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Strategic Response and Marketing Productivity of Food and Beverage Manufacturing Firms in South-South, Nigeria

[1]Dr. Mbaka, Ngwiate & [2]Dr. Chukwu, Alex D. C.

[1]Department of Marketing,
Faculty of Administration and Management,
Ignatius Ajuru University of Education Rumuolumeni, Port Harcourt, Nigeria.
mbakangwiate13@gmail.com/ngwiate.mbaka@iaue.edu.ng

[2]Universal Basic Education, Port Harcourt Rivers State, Nigeria.
alexchukwu38@gmail.com

ABSTRACT

This study investigated the relationship between strategic response and marketing productivity of food and beverage manufacturing firms in South-South Nigeria. Three research questions and three corresponding hypotheses were examined to validate the formulated assumptions. The study population consisted of twenty-six (26) food and beverage companies listed in the Nigeria Stock Exchange (NGX 2020). Census was adopted since the population was small, thus, the entire 26 listed food and beverage manufacturing firms in South-South, Nigeria constituted the census of this study. However, three (3) top managers each represented each firm as respondents making it a total of seventy-eight (78) respondents. Pearson's product moment correlation was used for data analyses with the aid of statistical packages for social science (SPSS) version 23.0. The p-values were calculated to determine the significance of the hypothesized relationship. The findings reveal a statistically significant relationship between strategic response and marketing productivity. Specifically, strategic response exerts a significant influence on all three dimensions of marketing productivity—customer acquisition, customer retention, and customer satisfaction. In terms of the strength of the relationship, the results indicate that strategic response demonstrates a strong positive association with customer acquisition ($r = 0.596$). This suggests that improvements in strategic response are likely to enhance a firm's ability to attract new customers. These findings provide important managerial implications, particularly for food and beverage manufacturing firms and similar industries. They indicate that a marginal increase in strategic response can lead to meaningful gains in customer acquisition, although such effects should be interpreted alongside the influence of other exogenous variables. Based on the findings the study concluded that strategic response has significant and positive relationship with marketing productivity of food and beverage manufacturing firms in South-South, Nigeria. The study further recommends the importance of strategic response to the survival of any organization, and in effect the prosperity of the nation, policy makers and regulatory authorities should go beyond directives to ensuring the entrenchment of strategic response practices in food and beverage manufacturing firms in the nation. Secondly, in setting up strategic response plans for any organization, marketing managers or directors should focus not only on identification of prospective customers for strategic implementation, but development of experience management strategies that could engender customer retention, regardless of the change, marketing managers should pattern their marketing activities in line with the context of current trends as this will impact on their organizational productivity.

Keywords: Strategic response, customer acquisition, customer retention, customer satisfaction.

INTRODUCTION

The evolving complex, dynamic, and competitive business environment has made it imperative for organizations to put in place systems and processes that will pledge appreciable marketing productivity in the interest of their critical stakeholders (Auirl & Aghdate, 2012). To this end, food and beverage manufacturing firms are developing several elucidations to attain and ensure desired organizational objectives despite the dynamics of competition. The changes in the business environment and the increase in competition have led organizations to focus greatly on improving their organizational productivity in order to achieve a sustainable competitive advantage by relying on keeping pace with these changes and developing their innovation capability to meet their customers' desires.

Firms in today's evolving and global business environment need to focus on creating new approaches to their development. Such approaches should provide confidence in the organization's ability to achieve long-term and sustained success. Marketing productivity represents one of the most recognized concepts that can assure such ability and ensure that all organizational methods are aligned and functioning cohesively together (Jackson, 2009). Seemingly, food and beverage firms are more concerned about their productivity than ever before, given that their survival not only depends on what they are currently offering but also on their willingness to think systematically and improve on their current products and services (Amsari & Riasi, 2016). This is motivated by the increasing competition in both the international and domestic markets, thereby, they are now grasping the importance of customer acquisition, customer retention, and customer satisfaction, and this is due to the rapid changes in technology and severe competition that is rapidly creating the added value of existing products and services.

It has become imperative and obvious to make a fundamental change in the way businesses are carried out in Nigeria. Low productivity, customer losses, and declines in profits, all combined, have put a lot of pressure on every business operation. Some managers would dispute that something more significant needs to be done in order to revive their dwindling enterprises. Presently, more than ever, the need for marketing productivity in form and action is considered to be even more imperative for the smooth operation and survival of businesses (Sharma & Kodali, 2008; Harrington, 2005).

