

THE INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF BUSINESS & MANAGEMENT

Positioning Strategies and Firm Competitiveness in the Nigeria Telecommunication Industry: A Study of GLO and MTN Asaba

Dr. Orishede Felix

Senior Lecturer, Department of Business Administration/Marketing,
Delta State University, Abraka, Asaba Campus, Nigeria

Maduemezia Ifeanyi Patricia

Civil Servant, Department of Audit,
Delta State Civil Service Commission, Nigeria

Abstract:

The study is to examine the relationship between positioning strategies and firm competitiveness in selected Nigerian Telecommunication firm in Asaba, Delta State. Cross sectional survey research method was adopted as the research design. Stratified random sampling technique was used at selecting the sample size. The population of the study is one hundred and twenty (120) comprising of customers and staff of GLO and MTN telecommunication firms in Delta State. The statistical techniques used comprises of simple percentage, correlation and multiple regression analysis. Findings showed that the variables of positioning strategies (product health messages, product packaging, product quality and product availability) have significant positive effect on firm competitiveness. The study concluded that the communication of the health messages of a product will contribute significantly to the productivity of the organization. With the development of living standards due to the product health messages, consumers have become progressively more concerned about their health. The study recommended that product health messages initiatives are ways organizations should use to communicate about effects, benefits and values of a product to the consumers. Therefore, organizations should continue to communicate about the health messages of the product with a label tagged on the product showing all the necessary health messages a consumer needs to know about the product.

Keywords: Competitive positioning, product quality, product packaging, product health message and firm competitiveness

1. Introduction

In a stable environment, firms can exploit their historical strength. However, a firm surviving in a dynamic and highly competitive environment is very difficult unless it engages in different strategies. Positioning strategies is a key ingredient of a company's marketing strategy and it is crucial to keep ahead of competition. Positioning is how you provide your product or service brand identification as you go to target market. It is the step after you have determined how to distinguish your product or service.

Products and services ought to be positioned against those of competitors on the base of timely delivery and excellence in manufacturing (Aleksandar and Nikola, 2015). In terms of expressed competitiveness, retail companies adjust their offer to the needs and requirements of their customers by ensuring that the right product, at the right time in the right place (Aleksandar and Nikola, 2015).

The increasing challenges consumers to place retailers into an undesirable condition, expecting both elevated quality and cost-efficient offer. The ever-rising competition on the retail market makes this position even more complex, forcing retailers to persistently explore for new, more resourceful ways of executing business processes (Aleksandar, Nikola and Nenad, 2016). Positioning relates essentially to the mind of the consumers. The positioning of a brand in a product grouping eventually relies on the consumer, and how they distinguish the superiority, attributes, worth, price, and image of the brand (Oghojafor, Ladipo and Rahim, 2013). In other word, it is the notion of a brand that is apprehended by the consumer (Keller; Vukasovic as cited in Kilonzo 2012)The long-term overall purpose of positioning is to fabricate a brand equity, which will in turn achieve a positive long-term purchase behavior (Keller, as cited in Kilonzo 2012).

A positioning strategy consists of three key components: to reveal probable competitive advantages that will create a positioning, to select the right competitive advantages and to choose a broad positioning strategy that will support with the organization's structure and reliable with the positioning objectives (Oghojafor, et al 2013). Companies will adopt effective communication and distribution system to market the preferred position (Kotler and Armstrong, as cited in Kilonzo 2012). A positioning strategy comprises of quite a lot of related decisions/activities and it is the key outcome of the strategy development segment in the strategic marketing planning process (Hooley, Greenley, Fahy and Cadogan, as cited in Kilonzo 2012; Andreasen and Kotler, as cited in Kilonzo 2012). As today there is a high competition in the business environment and the within the new economy, positioning is referred as an attempt to distinguish a company from its

competitors in order to be preferable within the certain market segment or prospect (Zineldin as cited in Kilonzo 2012). Effective positioning may enable a business to influence the environment in its favor and even defend itself against completion. Aaker as cited in Kilonzo (2012) also adds that given the current focus in business, there is need to understand competitor strengths in the market and the position of one's offerings to take advantage of weakness and avoid clashes against strengths.

Positioning strategy can create added value for the corporation and implement its vision and create unique position in the marketplace. Van Riel and Bruggen as cited in Kilonzo (2012) defined the positioning strategy as a systematically planned and implemented process of creating and maintaining a favorable reputation. They also said its constituent elements by sending signals to stakeholders used the brand positioning. Some factors impact the crafting strategy of the brand positioning. Corporate strategy, business model, organizational culture, pace of innovation, added-value lever, resources and brand vision are factors that should be taken into account when choosing a branding strategy (Kapferer, as cited in Kilonzo 2012).

