of one every five hours of every working day since 1994, with a search of the World Wide Web revealing over 170,000 references (Tellis & Johnson, 2007). Sheremata (2004) expressed that at one level, it may be as simple as its definition, although at another level the notion of a general level of performance is both intriguing yet continually disappointing. Performance is the aggregation of basic stages of action, from intention to result. It will be of no use engaging in marketing activities that cannot be measured; this is because those activities will not yield efficient result. If you can't measure you can't control, if you can't control you can't manage, if you can't manage you can't improve and be efficient.
Analysing the performance of marketing strategies should make clear and give an understanding of how marketing decisions influence financial results and their consequences on the firm cash flow. This level requires a marketing strategy analysis models that are more complex than the simple input-output analyses.

Customer Satisfaction

Customer satisfaction has been a popular topic in marketing practice and academic research since Cardozo's (1965) initial study of customer effort expectations and satisfaction. Customer satisfaction is regarded as the head of all marketing activities. According to Dutka, (1994), the principal purpose of marketing is to satisfy customer needs and wants. Satisfying customers is essential because satisfied customer will reward firm with favourable behaviour. It's found that enhancing customer satisfaction bring about a higher future profitability (Anderson et al, (1994), increase consumer willingness to pay a higher price, make a good accommodation and use the product frequently (Hayes, 2008) and develop customer loyalty (Salini, and Kenett, 2009). All

these points to the fact that customers satisfaction play a significant role in generating long term benefits for companies (Homburg et al, 2006)

There are many attempts on the definition and the clarification of what customer satisfaction is in marketing literature. Oliver (1977) defines customer satisfaction as "the customer fulfilment response". It is a judgement that a product feature or the product provided (or is providing) a pleasurable level of consumption related fulfilment. This could either be under or over fulfilment. According to Hung (1977), satisfaction is a kind of stepping away from an experience and evaluating it. One could have a pleasurable experience that caused dissatisfaction because even though it was pleasurable, it wasn't as pleasurable as it was supposed to be. So satisfaction / dissatisfaction isn't an emotion, it's the evaluation of the emotion. Woodruff and Gandiar (1996) rendered satisfaction to be the evaluation or feeling that results from the disconfirmation process. It is not the comparison itself (i.e. the disconfirmation process), but the customers response to the comparison. Customer satisfaction is also seen as an emotional response to the experiences provided by associating with particular product purchasers, retail outlet, or even molar patterns of behaviour such as shopping and buying behaviour and also the overall market place (Westbrook and Reilly, 1983).

According to Oliver (1981), "Customer Satisfaction is the summary of psychological state resulting when the emotion surrounding disconfirmed expectations is coupled with the consumers' prior feelings about the consumption experience". Customer satisfaction is the satisfactory post-purchase experience with a product, given an existing purchase expectation (Vavra, 1997). It is also said to be the buyer's cognitive state of being adequately rewarded for the sacrifices he has undergone (Howard and Sheth, 1969).

Tse and Witon (1988) defined it as "the consumer's response to the evaluation of the perceived discrepancy between prior and expectations and the actual performance of the product as perceived after its consumption. Berry and Parasuram argued that since customer satisfaction is influenced by the availability of customer services, the provision of quality customer service has become a major concern of all businesses. They see customer satisfaction as typically a post consumption evaluative judgement concerning a specific product or service. It is the result of an evaluative process that contrasts pre-purchase expectations with perceptions of performance during and after the consumption experience.

Customer Loyalty

Firms were merely focused on innovation and the triggering of new marketing philosophies, methods and information that will leave customers with no choice than to buy its products. But today customers no longer attach much importance to information (Jacoby & Chesnut, 1978). this is so because all information needed concerning a product is at their fingertips. Their interest now is on products benefits and practical features. Contemporary marketing practitioners, no longer concentrate solely on attracting new customers but also keeping those they have acquired because of the numerous gains of customer retention. According to Mitchell & Tomo (2005) Successful firms consciously create customer satisfaction and loyalty.

According to Hammond et al (1996), loyalty is a customer's inclination to re-buy a particular brand through actions which is measurable and significantly affect sales. Oliver (1999) sees it as

a profoundly accommodated steadfastness, to repurchase the product frequently in the future, by that giving rise to repetitions identical brand or identical brand-set buying, notwithstanding environmental influences and switching behaviour. On the other hand Jones and Sesser (1995), sees it as a "sentiment of the fidelity to or fondness for a firm's people or products. Scholars have different opinions as to how loyalty should be measured. According to Pine et al (1995) loyalty should be measured by using "re-buys dynamics and recommendations", but schiffman (1997) argued that “loyalty is not an attitudinal function and thus, should be measured through a purchase parameter so as to include cognitive captured consumer and habitual purchases among others.