However, a lot of corporate entities, such as food and beverage manufacturing firms, fail owing to the fact that marketers strategically fail to think outside the box, which leads to a loss of resources and time for the stakeholders (Ansari &Raisi, 2016; Raisi & Pourmiri, 2015).

Consequently, strategic response has received a lot of attention, and it is claimed that it separates successful organizations from non-performing firms. More so, successful firms stem from some powerful intangible factors in their corporate strategies, organizational culture, and employees' beliefs and value systems. Strategic response is defined as the sharpness of perception of, and the intensity of awareness and attention to, strategic developments (Doz & Kosonen, 2010). Strategic response means being open to as much information, intelligence, and innovation as possible by creating and maintaining relationships with a variety of different people and organizations (Doz & Kosonen, 2008). In this significant feat, few empirical studies have investigated the relationship between strategic response and marketing productivity in a detailed manner with qualitative methods. Hence the need for further research (Mir-Sepasi & Zahedi, 2002) on strategic response. Past research has revealed the significant role of strategic brand agility in impacting marketing productivity (Hosmer, 2001; Kotler, 2002, 2003; Reicheld, 1993, 1996; Wiley, 1991, Zaacharias, 2001; Zeithaml & Bitner, 2000).

From the above discussion, it is clear that there have been several studies in the area of strategic response (Ansari & Riasi, 2016; Riasi & Pourmiri, 2015) and marketing productivity (Aaker, 2001; Drucker, 1954; Hamel, 2002; Deshpande et al., 1997; Kotler, 2003). In spite of all these, it can be postulated that not much literature exists on the influence of strategic response and marketing productivity as well as its effects on manufacturing firms, particularly those in Nigeria. The gap created by this information necessitates a further research study that will determine the empirical effects of strategic response and marketing productivity in the food and beverage sector of manufacturing firms in South- South Nigeria.

The main purpose of this study was to examine the relationship between strategic response and marketing productivity of food and beverage manufacturing firms in South-South, Nigeria.

Specifically, the study seeks to:

i. Determine the extent of relationship between strategic response and customer acquisition in food and beverage manufacturing firms in South-South, Nigeria.
ii. Determine the extent of relationship between strategic response and customer retention in food and beverage manufacturing firms in South-South, Nigeria.
iii. Determine the extent of relationship between strategic response and customer satisfaction in food and beverage manufacturing firms in South-South, Nigeria.

The following research questions were stated to guide the study;

i. To what extent does strategic response relate with customer acquisition in food and beverage manufacturing firms in South-South, Nigeria?
ii. To what extent does strategic response relate with customer retention in food and beverage manufacturing firms in South-South, Nigeria?
iii. To what extent does strategic response relate with customer satisfaction in food and beverage manufacturing firms in South-South, Nigeria? The relationship under examination is depicted in conceptual framework in the conceptual framework in figure 1.