Regardless of the key role that positioning strategies plays in many markets; little empirical evidence exists on its importance for firm profits or consumer choices.

Many of the research studies on positioning strategy have not specifically been concerned with the relationship and the interplay of specific factors and their association to firm competitiveness success and failure.

The today's trends business surroundings make positioning more obscuring, and demoralize the application of previously used positioning approaches. The identification and selection of positioning strategy is a very multifaceted task and it entails detailed marketing analysis and planning to classify the properties and the images of each of the major competitors. As the organization brings strategy to life, certain problems arise.

Therefore, the study aims to examine the effect of positioning strategies on firm competitiveness in the Nigeria Telecommunication Industry (A study of GLO and MTN Asaba).

1.1. Research Objectives

The general objective of the study is to examine the relationship between positioning strategies and firm competitiveness. The specific objectives of the study are to:

- Determine the relationship between product quality and firm competitiveness.
- Examine the effect of product packaging and firm competitiveness.
- Determine the effect of product health message and firm competitiveness.

2. Literature Review

2.1. Conceptual Review

2.1.1. Positioning Strategies

The term positioning is an all-encompassing concept and it has long been recognized as a core branding activity (Ries and Trout, 2001). Therefore, a good understanding of what positioning entails is a key requisite for anyone involved in nation-brand development (Dinnie, 2008). Positioning is regarded by some scholars as the last stage, after product and image stages, in domain of marketing communication (Oghojafor, Ladipo, and Rahim 2013). Positioning strategy, in general, is the expression of applications of a product and brand to consumers and to occupy a specific location against competitors in consumers mind with the intention of claiming superiority over competitors (Oghojafor, *et al* 2013).

Positioning is the process of designing the company's offering and image to occupy a distinctive place in the minds of the target market (Kotler and Keller, 2006). Over the years 'positioning' has come to mean a lot of things and it has occasionally been used as a substitute word for branding. It is the definition of what the product stand for the customers and it contains communication agenda regarding the images of the brands that company's offer, which invariably influences product interpretation. Generating an appropriate 'position' is usually influenced by such factors as the competitive marketplace, specific corporate goals and organizational strengths (Oghojafor, *et al* 2013). It is often a process driven by the desire to find a unique position among competitors as well as to satisfy corporate sales objectives.

Pham and Muthukrishnan, (2002) classify positioning into two- abstract and attribute-specific. An abstract positioning is general, and summarizes the product's features (e.g., Ultimate Driving Machine; Best Television Picture). In contrast, an attribute - specific positioning is specific, and details the product's features through specific performance claims.

Therefore, when the attitude of the market is so negative the product may need to be re-position. The internal conventions of firm also influence its brand values. Oghojafor, *et al* (2013) opined that values expressed by brand usually centre on issues such as professionalism, hygiene, safety, personal attention etc. For example, Samsung switch from developing me-too consumer electronics to innovative ones by changing from its traditionally non-transparent and hierarchic form, resulting into a brand values that is distinct, simple and innovative (Far Eastern Economic Review, 2000).

The brand positioning refers to the strategy of developing a position in the market, increasing the customer perception, gaining competitive advantage and strengthening superiority or value over other brands (Hassan and Craft, 2012). Hence, companies have to identify their brand capabilities in order to become a potential source of competitive advantage and build a strong brand positioning around the capabilities (Jalkala and Keränen, 2014).

Keller, Sternthal and Tybout (2002) point some pitfalls that companies usually commit when positioning their brands, such as:

- Create brand awareness before knowing who the brand is and what its position represents in the market;

- Promote the product's attributes without knowing what the consumer really needs;
- Invest in competitive advantage that can be easily copied by its competitors;
- Be more worried in respond the competitor's attitude than establishing its position; and
- Do not find a workable and efficient brand positioning – since reposition is a tough task, sometimes impossible to be achieved.

There are four drivers of brand positioning, which are:

- Subset of the brand identity and value proposition
- The target audience
- Being actively communicated and
- Creating a competitive advantage.

With these characteristics the brand aims to achieve a specific position in the consumer's mind (Hansen and Singh, 2008). Floor and Van Raaij as cited in Oghojafor, *et al* (2013) distinguish four kinds of positioning strategies: informational positioning (based on rational benefits), transformational positioning (based on the brand image), two-sided positioning (based on both rational benefits and the brand image) and execution positioning (based on the execution of the marketing campaign).