New Product Planning and Marketing Performance

Several studies (Moon et al, 2010; Baush et al, 2011; Schiffman and Kanuk, 2001; Kauffman, 2007; Nwokah and Maclayton, 2002) showed the association between new product planning and marketing performance. According to Didia (2004) "Business organization venturing is justified by the provision of goods and services capable of satisfying the predetermined needs and wants of a defined group of consumers". But these products do not come into existence in the market as either magic or miracle, rather some procedures and processes are folowed to bring them into existence Kauffman, E.M.(2007). Kauffman, (2007) explained that "products are planned and developed by the organization that wants them for profits and to satisfy the consumer needs. In other words, for a product to satisfy customer needs and bring about profitability, it must be planned before development. This makes clear the significant association between new product planning and marketing performance. Going further, they assert that the reason new products fail is because of the inability of the concerned firms and their market teams to organize good market research to determine what the consumers want in the first place before going into product production. Market research is known to be part of a new products planning process (Nwokah and Maclayton, 2002).

Nwokah (2002) found out that "product planning is concerned with estimates of the magnitude of potential markets, estimates of sale volume, budgeting of costs, and other matters relating to the economics of developing a new product or modifying a product line”. And also that new product planning and development bring about greater profitability through increased customer needs and satisfaction. He went further to say that new product planning activities assures a firm that it will have a balanced assortment of goods to meet the anticipated needs of the marketplace. New product planning is without a doubt, a vital bridge between the economic and technological capabilities of the firm. New product planning thus, bring about an increase in market share (Nwokah and Maclayton, 2002), profitability (Schumpeter,1939) and also increases demand (Brown W 1957).

METHODOLOGY

This study adopted a survey research design. The population of the study comprised the seven (7) brewery firms in the South - South and South – East of Nigeria as reported by Nigerian stock exchange, 2017. The seven (7) breweries in the South-South and South East Nigeria were considered since they are below thirty (30). The managing directors in these companies and the managers as well as their assistants in the production, marketing, customer care, R & D, and logistics/distribution departments of each company were chosen as the target population, because they were in the right position to supply the relevant data for the study. The managing director of

each company and two managers each from production, marketing, customer care, R & D, and logistics/distribution of the seven companies were selected as the sample size for the study. The total number of respondents in each company therefore amounted to eleven (11). Since there are seven companies, the total numbers of the respondents amounted to seventy seven (77). Therefore, the sample size for the study was seventy seven (77).

This study adopted the questionnaire as its basic research instrument. This helped in translating the research objectives in specific questions, which respondents easily answered. Valid information, were thus given. The questionnaire was divided into two (2) sections. The first section was used to get demographic data while the other section was used to get responses that are related to the research questions. Copies of questionnaires were distributed by the researcher to individuals within the firms and collected on the spot, so as to reduce loss. Data will be collected from individuals within the firm.

The nature of relationship that exists between new product planning and marketing performance was x-rayed. To understand this, descriptive statistics such as frequency percentage, mean and standard deviation were used to analyse the data and Spearman Rank Order correlation coefficient with the aid of SPSS version 22.0 was used to test the hypotheses of the study. In order to test how valid the questionnaire was as regards measuring what it is supposed to measure, it was subjected to content validity. It was also subjected to professional scrutiny. A test-re-test method was adopted to know if there is consistency of the instruments. The reliability of the items measured using the Cronbach Alpha tool had high values (≥ 0.7). This showed the consistency in the response gotten from respondents. The reliability of the instrument used was also revealed.

Questionnaire Response

Questionnaire	Number	Percentage (%)
Distributed	77	100
Not Retrieval	5	6.5
Retrieval	72	93.5

Source: Field Survey (2017)

From the sixty (60) questionnaires distributed, fifty four (54) representing 90% were returned, valid and used for the analysis, while six (6) representing 10% were not returned.

Relationship between New product Planning and Customer Satisfaction

Table 2; Correlation Analysis showing the relationship between new product planning and customer satisfaction

Correlations

Type	Variables 1	Statistics	New Product planning	Customer Satisfaction

Spearman's rho	New product planning	Correlation Coefficient	1.000	.818**
		Sig. (2-tailed)		. 000
		N	72	72
	Customer Satisfaction	Correlation Coefficient	. 818**	1.000
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
		N	72	72

Source: SPSS V. 22.0 printout (based on field 2017).