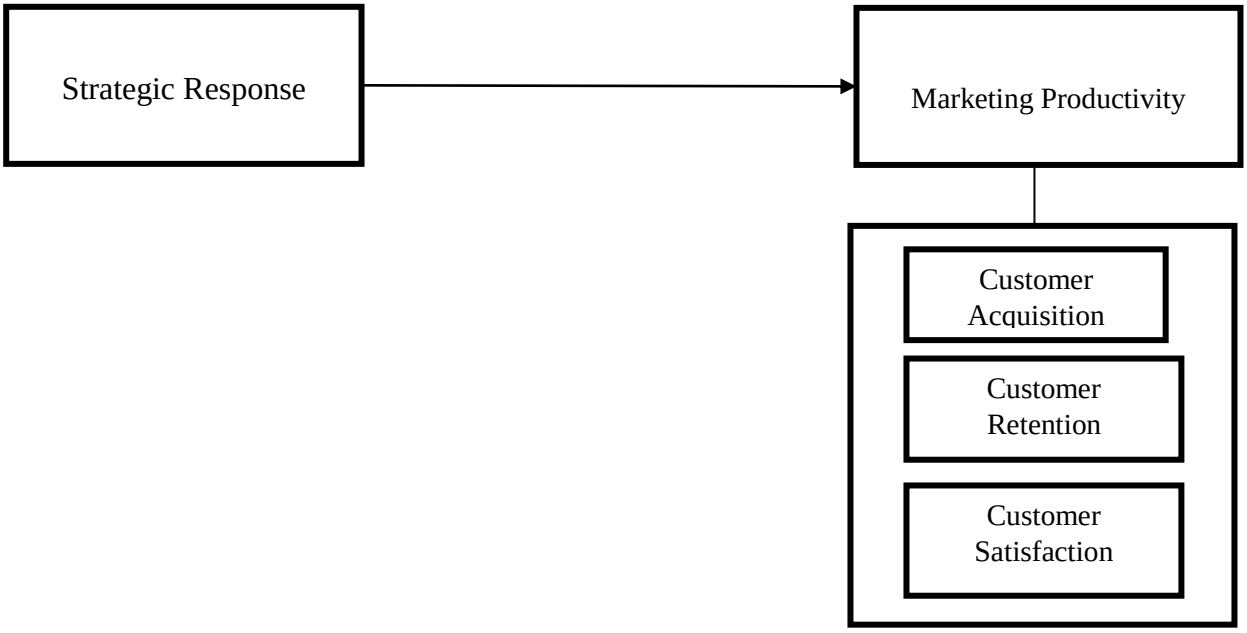

Figure 1.1: Conceptual framework of the relationship between strategic response and marketing productivity of food and beverage manufacturing firms in south- south, Nigeria.

Source: Desk Research, 2023

LITERATURE REVIEW

Theoretical Foundation

Market positioning theory and theory of dynamic capabilities served as the theoretical underpinnings for this study and helped to explain the relationship between the study variables.

Market Positioning Theory

Market positioning theory was developed by two marketing services executives, Ries and Trout, in 1969. This theory emphasizes the manipulation of the minds of individuals. The marketing climate is always the most important thing about positioning clients' hearts. In their first published article forecasting the coming era in the communications and marketing field, they argued that the coming period would concentrate more on not only the functionality of the product but also on gaining a role in the minds of prospective customers. They have been able to advise the top management of the various companies to assess their products critically from the point of view of the customer and to appeal to what is already in

their minds—that they can take advantage of positions already held. Ries& Trout (1969) stressed that strong positioning programs were cumulative in nature; flexible yet consistent.

The most important phenomenon is not the manipulation of various objects by the human mind. Satisfaction is based on the hearts and minds, that is, the desires of the customer. Positioning means aspects that include defining current locations, filling the gap strategy, having a single location strategy, having positioning analogies, and classifying brand positioning. According to market positioning theory, the dissemination of information from several sources can be attributed to a period of information explosion, which has a major effect on business operations. The theory is relevant to this study since it clearly defines the factors that can enhance an organization's ability to influence consumer perception. Market repositioning is when a company changes its existing brand or product status in the marketplace to enhance its competitive position. The objective of market positioning is to establish the image or identity of a brand.

Theory of Dynamic Capabilities

The theory of dynamic capabilities advances a position on the need for organizations to consistently align their resources and capacities in line with the changes and evolving features of their environment. Panos (2013) described dynamic capabilities as the organization's fluidity in terms of knowledge and competence, and its ability to match such with the requirements and gaps apparent in its environment. The theory provides a basis for understanding the interaction between strategic response and organizational competitiveness in the sense that it anchors the organizations capacity development on its learning and understanding of its environment. Thus, the competitiveness of the organization builds on this ability to effectively address and satisfy latent satisfaction gaps within its context through such learning. Chang, Lin, Yang and Sheu (2003) argued that the dynamic capabilities theory approaches the concept of change and development from a learning perspective, which, according to him, emphasizes the identification of key factors that offer organizations opportunities for relevance and innovation.

Strategic Responsiveness

Responsiveness is the attainment of quality of service; this plays pivotal role in surpassing customer's expectation and the willingness and preparedness of organizations to offer service by taking into consideration timeliness of services. Responsiveness in this regard is that act of being ready and disposed to offer services in a timely manner to clients in a bid to meet or surpass their expectation by utilizing information obtained from the market, responsiveness is important in creating a good impression in the minds of customers which will likely increase their tendency in prolonging their relationship with the organization. Through technology, organizations are now able to perform unswervingly and respond swift in line with customers' obligation that will bring up the level of customers' satisfaction (Shariq & Tondon, 2012 cited in Georgewill, 2021). Internal response orientation (IRO) is a sub construct of strategic response (SR), a dimensional construct of SA. Strategic response is the ability of an organization, working in collaboration with its customers and business partners, to quickly and seamlessly reconfigure its resources and processes to react or proactive in line with changes and/or developments in the business environment (Mavengere, 2013).