2.1.2. Product Quality

Kotler, et al. (2011) stated that product quality is the distinctiveness of a product or service that bears on its capability to gratify stated or implied customer needs. Ahn, Ryu, and Han, (2004) defined product quality as the actual functionality of the product, consistency between the quality requirement from online shop and real quality of the physical product. Measurement items of product quality used in this research are product quality (the website deals products with high quality), product variety (the website deals various products), and product availability (the website supports high product availability). Customers are likely to visit an online shop with various and high-quality products. If the product quality meets their anticipation, customers tend to consider the online shop as useful and persist to visit it. It can be concluded that product quality is the distinctiveness of a product that give to its capability to gratify customer needs. Before quality can be measured, quality must be cleared, but there are impediments since there are no entire definition of quality exists, at the same time, there are option measures laid from five main approaches, which are transcendent, product-based, user-based, manufacturing-based, and value-based (Sebastianelli and Tamimi, 2002).

The quality of the package as well as the quality of the real product is the core elements of purchasing decision making. When the consumer forms an opinion towards the new package, the packaging design variables are highly important. Underwood and Burke (2001) suggest that consumer impulsively can imagine how the product looks, tastes, feels smells and sounds while viewing picture and images on the package. (Silayoi et al, 2004).

2.1.3. Product Packaging

There have been many definitions of packaging in marketing, though packaging was solely conceived internally as a protective device, it has received a considerable interest of many contemporary writers as a promotional medium and subsequently as a means of increasing sales. Packaging is all-encompassing and essential; it environs, improves and shields the brands we purchase, from processing and manufacturing through handling and storage to the ultimate consumer. With no packaging, material handling would be a mess, ineffective and expensive exercise and contemporary consumer marketing would be practically not possible.

The UK Institute of Packaging provides three definition of packaging:

- Synchronized system of preparing goods for transport, distribution, storage, retailing and end use.
- Means of ensuring safe delivery to the final consumer in sound situation at minimum cost.
- A techno-economic purpose aimed at minimizing costs of delivery while maximizing sales.

Garber, Burke and Jones (2000) packaging are defined as the use of containers and components, plus decoration or labeling to protect, contain, identify, merchandise and facilitate the use of products. It is containment and packing prior to sale with the primary purchase of facilitating the purchase and use of the product.

2.1.4. Nature of Product Packaging

Kotler as cited in Oghojafor, *et al* (2013) defined packaging as the activities of designing and producing the container or wrapper for a product. It must protect what it sells and sell what it protects. There are three (3) types or form of package: primary package, secondary package, shipment package.

- Primary package: This is the first layer of package that primarily protects the product. For example, in our case, the glass bottle containing the performance is the primary.
- Secondary package: This is the next layer of package that protects the primary package; it facilitates its distribution and/or protects it during distribution process. It is intended to protect not only the product but also the primary packaging which often is the packaging most visit to the consumer in retail displays.
- Shipment package: Is made up of numbers of secondary packages, the most common example being a stretch wrapped pallet of corrugated cases.

2.2. Product Availability

In retail sector with the increase of inventory levels, better customer service can be achieved (Wild, 2002). Higher number of products in stock in retail stores boosts the opportunity that the customer will find and buy the desired product

(Ton and Raman, 2010). In relation to this, the out-of-stock situation (OOS) can cause significant negative consequences, not only for retailers, but also for further entities in the supply chain.

However, in the case of a multiple product order, it represents the percent of the total number of complete orders supplied in the total number of orders. Subsequent the same approach, Chopra and Meindl, (2004) distinguish product and order fill rates, as availability indicators. While order fill rate represents the portion of orders that are filled from available inventory, product fill rate is correspondent to the probability that product demand is supplied from available inventory. Because all products must be in stock for an order to be filled, the order fill rate tends to be lower than product fill rate. Besides these two indicators, Chopra and Meindl, (2004) enhance the importance of the cycle service level (CSL) as the third availability measure. This indicator represents the portion of replenishment cycle that ends with contented customer demand.

particular concentration to inventory management, so as to achieve certain cost cuts, satisfy their customers, and offer them the right product at the exact time at the exact place. According to Trautrim, Grant, Fernie, and Harrison, (2009) customer service for retail consumers is manifested by product availability as the elementary performance indicator of the whole supply chain. Securing the ample availability level also raises the service quality level in retail stores, which can make a positive impact on customer loyalty (Beneke, Hayworth, Hobson and Mia, 2012) and the business performance of retailers and their suppliers (Mittal, Anderson, Sayrak and Tadikamalla, 2005). If, however, the demand cannot be met due to inadequate amounts of products on stock, out-of-stock (OOS) problem emerges, facing all supply chain members, primarily customers. Securing the most favorable retail product availability rates creates the basic requirement for its sale, i.e., for achieving the desired transaction with the customer.