Table 2 shows that Spearman's correlation coefficient (r) = .818**, this value is high, implying that a strong relationship exist between New product planning and Customer satisfaction. The positive sign of the correlation coefficient means a positive relationship exist between both variables. That means an increase in New product planning is accompanied with an increase in customer satisfaction. Probability/significant value (PV) is 0.000 < 0.05 level of significance, consequently, the researcher rejects the null hypothesis and concludes that there is a significant relationship between New Product planning and Customer satisfaction.

Relationship between New product Planning and Customer Loyalty

Table 3; Correlation Analysis showing the relationship between new product planning and customer loyalty.

Correlations

Type	Variables 1	Statistics	New Product planning	Customer Loyalty
Spearman's rho	New product Planning	Correlation Coefficient	1.000	.631**
		Sig. (2-tailed)		. 000
		N	72	72
	Customer Loyalty	Correlation Coefficient	. 631**	1.000
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
		N	72	72

Source: SPSS V. 22.0 printout (based on field 2017).

Table 3 shows that Spearman's correlation coefficient (r) = .722**, this value imply a strong relationship exist between New product planning and customer loyalty. The positive sign of the correlation coefficient means a positive relationship exist between both variables. That means an increase in New product planning is accompanied with an increase in customer loyalty. Probability/significant value (PV) is 0.000 < 0.05 level of significance, consequently, the researcher rejects the null hypothesis and concludes that there is a significant relationship between New Product planning and Customer loyalty.

Discussion of Findings

From the study, it was found that there is a positive and significant relationship between new product planning and marketing performance. A proper plan on the type of product to develop or modify bring about customer satisfaction. In 1990 forinstance, Guinness Nigeria Plc introduced Malta Guinness, and then in 2012 the one with low sugar was introduced so as to meet the needs of customers low sugar need. This also enabled the company to share in the sales of competitors with low sugar drinks. Product planning defines industrial activities and corporate success or failure (Didia,2004). According to Nwokah (2002), "new product planning and development brings greater profitability through increased customer needs and satisfactions.

It was also found that there is a positive and significant relationship between new product planning and customer loyalty. When plans are made concerning the extension of product lines for instance, customers will be able to choose from the brands instead of looking at competitor's products. Line extension makes a brand lively and attractive to the point that it is capable of making customers loyal (Verma (2000).

Conclusion and Recommendation

It was concluded that there is a positive and significant relationship between new product planning and customer satisfaction, and between new product planning and customer loyalty. It is therefore recommended that companies be alert to its responsibilities in drawing and addressing their production planning agenda. Also, companies should not just innovate because others are doing so, a proper planning for a new product should be incorporated, so as to make improvement in their marketing performance.

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Influence of Celebrity Endorsement on Consumer Behavior and Sales Volume of a Company (A Study of MTN Nigeria)

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Abstract: *The study is designed to assess the influence of celebrity endorsement on consumer behavior and sales volume of a company (A study of MTN Nigeria). The study employed a descriptive survey design using questionnaire to collect data from MTN subscribers around Offa Local Government Area in Kwara State, Nigeria. Four hundred and sixty (460) questionnaires were distributed only Four hundred and twenty (420) was filled and returned. The study used Bivariate Correlation to analysis data via Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 20.0. The result revealed that celebrity endorsement and advertising are significant factors that many companies should consider because they have an impact on society. The study also reveals that many companies accept as true what can increase their revenue even as their products or sales are encouraged by having a good time; hence, they recommend having a good time and advertising their products in order to increase sales and profit growth. The study recommends that before endorsing a product, care should be taken to investigate a celebrity's lifestyle and social popularity in order to avoid any negative publicity or scandals that could harm the brand.*

Keywords: *Celebrity, Endorsement, Advertising, Influence and Products*

I. INTRODUCTION

Over many years, the use of advertisement experienced a tremendous transformation from a classical to a modern perspective. Marketers nowadays create methods that include sexual, emotional, and humorous appeals, among others. Advertising is a non-verbal or visual kind of marketing that is intended to increase product or service sales. No one wants to make a wrong decision when purchasing a product or service, thus advertising is designed to inform customers about the product or services so that they may make informed decisions (Amir, 2015). Advertising has been used to increase product or service sales over time. Advertising has been used to reach out to audiences and attract customers ever since. Today, there are several media avenues for advertising products and services (Patel, 2015).