Concept of Marketing Productivity

Lebans & Euske (2006) opined that Productivity is a set of financial and nonfinancial indicators that offer information on the level of accomplishment of objectives and results. Ivanov & Avasilcai (2014) appreciates that a firm is productivity when it is at the same time efficient and effective. Therefore, the marketing productivity is a function of two variables, efficiency and efficacy. Roshan & Jenson, (2014) considers the word productivity as a bag-word because it covers various and different notions such as growth, profitability, return, productivity, efficiency, and competitiveness. Bartoli & Blatrix (2015) believed that the definition of productivity should be achieved through items such as piloting, productivity, evaluation, efficiency, effectiveness, and quality. Every firm should, in principle, seek better productivity through profitable growth over maximum sales. Productivity outcomes result from market

successes or when market positions are achieved (Day & Wensley 2018) and fundamentally change over time (Rust et al. 2014).

The concept of marketing productivity has been based upon the idea that a business is a voluntary association of productive assets, including human, physical, technological and capital resources, in order to achieve a common purpose (Barney 2015). According to Richard et al. (2019), marketing productivity encompasses three specific areas of firm outcomes: financial productivity (profits, return on assets, customer satisfaction, etc.); market productivity (sales, market share, etc.); and shareholder return (total shareholder return, economic value added, etc.). The successful productivity of firms does not only depend on good economic productivity, but rather on the way the entrepreneurs and employees work together and fulfill their activities and objectives in a joint and coordinated basis.

Marketing productivity is also described as an organization's ability to acquire and utilize its scarce resources and valuables or expeditiously as possible in the pursuit of its operational goals. Productivity is the end result of activities carried out and for any business it is concerned with the general efficiency or productivity. Two ways to deal with productivity has been recognized in literatures: the financial or "sales-based" and the non-financial or "firm-based". Whereas the financial is measured with dimensions such as Customer Acquisition, growth, productivity, level of sales revenue, market share and product, Customer Satisfactions, product added value; the non-financial is measured in terms of employee development, Customer satisfaction, job satisfaction and efficient organizational internal processes (Fiberesima & Abdul Rani, 2014).

Customer Acquisition

Customers are assets that need to be acquired before they can be managed for profits (Levitt, 2016). Customer Acquisition is a sensitive aspect of business and can make or break an organization. Customer Acquisition has been defined as, "finding the right customers that provides a profitable return (Kolter & Armstrong, 2009). Customer acquisition is paramount for any business to create Customer Satisfaction and it remains relevant in situations where switching costs are relatively lower and repeat purchase is infrequent (Shukla, 2013). While customer acquisition it is a prerequisite for organization to find the right customers to serve before decide how they can be acquired. It is the first objectives of Customer Relationship Management to acquire a new customer and maintains that a new customer deserves the same attention as that given to a potential customer (Becker, Greve & Albers, 2009).

Customer acquisition is always a dependent process and certainly exerts influence on customer retention (Thomas, 2001) and consumer behaviour (Verhoef & Donkers, 2005). It has also been termed as customer initiation (Becker et al., 2009). It remains a challenging task to acquire promising customers (Thomas, Reinartz & Kumar 2015; Blattberg, Getz & Thomas 2011) subject to the condition that the costs of acquiring such customers do not outweigh the benefits (Blattberg, Getz & Thomas 2011). Acquiring a new customer is a multi-stage process, represented as the sales funnel, where not all the suspects become the actual customers (Cooper & Budd, 2017; Yu &Cai, 2017; Patterson, 2017). The articles in the recent past reflects that firm's future prospects and value can only to strengthened by its customer base (Gupta & Lehmann, 2013).

Customer Retention

Customer retention refers to the ability of a company or product to retain its customers over some specified period. High customer retention means customers of the product or business tend to return to, continue to buy or in some other way not defect to another product or business, or to non-use entirely. Selling organizations generally attempt to reduce customer defections. Customer retention starts with the first contact an organization has with a customer and continues throughout the entire lifetime of a relationship and successful retention efforts take this entire lifecycle into account. A company's ability to attract and retain new customers is related not only to its product or services, but also to the way it services its existing customers, the value the customers actually perceive as a result of utilizing the solutions, and the reputation it creates within and across the marketplace. Successful customer retention involves more than giving the customer what they expect. Generating loyal advocates of the brand might

mean exceeding customer expectations. Creating customer loyalty puts 'customer value rather than maximizing profits and shareholder value at the center of business strategy. The key differentiation in a competitive environment is often the delivery of a consistently high standard of customer service. Furthermore, in the emerging world of Customer Success, retention is a major objective. Customer retention has a direct impact on profitability. Research by John Fleming and Jim Asplund indicates that engaged customers generate 1.7 times more revenue than normal customers while having engaged employees and engaged customers return a revenue gain of 3.4 times the norm.