2.3. Firm Competitiveness

Slater and Narver (2004) explained firm competitiveness from the viewpoint of customer retention, sales growth and success of new products. They also took return of assets, sales growth and success of new products as indicators of firm competitiveness (Slater and Narver, 2004). Matsuno and Mentzer (2010) measured firm competitiveness based on relevant sales growth, sales of new products to total sales and return of investment. Pilar and Ana (2006) emphasized in their suggestions that, like the representativeness of sales, market share and profits to the performance of new products, it was important to measure the performance thereof based on the speed of innovation.

Venkatraman and Ramanujam (2006) pointed out, firm competitiveness is the field that every company wants to understand most, and company owners or managers can determine sequential strategies according to the performance of their organization. Innovation in a broader sense influences not only the innovation of organizational processes, but also the manufacturing process and service. This may consequently create various economic performances (Mica and James, 2008).

2.4. Theoretical Review

The following are the key theory that underpins the study of positioning strategy and firm competitiveness.

2.5. Competitive Signaling

Competitive signaling serves as a foundation to understand limit and predatory pricing because both represent (potentially) costly signals to potential and actual entrants. Limit pricing may signal that the cost structure of the incumbent is low or willingness to protect the market through sacrifice, whereas predatory pricing indicates both a low-cost structure for the incumbent and the incumbent has deep pockets and is willing to fend off an entrant at all costs. Similarly, all price modifications can convey competitive signals, depending on the amount, time, and the context. Evolving and structural changes in prices are important because they are likely to produce different results (Srinivasan et al. 2000). Facing a price cut, an incumbent firm may choose to accommodate, to protect market share and sales volume or to counter-attack with deeper discounts.

In most markets, the incumbent is more informed about the characteristics and conditions (e.g., demand, technology, production) of the market than the new entrant. The utilization of the asymmetry of information can be predatory if the incumbent influences the belief and expectations of a competitor in a way to alter its decision regarding entry, exit, price, input and output levels.

2.6. The Capability-Based View

The knowledge-based view and capability-based view of strategy have also been consequential from the resource-based view (Wang, 2014). Haas and Hansen (2005) supported the significance of capabilities and propose that an organization can expand competitive advantage from its capability to pertain its abilities to execute vital activities within the firm. They are information-based, tangible or intangible processes that are firm-specific and developed over time through multifaceted contacts amid the firm's resources (Wang, 2014).

Sirmon, Hitt and Ireland, (2003) stressed the importance of organizational learning. They suggest that capabilities and organizational learning implicitly and explicitly are a part of any strategy within an organization. Lee, Lee and Pennings (2001) discussed the influence of internal capabilities and external networks on firm performance.

2.7. Empirical Review

Laras (2016) examined the impact of product quality and delivery service on online-customer satisfaction withdrawing taking online fashion retailer Zalora Indonesia as its research object. This research is causal type of research which used primary data obtained through questionnaires and used Multiple Regression Analysis. The population

experimental is people in Manado who have bought Zalora Indonesia products online with 100 respondents as the sample size. The result of this study revealed that product quality and delivery service have momentous influences on online-customer satisfaction. To enhance customer satisfaction, the recommendations for online shop owners are to maintain product quality, variety and availability in order to meet customer expectation as well as constantly offer reliable and safe delivery service at promised delivery schedule which hearten repeat purchases.

Kefa (2015) examined how competitive strategies can be successfully developed and implemented in HEI's, in this case, Kabarak University, Kenya. The study observed how HEIs create their competitive strategies by taking into description the effect of the external environment, build and utilize their internal resources, capabilities and routines to position their business in the advanced education industry and used stakeholders to add and sustain competitive advantage to achieve their desired market, organization effectiveness and success.