It's impossible to discuss celebrity endorsement without mentioning at least one of the marketing 4Ps (which is promotion). "A means of communicating with individuals, groups, or organizations to directly or indirectly encourage exchanges by informing and convincing one or

more audiences to embrace an organization's products, brands, or services," describe promotion. As a result, promotion is frequently associated with the following goals: (a) raising awareness, (b) stimulating demand, (c) encouraging product trial, (d) identifying prospects, (e) retaining loyal consumers, (f) facilitating reseller assistance, and (g) reducing sales volatility (Chekima, 2018).

Brand manufacturers, corporations, and organizations are now seeking for ways to keep their customers loyal to their brands. As brands determine how to establish themselves in the hearts of clients or consumers, the effective advertising landscape has become incredibly competitive. Clients and consumers are exposed to hundreds of voices and pictures on a daily basis through newspapers, radio, and television (Choi &Rifon, 2012). Every product catches at least a fraction of a person's attention in order to tell him or her of the amazing features of the product brand in question. The difficulty for the advertiser is to find a snare that will keep the audience's attention. In order to combat this problem, using celebrities to endorse a brand has become a popular marketing tactic. Marketers do this by enlisting the help of well-known and well-known individuals, or celebrities (Chan, 2013).

Celebrity endorsement advertising is a common characteristic of modern marketing. Because these celebrities are well-known public figures, many multinational corporations around the world, including Nigeria, use them to promote their products, goods, or services Using a celebrity as an endorser has the advantage of attracting public attention regardless of the sort of product (Pugazhenthi, 2014). A large section of the public can recognize and associate with the celebrity, and the celebrity's appeal and goodwill can be transferred to the product. These individuals aid in making advertisements credible, increasing recall, brand awareness, and even persuading people to use the recommended brand. Celebrities are frequently utilized to promote products (Chekima, 2018). Celebrities sign deals and contracts with these organizations and firms in exchange for the service of being brand ambassadors, which helps promote the company's or organization's interest in terms of visibility and profit making by attracting more customer attention. People frequently assume that objects owned or touched by celebrities are valuable and are prepared to pay a high price for them, even if they are merely artifacts (Choi &Rifon, 2012).

Nigeria's telecommunications business has grown dramatically in recent years. As a result of more enterprises entering the industry, however, it has continued to face intense competition. MTN, is among the industry's players in Nigeria. These businesses compete in the areas of Internet services, SMS messaging, phone calls, and mobile money services. In the telecommunications sector, celebrity endorsement has been found to be a useful technique of boosting product awareness and perception in the minds of target customers (Martey & Frempong, 2014; Samar & Samreen, 2015). Because of their social status and celebrity, today's youth regard celebrities as role models and opinion leaders. They tend to imitate these superstars' lifestyles, including how they dress, speak, and even how they seem physically (Okorie, Oyedepo & Akhidenor, 2012).

Objectives of the study

The study's overall objective is to explore the impact of celebrity endorsement on consumer behavior and company sales volume (a case study of MTN Nigeria). The specific objectives are:

1) To figure out if celebrity endorsement is an excellent advertising tactic.
2) To see how effective celebrity endorsements are at encouraging people to subscribe to MTN.

3) To determine the impact of celebrity endorsements on consumers' purchasing intentions for MTN products.

Study Hypotheses

Hypothesis One

H0 There is a significance relationship between Celebrity endorsement and effective advertisement.

$H0_1$ There is no significance relationship between Celebrity endorsement and effective advertisement.

Hypothesis Two

H0 There is a significance relationship between Celebrity endorsement and subscribers' attitude towards MTN network and products.

$H0_2$ There is no significance relationship between Celebrity endorsement and subscribers' attitude towards MTN network and products

Hypothesis Three

H0 There is a significance relationship between Celebrity endorsement and consumer preference for products**.**

$H0_3$ There is no significance relationship between Celebrity endorsement and consumer preference for products**.**

II. REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

The Concept of Advertisement

Advertising is a powerful marketing strategy that aids in the sale of goods, services, images, and ideas by providing information and persuasion. It is a powerful social force. Every day, we are inundated with advertisements. It is necessary for any form of business or sector to succeed. Government, colleges, and institutions, as well as Public Service organizations, are increasingly utilizing advertising methods. It's a step in the marketing and communication process. People are persuaded to buy items through advertisements. Information and persuasion are both included in every advertisement (Belch and Belch, 2012).