Customer Satisfaction

Customer satisfaction is very important to every business. It is generally believed that satisfied customers tell between nine to ten people about their positive experience. This word-of-mouth communication is very important to organizations s it is most time considered more credible than paid advertisements and other forms of marketing communications. In any highly competitive industry, providing high quality products services to influence customers to be satisfied is fundamental for success (Keshavarz & Ali, 2015). Satisfied customers are considered as a vital element of a business growth. However, customers who are so dissatisfied or who experience dissatisfaction will be willing to enact positive post-complaint behaviours if the firm addresses their issues satisfactorily (Didia *et al* 2015). According to Chen & Myagmarsuren (2013) customers intend to be satisfied to the company if they find that the products and service is qualified. Customer satisfaction in marketing has been defined as the degree to which service productivity meets or exceeds the customer's expectations (Kumar, 2016; Santouridis & Trivellas, 2015). Hui & Zheng (2018) defined satisfaction as an evaluative judgment of a specific transaction resulting from perceived quality. According to Grigoroudis& Siskos, customer satisfaction is described as: the consumer's fulfillment response. It is judgment that a product or service feature, or the product or service itself, provided (or is providing) a pleasurable level of consumption-related fulfillment, including levels of under-or over fulfillment (Grigoroudis & Siskos, 2010).

Also, Fornell (2012) considered customer satisfaction as an attitude shaped on the basis of experience after clients acquire a product or use a service and pay for them. Similar to this Shin & Kim (2018) defined satisfaction as an attitude, assessment and emotional response shown by the consumer after the purchase process. It is an indication of being pleased with a product or a service. The definition given by Yap, Ramayah & Shahidan (2012) posited satisfaction as an overall customer attitude towards a service provider.

Empirical Review

Strategic responses have been implemented widely in the developed countries such as U.S, U.K, and Asia as compared to the developing countries. Although developing nations are still reluctant to adopt strategic responses as a way of dealing with environmental challenges, few local researches that have investigated this area have found contradicting results. Strategic responses are perceived as key drivers in dealing with environmental challenges and responding to customer needs; Grant (2003) studied the benefits of strategic response in European of companies. The findings revealed that the adoption of strategic responses enabled oil firms to effectively respond to environmental dynamics. Further, it was revealed that oil firms that used strategic responses were able to maximize on their core competencies and thus provided value adding goods and services at a cheaper price than their competitors.

Pearce & Robinson (2005) argue that strategic responses are actions that are designed to enable the firm to cope with challenges in the environment. A survey by Collins (2014) in Netherlands found that most manufacturing firms that used strategic responses recorded better productivity as compared to m manufacturing firms that failed to implement strategic responses. Ketchen & Palmer, (2013) investigated the effectiveness of strategic responses and organizational productivity in the Textile Industry. The study used a longitudinal research design. 300 managers were interviewed in different states. Textile firms that utilized strategic responses performed better as compared to those firms that were reluctant to adopt strategic responses. Santhanam & Hartono (2003) examined the effectiveness of strategic responses on organizational productivity of IT firms in US. The cross-sectional design was which consisted of a

quarterly report. The study concluded that strategy did not necessarily enable firms to respond to their customer needs. A negative correlation between strategic responses and organizational productivity was established. Jabar, Othman & Idris (2011) examined the relationship between organizations' resource availability and absorptive capacity as well as type of alliances with organizational productivity. The result establishes that Malaysian manufacturers need to increase their efforts in increasing internal resources that are the source of competitive advantage in order to achieve superior m manufacturing productivity.

Diallo (2012) explored the effectiveness of coping strategies by commercial banks to environmental dynamics in Senegal. The findings showed that the strategic responses utilized by banks were differentiation, mergers, strategic alliances and product innovation. Banks the employed these strategies were found to be efficient in their operations and thus, they were able to retain a large clientele. Kasekendi (2013) found that the adoption of strategic responses allowed manufacturing firms to adapt effectively to the changing environment. This made it easier for such firms to continuously record good sales and profitability. A strong correlation was found to be present between strategic responses and productivity. Imalingat (2015) did an investigation of strategic responses of mobile money transfer services in Barclay banks in Kampala, Uganda. The results found that product innovation, differentiation, strategic alliances and mergers were commonly used strategies by Barclays. Implementation of these strategies enabled the bank to effectively cope with changes in the market and guarantee survival. In so doing, the bank was able to cater for the growing needs of its customers. This improved customer loyalty, growth sales and increased profitability.