Godwell and Mike (2017) observed the impact of designs that come with a package and how they influence consumer purchasing practice of FMCG products in Zimbabwe during and after the multi-currency period. The objectives of the research were to determine the major impact of packaging designs on consumer purchasing pattern of FMCG goods in Zimbabwe, to ascertain the main function of packaging on FMCG products and to observed the outstanding impact of other factors that can be controlled and that cannot be controlled on the purchasing pattern of consumer on FMCG goods during and after the multi-currency period in Zimbabwe. The researcher employed the descriptive survey and exploratory research designs to assemble data from the retail sector. The research was performed in Harare Zimbabwe where most of the retail outlets are mostly concentrated. A study sample of 47 respondents from the retail sector was used targeting organizations in the FMCG sector. Data to answer research problem was obtained through an in-depth interviews and questionnaires. Five policy makers were interviewed while 42 questionnaires were sent to retail managers and of which 32 were then returned. The target samples were guided with a questionnaire with closed and open-ended questions. Respondents were stratified and opportunely selected. The findings of the study showed that, the aspect with the most dominant factor on purchasing pattern of FMCG products is printed information as designated by more respondents. Accordingly, the correct message sold a product therefore designers and product strategists must think first on all messages that will be delivered to consumers. This corresponds with Deliya and Parmar (2012) study concluded that font style has the slightest influence as compared to all the packaging elements. It should be concluded that size and material are the chart elements generally measured by customers when purchasing products whereas product information is also the key verbal elements having an influence on consumer decision making. Categorically packaging elements are professed to be an element of the product. The study also showed that, during and after the multi-currency period, consumers in Zimbabwe chosen to buy more of foreign packaged products than local packed products.

The researcher reviews past and present literatures of local and foreign extract particularly relating to positioning strategies, product quality, product packaging, product health message, product availability, and firm competitiveness. Theoretical review covered two theory of competitive signaling, the capability-based view, and empirical review of previous studies that are related to the subject of the research. In all, the chapter provided a strong literature base for future researchers on the area of interest considering the three-core area reviewed which include conceptual, theoretical and empirical reviews.

3. Methodology

The research method is focused on outlining the steps in which the study intends at achieving result and arriving at a conclusion, thereby meeting the intended goals of the research. The modalities showing in sequence are; the research design; population of the study; sampling method; the research instrument and the measurement of variables and the data analysis. The study covered customers and staff of GLO and MTN telecommunication firms in Delta State which will be restricted to GLO and MTN telecommunication firm in Delta State. Hence, the population consists of one hundred and twenty (120) customers and staff of GLO and MTN telecommunication firms in Delta State. A stratified random sampling method was adopted, the research instrument used in this study is structured questionnaire which response format is in the five-point Likert scale. The Likert questionnaire scale format were assigned numbers that ranges from: One (1): for strongly disagree; Two (2): for disagree; Three (3): for Undecided; four (4): for agree; and five (5): for strongly agree. Regression and correlation analysis were used for the analysis of data.

4. Analysis and Interpretation of Data

This chapter is concerned with the analysis of data

		1	2	3	4	5
Product Quality	Pearson correlation	1				
	Sig. (2-tailed)					
	N	100				
Product Packaging	Pearson correlation	.409**	1			
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000				
	N	100	100			
Product Health Message	Pearson correlation	.446**	.430**	1		
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000			
	N	100	100	100		
Product Availability	Pearson correlation	.378**	.281**	.561**	1	
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000		
	N	100	100	100	100	
Competitive Advantage	Pearson correlation	.336**	.556**	.416**	.319**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000	.000	
	N	100	100	100	100	100

Table 1: Correlation Matrix between Studied Variables
**Correlation Is Significant at the 0.01 Level (2-Tailed)

The result in Table 1 shows that the tested variables showed an overwhelming positive correlation ranging from (.218 to .561) implying that, there is a significant positive association between the variables of positioning strategies and firm competitiveness.

Model Summary				
Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.597 ^a	.356	.345	1.6607
a. Predictors: (Constant), Product Availability, Product Packaging, Product Health Message, Product Quality				

Table 2: Model Summary

From Table 2, it revealed the extent to which positioning strategies accounted for change in the firm competitiveness as indicated by the adjusted R-Square, which shows that 35% (.345) of the change in the firm competitiveness is brought about by positioning strategies.

ANOVA ^a						
Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	343.047	4	85.762	31.098	.000 ^b
	Residual	620.501	225	2.758		
	Total	963.548	229			
a. Dependent Variable: Competitive Advantage						
b. Predictors: (Constant), Product Availability, Product Packaging, Product Health Messages, Product Quality						

Table 3: Fitness of the Model

The *F*-ratio in table 4.3 tests whether the overall regression model is a good fit for the data. The table indicated that positioning strategies statistically significantly predicted the firm competitiveness, $F(4, 225) = 31.098, p < .0005$. This indicates that the regression model is a good fit of the data.