The word advertising comes from the Latin word advertere, which means "to direct one's attention." "Advertising is any paid type of non-personal presentation and promotion of ideas, commodities, and services by an identified sponsor," according to the American Marketing Association (AMA, 2018). According to the American Marketing Association, advertising, along with the product and its packaging, price, distribution, and personnel selling, is a marketing instrument. Its job is to present and promote product and service concepts. Promotion is 'non-personal' according to this definition. It's addressed to "anyone it may affect." Because the public is receptive to advertising, it is effective (Adebayo, 2020).

Advertising, according to Victor (2018), is "any paid–for communication designed to inform and/or persuade one or more individuals." The first paid element distinguishes advertising from free publicity in this case. The second aspect, communication, refers to message delivery and the usage of a medium. The third element is that advertisements should be goal-oriented. Finally, the terms inform and/or influence refer to the persuasive aspect of advertising.

Need for Advertisement

The following are the reasons for advertising:

- Increasing the product/sales service's
- Developing and maintaining a brand image or identity.
- Notifying an existing product line of a change.
- A new product or service is introduced.
- Increasing the brand's or company's market value

The Concept of celebrity?

A celebrity is a public figure who has a high profile and enjoys some level of public attention and influence in the media. A person who has a lot of popularity, is well-known in their industry, and is easily recognized by the general public. Celebrity status is typically associated with a variety of occupations in the sports and entertainment industries (Kheder, 2018). While some persons achieve celebrity status as a result of a great career in a specific sector, others do not (primarily in the areas pertaining towards sports and entertainment), People become celebrities in other circumstances as a result of media attention for their extravagant lifestyle or fortune (as in the case of a socialite); their relationship to a famous person (as in the case of a famous relative); or even their misdeeds (as in the case of a well-known criminal). Celebrities may be well-known globally (e.g., pop singers and film actors), nationally (e.g., a top Australian rugby player), or regionally (e.g., a top American football player) (e.g., a local television news anchor) (Jain and Roy, 2016 as cited in Kheder, 2018).

An "individual who is known to the public, such as actors, sports figures, entertainers, and others for their successes in their respective areas other than the product supported by them" is referred to as a "celebrity". They are individuals who have excelled in their fields of endeavor and may be sportspersons, movie stars, academics, musicians, and or comedians who are known to the public for achievements in areas other than the products or services that they endorsed or are promoting (Osei-Frimpong and Frimpong, 2019).

The Concept of Product Endorsement

A product endorsement is a type of testimonial in which someone expresses their liking or approval of a product. Product endorsement could take the form of favorable word of mouth from celebrities, allowing corporations to sell their products using phrases like "as used by such and such an actress" or "the official product of a company." On product packaging and in commercials, it's difficult to overlook a Celebrity Endorsement & Brand Building product endorsement; most companies keep their endorsements front and center so that they are always in the public eye. The concept of product endorsement dates back centuries (Popescu, 2014).

A product's endorsement does not always imply that it is good. It simply means that the corporation has used its public relations connections to have a well-known figure affiliated with it. Some endorsements come in the form of written testimonials, in which people describe how the product has improved their lives (Popescu, 2014). Modern testimonials are more frequently used in advertising efforts, with only brief portions appearing on the package (Radha & Jija, 2013). Modern product endorsements might come with contracts worth a lot of money. Several professional athletes, for example, agree to engage in product endorsement campaigns on the condition that the company compensates them for their time and effort; some stars donate the earnings to charities they support, thereby turning the endorsement into a public relations campaign. Someone may commit to utilize the product publicly whenever feasible in exchange for an endorsement contract, and they may be prohibited from utilizing competitor's items (Radha & Jija, 2013).

The Concept of Celebrity Endorsement

Marketers frequently employ celebrity endorsements in their commercials. In some countries, celebrities are idolized; whether they be actors or comedian, the people adore them. (Hashaw, 2019). Every major brand in the country has employed it at various levels, for a variety of products, and in diverse ways. That being stated, it is critical that marketers understand the success of this notion before putting it into practice. As a result, celebrity endorsement is a marketing strategy that aims to use a celebrity's renown quotient, acceptability, reliability, and audience base to positively influence brand perception, increase interest, and drive sales (Adebayo, 2020). Popularity endorsement/advertising, according to Business Dictionary, is a type of brand or advertising campaign in which a well-known individual uses their celebrity to help market a product or service. Furthermore, MarketBliss (2015) defines the term as "a form of advertising in which celebrities use their celebrity to promote certain products," and Hashaw, (2019), Francis & Yazdanifard, (2013), Adam & Hussain, (2017) credit it as the preferred advertising technique of large corporations, particularly those involved in sensory products such as cosmetics and fashion.