Akinyele and Fasogbon (2010) examined the impact of strategic responses on firm productivity of service firms in Lagos, Nigeria. The study found that strategic alliance and product innovation influenced firm productivity. Product innovation adoption led to increased sales since customers got quality products which were difficult to imitate by competitors. The findings depicted that strategic alliances improve synergy between firms. It also widened the scope of services and products offerings to the customers giving many customers a chance to access products. In the Kenyan context strategic responses has attracted growing attention as a tool to enhance productivity. Some studies have been done relation to strategic responses and productivity. Murule (2011) studied the strategic responses used by pharmaceutical manufacturing firms in Kenya. The study used a cross-sectional design where data was collected using questionnaires once. Primary data was collected using semi structured questionnaires. The results found that pricing, marketing and strategic alliances were the most commonly used strategies in pharmaceutical firms to maintain competitive advantage. Kilonzi (2012) investigated the strategies responses used by NIC bank. A cases study was used to carry out an in-depth investigation of NIC bank. Five (5) departmental heads were interviewed and data was analyzed using content analysis. The findings revealed that differentiation and diversification were the main strategic responses used by NIC bank. Kimunguyi (2013) studied strategic responses adopted by agrochemical firms.

The study used a descriptive survey to find out the strategic responses adopted and their contribution to organizational productivity. Primary data was collected using unstructured questionnaires that were administered using 'a drop and pick' later method. The findings indicated that the most popular responses adopted by agrochemical companies were differentiation and go-to-market strategy. Kamau (2014) assessed the influence of strategic responses on competitiveness of Faulu bank. The study used a cases study research design and primary data was collected using questionnaires. The findings revealed differentiation, product innovation and strategic alliances. Adoption of these responses was found to contribute positively towards improved productivity that strategic alliances and differentiation were popular strategic responses implemented by Faulu bank. The Kenya oil market comprises of 64 companies that are involved in the distribution of petroleum products in Kenya as per 2013 data from the pipeline coordinator.

A few Oil marketers have retail stations while others lack but are involved in the exportation of petroleum products and wholesale to other companies. Five dominants players in the Kenyan Oil market command a market share above 5 percent. These are Total, Kenol-Kobil, OMCs, Oil Libya and National Oil that

consists of 72 percent combined proportion of the Retail stations at 45 percent. This is an indication that major oil companies have a competitive edge over their rivals (EAOGS, 2014). Of the major oil marketers, Kenol-Kobil, and National Oil is local. As at end 2013, there were approximately 1400 Retail stations countrywide with more than five dominant players owning a combined total of 654 of the stations in the country (Total=188, Kenol-Kobil=166, OMCs=121, National Oil=101, oil Libya=78). The domestic sales of the industry in 2013 stood at 4550 kilometers cubed, and the total industry sales in the Retail stations stood at 1795 km3. The growth rate annually is estimated at an average of 4 percent per annum (Deloitte Report, 2013). The oil marketing firms share in joint imports for motor fuels to realize economies of scale. The ministry of energy coordinates the imports with the help of an open tender system. The Oil Marketing Company (OMC) that offers the most competitive quote imports on behalf of the industry, The OMCs have a joint facility at the port and Kenya Pipeline Company (KPC) to import and transport petroleum products. The OMCs have agreed to share services that are not sufficient to service the oil needs in Kenya. The oil companies have their storage depots in Mombasa and Nairobi that gives them a competitive edge over their rivals since they can hold buffer stocks to maintain their operations when Kenya Pipeline is out of stock (EAOGS, 2014). The oil industry faces increasing competition due to the growing demand for oil and petroleum products in Kenya. Oil marketing firms supply oil in Kenya and in the region, they undergo through an open tender system whereby the oil firms with the most competitive quote imports on behalf of the oil industry.

The ministry of energy is charged with the responsibility of coordinating the open tender system (Munyasya, 2014). To serve the current needs of the market oils firms should consider adopting strategic responses that will allow oil marketing firms to utilize their core competencies to provide value adding goods and services to customer. This will attract more customers and contribute to superior productivity (Munyasya, 2014). Firms operate in an environment that is complex and uncertain this necessitates the need to respond to environmental challenges so as to survive in the business environment. However, there are certain environmental aspects that the firm is sensitive and must therefore respond to survive. The environment comprises of opportunities, threats and constraints; rising prices, competition and technological changes are important topics that require organizations to find ways to man oeuvre in order to survive. Strategic responses have been described as effective in enabling a firm to cope with environmental alterations. These responses are changes which take place overtime to the strategies managers. Resources are either intangible or tangible in nature (Hoopes, Madsen, Walker, 2003). Based on the strength of the forgoing, this study hypothesizes thus:

Ho_1: There is no significant relationship between strategic response and customer acquisition of food and beverage manufacturing firms in South-South, Nigeria.