Coefficients ^a						
Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	3.621	1.264		2.864	.005
	Product Health Messages	.057	.067	.054	.858	.000
	Product Packaging	.472	.065	.444	7.218	.000
	Product Quality	.155	.073	.151	2.139	.000
	Product Availability	.087	.064	.089	1.358	.000
a. Dependent Variable: firm competitiveness						

Table 4: Multiple Regressions of Positioning Strategies and the Firm Competitiveness

Table 4 showed the multiple regression analysis result for positioning strategies and the firm competitiveness. The table exhibited that product health messages which is the first sub-variable has positive effect on firm competitiveness ($\beta = .054$, $P < 0.01$). Product packaging which is the second variable has positive effect on the availability of firm competitiveness ($\beta = .444$, $P < 0.01$). Similarly, it was indicated that product quality which is the third variable has positive effect on the firm competitiveness ($\beta = .151$, $P < 0.01$). It was also shown that product availability which is the last variable has positive effect on the firm competitiveness ($\beta = .089$, $P < 0.01$).

4.1. Test of Hypotheses

4.1.1. The Decision Rule

If the probability value calculated is greater than the critical level of significance, then the null hypotheses is accepted while the alternate hypotheses is rejected and vice versa. If the probability value of 0.00 is smaller than the critical value of 5% (i.e., $0.00 < 0.05$), reject the null hypotheses and accept the alternate.

4.1.1.1. Hypothesis One

There is no positive significant relationship between product quality and firm competitiveness. Hence, the p-value critical is at 0.05 (5%) i.e., the level of significance which is the tolerable error in estimation is less than the calculated level of significance ($0.000 < 0.05$), the null hypothesis is rejected while the alternate is accepted indicating that there is a significant relationship between product quality and firm competitiveness.

4.1.1.2. Hypothesis Two

There is no positive significant relationship between product packaging and firm competitiveness. Table 4.14 above shows that the calculated level of significance is less than the p-value of 0.05 (5%) i.e. ($.000 < 0.05$), the null hypothesis is rejected while the alternate is accepted. The null hypothesis is rejected and alternate is accepted denoting that there is a relationship between product packaging and firm competitiveness.

4.1.1.3. Hypothesis Three

There is no positive significant relationship between product health message and firm competitiveness. In Table 4 above, shows that the level of significance that was calculated is lesser than the established p-value ($.000 < 0.05$), therefore the null hypothesis is rejected to accept the alternate which states that there is a significant relationship between product health message and firm competitiveness.

5. Discussion of Findings

The result obtained shows that overwhelming positive correlation was observed among the variables of product quality. The overwhelming positive correlations suggested that they were all appropriate indicators of product quality. Table 4 showed that the β value ($\beta = .151$, 0.01) has a positive effect on product quality and firm competitiveness. In furtherance, the test of hypothesis indicated in table 4.14 showed that there is a significant relationship between product quality and the firm competitiveness ($.000 < 0.05$). This is in consonance with Sebastianelli and Tamimi (2002) posit that Customers are expected to visit an online shop with various and high-quality products. If the product quality meets their prospect, customers tend to consider the online shop as functional and continue to visit it.

The results of data analyzed it was reported that the total positive correlation coefficient values among the variables of product health messages indicated that they are all appropriate indicators of product health messages. From table 4.14, the β value ($\beta = .054$, 0.01) indicated that product health messages have positive effect in firm competitiveness. In furtherance, the test of hypothesis indicated in Table 4 exhibits that there is a significant relationship between product health messages and firm competitiveness ($.000 < 0.05$). This is in consonance with Olawale (2000) posited that it is always better to launch prototype advertising or copy platforms so that management can see the strategy come to life.

From the analysis of data, an overwhelming positive correlation was observed among the variables of product availability. The overwhelming positive correlations suggest that they were all appropriate indicators of product availability. In Table 4 showed that the β value ($\beta = .089$, 0.01) has a positive effect on product availability and firm competitiveness. Furthermore, the test of hypothesis indicated in table 4.3 showed that product availability has a significant relationship with firm competitiveness ($.000 < 0.05$). This is in agreement with Chopra and Meindl, (2004) distinguish product and order fill rates, as availability indicators. While order fill rate represents the part of orders that are filled from accessible inventory, product fill rate is correspondent to the probability that product demand is supplied from available inventory.

6. Conclusions

Based on the findings of this study, the following conclusions are made

- It is concluded that product quality has influence on firm competitiveness. Organization should look at the effect of quality changes of telecommunication product quality in the short and long run and the factors responsible for the changes itself.
- The study concluded that product packaging influence firm competitiveness. Without packaging, material handling would be a mess, ineffective and expensive exercise and modern consumer marketing would be practically impractical.

- Finally, product availability has effect on firm competitiveness. Higher number of services rendered by banks to boosts the possibility that the customer will find and buy the desired product.