According to Radha, & Jija, (2013), celebrity endorsements are not only efficient in capturing the attention of customers to buy the product being pushed, but also in creating a long-lasting memory in the minds of consumers, influencing them to buy the product again. The content in a celebrity-endorsed advertisement is seen to be accurate since most customers believe that celebrities would not want to be associated with "false products."

Celebrity Endorsement Forms

According to Radha, & Jija, (2013), Various kinds of celebrity endorsement exist. For example, Adam and Hussain recognized the following types:

- Explicit (I endorse this item)
- Implicit (I use this item)
- a necessity (You should use this product)
- Mode of co-presentation (only appearing with the product)

Benefits of Celebrity Endorsement

Undoubtedly, celebrity endorsements can benefit a company tremendously. McCracken created an intriguing take on celebrity endorsement and how it affects customers (1989). The effectiveness of a celebrity as an endorser, according to this paradigm, is determined by the culturally acquired meaning he or she contributes to the endorsement process. Status, class, gender, and age, as well as personality and lifestyle, all have several implications for each celebrity.

Theoretical Framework

Source Credibility Theory

The Source Credibility Theory was proposed in 1951 by Carl Hovland and Walter Weiss (Schouten *et al.,* 2019). "People are more likely to be swayed once the source appears to be reliable," it says. The theory is divided into three models that are simple to implement. "The factor model, the functional model, and the constructivist model" are the titles of these models (Piehler *et al.,* 2021). Hovland Weiss devised an experiment to test the idea in 1951. The same messages were delivered to two sets of people: one received a message from a high-credibility source, while the other received a message from a low-credibility source. The experiment found that on three of the four issues presented to them, the high credible source group produced more opinion change. "Credibility is defined as the willingness to believe or trust someone despite the

possibility of being misled or manipulated. Credibility encompasses faith, trust, love, and impartiality all in one term" (Umeogu, 2012).

This idea has been criticized since it is more scientific. "Many researchers have found many ways to refute what the theory claims, hence it is thought to have a high level of falsifiability." It also has great internal reliabilities; nonetheless, the theory's three primary models allow it to have a unifying effect (Schouten *et al.,* 2019). The three models condense the source credibility theory's scope while also providing additional communication procedures. The factor model determines how trustworthy the source is to the recipient. The functional model considers the validity of a source's ability to meet individual requirements. The constructivist approach looks into the recipient's reaction to the source's proposal.

Uses and Gratification Theory

Blumler and Katzs proposed the Uses and Gratification Theory in 1974. (Hung, 2014). The theory explains how people use the media for their needs and fulfillment in general. It contrasts what people do with the media with what the media does to them. The Bullet Theory's assumptions that the public is passive and reacts in the same way the media wants them are plainly invalidated by the Uses and Gratification Theory. The focus that the media has a limited effect on its audiences because the audiences may exercise control over their media is a key assumption that connects this theory to the study (Sohaib Afzaal, 2015).

This theory differs from other media theories in that Katz proposed that instead of asking "what the media does for people," communication theorists should ask "what people do with media." In other words, users of these media have control over their media intake rather than the other way around; they choose their media to suit their requirements in order to obtain fulfillment. The audience's demands and desires can be divided into five groups. Cognitive, emotive, personal integrative, social integrative, and stress release demands are among them (Sohaib Afzaal, 2015).

Empirical Review

Related research has been conducted on the relationship between celebrity endorsement and consumer purchase behavior. Although there are limited empirical estimates of the impact of celebrity endorsement on consumer purchasing behavior, it is apparent that celebrities can affect their fans' behavior in other areas. Using the global airline sector as a case study, Wang and Scheinbaum (2017) test a structural model to uncover a relationship between advertisement and brand results of celebrity endorsement. There were 637 international airports in the sample. Consumers' perceptions of a celebrity endorser's attractiveness and trustworthiness improve brand attitude, brand credibility, and buy intention toward endorsed brands, according to structural equations studies. Advertisers in the global airline business should engage attractive celebrity endorsers with worldwide appeal who are trustworthy to boost brand credibility, according to the writers.