Ho_2: There is no significant relationship between strategic response and customer retention of food and beverage manufacturing firms in South-South, Nigeria.

Ho_3: There is no significant relationship between strategic response and customer satisfaction of food and beverage manufacturing firms in South-South, Nigeria.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This study adopted the descriptive survey research design. This design enabled the use of questionnaire as instruments for gathering data. The relevant data were collected, which in the context of the current study focus on the strategic response and marketing productivity of the food and beverage firms in South-South, Nigeria.The population of the study consisted of the 26 registered food and beverage firms listed in the Nigerian Stock Exchange (2020). However, given that this study is domiciled at the macro level of analysis, the study only concentrated on staff members of the companies in the managerial cadre. Therefore, three managers were chosen from each of the 26 registered food and beverage firms to represent their organizations because they are intellectually and officially qualified to give more accurate data needed for the study. The primary data was collected using a self-administered questionnaire that was designed in a multiple-choice format with a 5-point Likert scale, which enhanced simplicity in being understood by respondents. The research questionnaire was validated using the content validity technique

while its reliability was tested using Nunnally's (1978) Cronbach's alpha at a benchmark of 0.7 as a minimum criterion. The test showed coefficients of strategic sensitivity, customer acquisition, customer retention and customer satisfaction as 0.984, 0.976, 0.985 and 0.984 respectively. The data were analyzed using an inferential statistical technique with SPSS version 25.0 at a 95% confidence interval and a 0.05 level of significance. Pearson's Product Moment Correlation coefficients and p-values were calculated in order to ascertain the nature and direction of the proposed associations and for testing the stated hypotheses.

DATA ANALYSIS AND RESULT

Table 1: Correlation Analysis showing the Direction and Magnitude of Relationship between Strategic Response and Customer Acquisition

Correlations

		Strategic Response	Customer Acquisition
Strategic Response	Pearson Correlation	1	.737**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	74	74
Customer Acquisition	Pearson Correlation	.737**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	74	74

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

Source: SPSS 23.0 Output.

As undoubtedly, indicated in the correlation outcomes among strategic response and customer acquisition. The results show a positive as well as significant relationship between the variables. The correlation statistic ($r = .0.737$, $p < 0.001$) signify that strategic response can explain 73.7% of variation in customer acquisition. This is an indication of a positive relationship between the variables. In term of intensity of the relationship, the result show that strategic response with ($r = 0.737$) is highly related to customer acquisition. This is very instructive to management or managers of food and beverage m manufacturing firms that, a unit increase in strategic response have the potential of improving customer acquisition without the consideration of the effects of other exogenous variables. With reference to the yardstick stated by Irving (2005) for accepting either the null or alternative hypothesis, we therefore reject the null hypothesis as the computed output is greater than 0.20, that is, r-.737 is greater than 0.20. Hence the alternative hypothesis is accepted

Table 2: Correlation Analysis showing the Direction and Magnitude of Relationship between Strategic Response and Customer Retention

Correlations

		Strategic Response	Customer Retention
Strategic Response	Pearson Correlation	1	.763**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	74	74
Customer Retention	Pearson Correlation	.763**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	74	74

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).
Source: SPSS 23.0 Output, (Detail in Appendix XIV)

As undoubtedly, indicated in the correlation outcomes among strategic response and customer retention. The results show a positive as well as significant relationship between the variables. The correlation statistic ($r = .0.763$, $p < 0.001$) signify that strategic response can explain 76.3% of variation in customer retention. This is an indication of a positive relationship between the variables. In term of intensity of the relationship, the result show that strategic response with ($r = 0.763$) is highly related to customer retention. This is very edifying to management or managers of food and beverage manufacturing firms that, a unit increase in strategic response have the potential of improving customer retention without the consideration of the effects of other exogenous variables. With reference to the yardstick stated by Irving (2005) for accepting either the null or alternative hypothesis, we therefore reject the null hypothesis as the computed output is greater than 0.20, that is, r-.763 is greater than 0.20. Hence the alternative hypothesis is accepted.