7. Recommendation

The study recommends thus:

- Product quality is the characteristics of a product or service that bear on its ability to satisfy stated or implied customer needs. Due to the heavy competition in the market, organization should strive hard to make product quality meets their customers expectation.
- Product packaging is used by organization to captured consumers attention toward a product. Organization should continue to use an attractive package in order to facilitate customer patronage.
- Product availability is very important in organization so as to able to compete with others. Organization should always make the products available at all time in order for them to be able compete with rivals

8. References

- i. Aleksandar, G. and Nikola, M. (2015). Measuring on-shelf availability of FMCG products, *Industrija*, 43(1): 53-71.
- ii. Aleksandar, G. Nikola, M and Nenad, D (2016). The effect of inventory level on product availability and sale, *Prague Economic Papers*, 25(2): 221-223.
- iii. Asli, K. E. (2010). The importance of product positioning and global branding for sustaining competitive advantage within the companies' global marketing strategy, *Chinese Business Review*, 9(4): 17-26.
- iv. Kilonzo, S. N (2012) Brand positioning strategies and competitive Advantage of the five star hotels in Nairobi. Master of Business Administration, School of Business University of Nairobi.
- v. Oghojafor, B. A. Ladipo, P. K. A. and Rahim, A. G (2013). Approaches for generating and evaluating product positioning strategy, *International Journal of Business Administration*, 4(1): 46-52.
- vi. Vukasovic, T. (2009). Searching for competitive advantage with the aid of the brand potential index. *Journal of Product and Brand Management*, 18(3): 165-176.
- vii. Aleksandar, G. Nikola, M and Nenad, D (2016). The effect of inventory level on product availability and sale, *Prague Economic Papers*, 25(2): 221-223.
- viii. Andreasen, A.R., & Kotler, P. (2003). *Strategic Marketing for Non-profit Organizations* (6th eds.). Upper Saddle River, New Jersey: Pearson /Prentice-Hall.
- ix. Arora, R. (2000). Message framing and credibility: Application in dental services. *Health Marketing Quarterly*, 18: 29-44.
- x. Asli, K. E.(2010).The importance of product positioning and global branding for sustaining competitive advantage within the companies' global marketing strategy, *Chinese Business Review*, 9(4): 17-26.
- xi. Beneke, J., Hayworth, C., Hobson, R., and Mia, Z. (2012). Examining the Effect of Retail Service Quality Dimensions on Customer Satisfaction and Loyalty: The Case of the Supermarket Shopper. *ActaCommercii*, 12(1): 27-43.
- xii. Benton, D., Ruffin, M. P., Lassel, T., Nabb, S., Messaoudi, M., Vinoy, S., Desor, D., and Lang, V. (2003). The delivery rate of dietary carbohydrates affects cognitive performance in both rats and humans, *Psychopharmacology*, 166(1): 86-90.
- xiii. Chopra, S., &Meindle, P. (2004). *Supply Chain Management: Strategy, Planning and Operation*. New Jersey: Prentice Hall.
- xiv. Chun-Tuan, C. (2007). Health-care product advertising: The Influences of message framing and perceived product characteristics, *Psychology & Marketing*, 24(2): 143-169.
- xv. Coulson, N.S. (2000). An application of the stages of change model to consumer use of food labels, *British Food Journal*, 102(9): 661-8.
- xvi. Drewnowski, A., and Darmon, N. (2005). Food choices and diet costs: An economic analysis, *Journal of Nutrition*, 135(4): 900-904.
- xvii. Dinnie, K. (2008). *Nation Branding, Concepts, Issues, Practice*. Oxford: Butterworth-Heinemann.
- xviii. Dubelaar, C., Chow, G., Larson, P. (2001). Relationships between Inventory, Sales and Service in a Retail Chain Store Operation. *International Journal of Physical Distribution & Logistics Management*, 31(2): 96-108.
- xx. ECR Rus (2009). *ECR ePoS Step-by-Step Manual for FMCG Supplier*. Russia: ECR Rus
- xxi. Ehrental, J.C.F., Gruen, T.W., &Hofstetter, J.S. (2014). Value attenuation and retail out-of-stocks. *International Journal of Physical Distribution & Logistics Management*, 44(1-2): 39-57.
- xxii. Ettouzani, Y., Yates, N., & Mena, C. (2012). Examining retail on shelf availability: promotional impact and a call for research. *International Journal of Physical Distribution & Logistics Management*, 42(3): 213-243.
- xxiii. Farley, H., Wells, L.E., & Armstrong, G.A., (2007). The importance of packaging design for own-label food brands. *International Journal of Retail & Distribution Management*, 35 (9): 677-690.
- xxiv. Fernie, J., & Grant, D.B. (2008). On-shelf availability: the case of a UK grocery retailer. *The International Journal of Logistics Management*, 19(3): 293-308.
- xxv. Far Eastern Economic Review. (2000). 'Bull's -eye'. 12 October, 2000.
- xxvi. Fuchs, C., and Diamantopoulos, A. (2010). Evaluating the effectiveness of brand-positioning strategies from a consumer perspective. *European Journal of Marketing*, 44(11/12): 1763-1786.
- xxvii. Floor, V. R. and Van, R.(2006). Marketing communication strategie. *StenfertKroese*.