In a study conducted in the United States by Elberse, as mentioned in TigerShark Studios, it was discovered that 1) 20 percent of all advertisements in the United States involve a celebrity, and 2) celebrity endorsements raise sales by 20-40 percent across the board. Deshwal (2015) found that celebrity endorsements are more effective when there is a high level of congruence between the celebrity and the endorsed brand, ii) when the celebrity is not involved in multiple endorsements, and iii) when the practice is integrated across the elements of the marketing mix.

Finally, In Coimbatore, India, Radha and Jija (2013) investigated the impact of celebrity endorsement on consumer purchase decisions. With a sample of 200 people, convenience sampling was used. Consumers support brand quality 51% of the time when purchasing

products, according to the data. While 53% of respondents believe that advertising featuring celebrities help consumers get familiar with a product. Radha and Jija (2013) discovered the following in another study in India: 1) Celebrity endorsement leads to more product recognition than actual purchase, with a 53 percent favorable reaction rate. 2) A little more than half of the respondents said celebrity endorsement influenced their choice to switch brands, and 3) product quality has the same predictive power on buy intention as celebrity endorsement.

III. METHODOLOGY

Research Design and Population of the Study

The study adopted the survey design. The reason for this is that whenever the major source of primary data for a study is the views of members of the public or any particular group, a survey is better called for. The aim of survey is to provide empirical data collected from a population of respondents on which valid conclusions will be made. Therefore, research designs simply imply a comprehensive plan or blue print showing how the research will be used to solve the already identified problems (Issa, 2012).

In this study, the descriptive research design was selected to be a case study of MTN Nigeria. The case study focuses on a single company from a broad group of similar businesses (Kapel, 2015). The study targets all subscribers of MTN in Offa Local Government, Kwara state, Nigeria. The author finds it difficult to determine the actual number of MTN users. Thus, the population of this study is considered as infinite population.

Sample Size and Sampling Technique

Sampling, as explained by Oloyede and Adejare (2012), is the act of taking members of a given population as representative of that population. As cited in Oloyede and Adejare (2012) define sampling as the selection of a part to represent a whole. This means the exact number of respondents which the researcher studied out of the whole population. For the fact that it will be practically impossible to reach out to the whole population of MTN user in Offa, Rose *et al* (2015), model is used to determine the sample size.

$$nr = \frac{4pq}{d^2}$$

nr = required sample size
P = proportion of the population
Q = 1-p
d = Degree of Freedom (Level of Significant)

$$nr = \frac{4 \times 0.5 \times 0.5}{(0.05)^2}$$

$$= \frac{1}{0.0025}$$

$$nr = 400$$

According to Israel (2013), 10-30% of the sample size gotten should be added to the sample size. Therefore, the sample size is:

$$15 \quad X\ 400 = \frac{60}{100}$$

$$nr = 400 + 60 = 460$$

$$nr = 460$$

Instrumentation and Data analysis

A self-administered structured questionnaire on a Likert scale was used to collect primary data. The information gathered was saved in a format that allowed for statistical analysis. Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) was used in the analysis. All of the data was entered into a statistical tool and checked for missing values and data entry mistakes. SPSS Version 20.0 was used to analyze the data. Data analyses were executed at 95% confidence level. Bivariate Correlation procedures was use to draw inferences about the population from the sample. The results will be presented in the form of tables.

IV. RESULT AND FINDINGS

This is the breaking down of the responses received from the questionnaires distributed. Four Hundred and sixty (460) questionnaires were distributed to MTN subscribers within Offa Metropolis. Out of the Four Hundred and sixty (460) questionnaires distributed, only four hundred and twenty (420) questionnaire were filled and returned, and the analysis of the questionnaires are done below.

Table 1: Demographics characteristics of the respondents

S/N	Variable		Frequency	Percentage
1	Gender	Male	299	71.2
		Female	121	28.8
	Total		**420**	**100**
2	Age	25-35years	231	55
		36-45years	154	36.7
		46-55years	28	6.7
		56 years and above	7	1.7
	Total		**420**	**100**
3	Do you use MTN	YES	398	94.8
		NO	22	5.2
	Total		**420**	**100**
4	If Yes, for how long have you used MTN	0-3 years	59	14.1
		4-7 years	337	80.2
		8 years- above	24	5.7
	Total		**420**	**100**

Source: Field Survey, 2022

The Table 1 above indicates the characteristics of the respondents, According to the responses, 299 respondents (71.2%) are male, 121 respondents (28.8%) are female, 231 respondents (55%) are between the ages of 25 and 35, 154 respondents (36.7%) are between the ages of 36 and 45, 28 respondents (6.7%) are between the ages of 46 and 55, and 7 respondents (6.7%) are between the ages of 46 and 55. Majority of respondents (94.8%) are MTN subscribers, and 80.2% have been using MTN for 4-7 years, according to the responses.