Table 3: Correlation Analysis showing the Direction and Magnitude of Relationship between Strategic Response and Customer Satisfaction

Correlations

		Strategic Response	Customer Satisfaction
Strategic Response	Pearson Correlation	1	.901**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	74	74
Customer Satisfaction	Pearson Correlation	.901**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	74	74

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).
Source: SPSS 23.0 Output, (Detail in Appendix XIV)

As indisputably, specified in the correlation outcomes among strategic response and Customer Satisfaction. The outcomes show a positive as well as significant relationship between the variables. The correlation statistic ($r = .0.901$, $p < 0.001$) signify that strategic response can explain 90.1% of variation in Customer Satisfaction. This is an indication of a positive relationship between the variables. In term of intensity of the relationship, the result show that strategic response with ($r = 0.901$) is highly related to Customer Satisfaction. This is very edifying to management or managers of food and beverage manufacturing firms that, a unit increase in strategic response have the potential of improving Customer Satisfaction with the consideration of the effects of other exogenous variables.

With reference to the yardstick stated by Irving (2005) for accepting either the null or alternative hypothesis, we therefore reject the null hypothesis as the computed output is greater than 0.20, that is, r-.901 is greater than 0.20. Hence the alternative hypothesis is accepted.

DISCUSSION OF THE FINDINGS

The finding on the relationship between strategic response and marketing productivity is observed to be significant; where strategic response is observed to significantly effect on all three (customer acquisition, customer retention and customer satisfaction) measures of marketing productivity. The correlation statistic ($r = .0.737$, $p < 0.001$) signify that strategic response can explain 73.7% of variation in customer acquisition. This is an indication of a positive relationship between the variables. In term of intensity of the relationship, the result show that strategic response with ($r = 0.737$) is highly related to customer acquisition. This is very instructive to management of food and beverage manufacturing firms or any other industry that, a unit increase in strategic response has potential to improve customer acquisition, however, with the consideration of the effects of other exogenous variables.

The result of the second hypothesis is that strategic response has a significant positive effect on customer Retention of Foods and Beverage manufacturing firms in South-South, Nigeria. The findings agreed with the study of Paluku (2016) on systemic thinking and relationship marketing of Retails Enterprises in Wobulenzi-l.uweero City, Uganda; that systemic thinking and relationship marketing were very high in the selected retailing enterprises Following also is the work of Akuh (2015) on systemic orientation for academic excellence and a productive educational system in Nigeria. The results show a positive as well as significant association between the variables. The correlation statistic ($r = .0.763$, $p < 0.001$) signify that strategic response can explain 76.3% of variation in customer retention.

On the third hypothesis, the findings specified that, there is relationship between strategic response and customer satisfaction. The results show a positive as well as significant association between the variables. The correlation statistic ($r = .0.901$, $p < 0.001$) signify that strategic response can explain 90.1% of variation in customer satisfaction. This is an indication of a positive relationship between the variables. In term of intensity of the relationship, the result demonstrated that strategic response with ($r = 0.901$) is highly related to customer satisfaction. This is in conformity with the work of Mojaye & Dedekuma (2015) who conducted a study on the influence of systemic thinking on productivity in the telecom industry in Kenya. The study showed that while systemic thinking may not necessarily lead to good productivity, it may engender customer focus and sales growth.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The central nexus of this study was to appraise the impact of strategic brand agility on marketing productivity of food and beverage manufacturing firms in South-South, Nigeria. Based on the empirical findings from quantitative analysis, this study concludes that strategic response South-South, Nigeria.

Based on the findings from the study, the study proffers the following recommendations:

1. Disregarding strategic response in the planning of brand marketing portfolio is suicidal to marketing firm in terms of competitiveness in the highly volatile business environment.
2. It is critical that organizational marketing managers appreciate the significance of strategic response to their bottom–line, but also goes a step further by developing appropriate policies for

having strategic response permeate strategic planning programs not only in the marketing domain, but along the product value chain.

3. Considering the importance of strategic response to the survival of any organization, and its attending effect on the prosperity of the nation, policy makers and regulatory authorities should go beyond directives to ensuring the entrenchment of strategic response practices in food and beverage firms registered in the nation with effective monitoring for compliance, this will promote the strategic response culture that leads to sustainability of marketing organizations in the nation.
4. Fundamentally, marketing reorientation should be considered with respect to organizational structure, processes and people that will enable expeditious change based on solid knowledge, sound analysis and creative strategy development.
5. In setting up strategic response plans for an organization, marketing managers should focus not only identification of prospective customers for strategic implementation, but development of experience marketing strategies that could engender customer retention.
6. Strategic response policy should be a living document with ongoing strategic implementation process and not a one-off event. Top Management of food and beverage firms in South-South, Nigeria should take ownership of strategic response implementation process to ensure effective knowledge and capacity transfer through an effective developmental programme to drive the goals of the organization in relation to marketing productivity.

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