Test of Hypothesis

The hypotheses raised in the study are tested in this section.

Hypothesis One

H0 There is no significance relationship between Celebrity endorsement and effective advertisement.

$H0_1$ There is a significance relationship between Celebrity endorsement and effective advertisement.

Level of Significance = 0.05

Correlations		**Celebrity Endorsement**	**Effective Advertisement**
Celebrity endorsement	Pearson Correlation	1	.880**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	420	420
Effective advertisement.	Pearson Correlation	.880**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	420	420
**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).			

Source: **SPSS Output, 2022**

Based on the summary of findings of hypothesis testing, the result reveals that r = 0. 880 (88) it shows that there is a strong positive relationship between advertisement and celebrity endorsement. Since the p value 0.00< 0.001, it shows that the result is statistically significant at 0.05 level of significance.

Hypothesis Two

H0 There is no significance relationship between Celebrity endorsement and subscribers' attitude towards MTN network and products.

$H0_2$ There is a significance relationship between Celebrity endorsement and subscribers' attitude towards MTN network and products

Correlations		**Celebrity Endorsement**	**Subscribers' attitude**
Celebrity endorsement	Pearson Correlation	1	.789**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	420	420
Subscribers' attitude	Pearson Correlation	.789**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	420	420
**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).			

Source: **SPSS Output, 2022**

The result shows that r = 0.789 (80).It shows that there is a positive relationship between Celebrity endorsement and subscribers' attitude towards MTN network and products. Since the p value 0.00< 0.001, it shows that the result is statistically significant at 0.05 (5) level of significance.

Hypothesis Three

H0 There is no significance relationship between Celebrity endorsement and consumer preference for products**.**

$H0_3$ There is a significance relationship between Celebrity endorsement and consumer preference for products**.**

Correlations		**Celebrity Endorsement**	**Consumer preference for products**
Celebrity endorsement	Pearson Correlation	1	.916**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	420	420
Consumer preference for products	Pearson Correlation	.916**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	420	420
**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).			

Source: **SPSS Output, 2022**

The result shows that r = 0.916 (92).It shows that there is a strong positive relationship between Celebrity endorsement and Consumer preference for products. Since the p value 0.00< 0.001, it shows that the result is statistically significant at 0.05 (5) level of significance.

Findings

The findings of the study reveal that celebrity endorsement influences consumer behavior. This corresponds with the findings of Rehman *et al.* (2014) investigated how advertising influences customer purchasing behavior. In a study conducted in Pakistan, he looked at the impact of advertising on customer purchasing behavior as well as the partnership's consequences. The study found that advertising is highly linked to purchasing behavior at the most astounding levels, and that commodities impact customer purchasing behavior. The study discovered that alerts provide consumers with the information they require about the marketed product, which gradually evolves into a source of awareness as purchasers share the information with their family and friends, influencing buyers' purchasing decisions.

V. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

The study concluded that celebrity endorsement and advertising are significant factors that many companies should consider because they have an impact on society. The study also reveals that many companies accept as true what can increase their revenue even as their products or sales are encouraged by having a good time; hence, they recommend having a good time and advertising their products in order to increase sales and profit growth. Although celebrity endorsement has a significant impact on customer purchasing behavior, it is critical for business executives to determine who to use to promote their products and services. Many customers are influenced by celebrities, according to the research, but these celebrities should be employed with caution. The reason for this is that while a person may be a celebrity, he or she may not have a favorable impact on consumers' purchasing decisions based on who and what they perceive him to be and how much they like him. It was also shown that celebrity endorsement was effective in assisting consumers in better understanding items and selecting companies to purchase. Consumers link celebrities with the items they promote, according to the report, and celebrity endorsement may bring an organization positive returns if done correctly.

This study suggests that before endorsing a product, care should be taken to investigate a celebrity's lifestyle and social popularity in order to avoid any negative publicity or scandals that could harm the brand. It also suggests that when creating an advertisement, advertisers should keep in mind simple cues such as exciting phrases, top photos, and melodies that customers can easily know and comprehend in order for them to recognize the better advertisement and have a good reaction to it.

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