- xxviii. Godwell, K and Mike, S. (2017). The Impact of Packaging Designs on Consumer Buying Behaviour of FMCG during the Hyperinflationary and After the Dollarisation Era in Zimbabwe. *Asian Journal of Social Sciences and Management Studies*, 4(1): 20-30.
- xxix. Gruen, T., &Corsten, D. (2007). *A Comprehensive Guide to Retail Out-of- Stock Reduction In the Fast-Moving Consumer Goods Industry*. Colorado: Grocery Manufacturers' Association.
- xxx. Garber, Burke and Jones (2000). The role of package appearance in consumer choice. Chapel Hill; University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.
- xxxi. Grant, D.B., Lambert, D.M., Stock, J.R., &Ellram, L.M. (2006). *Fundamentals of logistics management: European Edition*. New York: McGraw-Hill.
- xxxii. Hassan, S., and Craft, S. (2012). Examining world market segmentation and brand positioning strategies. *Journal of Consumer marketing*, 6(2): 344-356.
- xxxiii. Haas, M. R. and Hansen, M. T. (2005). When using knowledge can hurt performance: The value of organizational capabilities in a management consulting company, *Strategic Management Journal*, 26(1): 1-24.
- xxxiv. Hooley, G., Greenley, G., Fahy, J., and Cadogan, J. (2001). Market-focused Resources, Competitive Positioning and Firm Performance. *Journal of Marketing Management*, 17(3):503-520.
- xxxv. Hu, W., Adamowicz, W. L. and Veeman, M. M. (2006). Labelling context and reference point effects in models of food attribute demand', *American Journal of Agricultural Economics*, 88(4): 1034-1049.
- xxxvi. Hausruckinger, G., &Rackebbrandt, J. (2003). Optimal shelf availability - getting products on the shelf. Preuzetosawww.ecr-europe.org
- xxxvii. Hansen, K., and Singh, V. (2008). Does Store Brand Create Store Loyalty? An Empirical Investigation. *Management Science*, 4(2): 1828 - 1834.
- xxxviii. Jalkala, A. M., and Keränen, J. (2014). Brand positioning strategies for industrial firms providing customer solutions. *Journal of Business & Industrial Marketing*, 6(5): 253 -264.
- xxxix. Kefa R. (2015) Effects of competitive advantage on organizational effectiveness in higher education institutions: a case of kabarak university. A Ph.D Thesis, Kenyatta University
- xl. Kasapila, W., and Shawa, P. (2011). Use and understanding of nutrition labels among consumers in Lilongwe (Malawi), *African Journal of Food, Agriculture, Nutrition and Development*, 11(5): 5171-5186.
- xli. Keller, K.L. and Lehmann, D.R. (2006), 'Brands and branding: research findings and future priorities'. *Marketing Science*, 25(6): 740-59.
- xlii. Keller, K. L., Sternthal, B., and Tybout, A. (2002). Three questions you need to ask about your brand. *Harward Business Review*, 6(2): 1-8.
- xliii. Keller, K. (2008). *Strategic Brand Management: Building, Measuring, and Managing Brand Equity*. University of California: Prentice Hall.
- xliv. Kotler, P., and Armstrong, G. (2006). *Principles of Marketing* (11th ed.). USA: Prentice Hall
- xlv. Kotler, P. & G. Armstrong (2006a). *Principles of Marketing*. 11th ed. New Jersey: Pearson Prentice Hall.
- xlvi. Kotler, P. & K. L. Keller (2006b). *Marketing Management*. 12th ed. New Jersey: Pearson Prentice Hall.
- xlvii. Kotler, P. (2003). *Marketing Management* 9thed. Upper Saddle River, Prentice-Hall.
- xlviii. Kotler, P. and Keller, K., (2011) *Marketing Management* (14th edition). London: Pearson Education.
- xliv. Kotler, P., & Keller, K.L. (2006). *Marketing Management* (12 ed.). Upper Saddle River: Prentice-Hall.
- l. Kupiec, B. and Revell, B. (2001). Measuring consumer quality judgments, *British Food Journal*, 103 (1): 7-22.
- li. Laras P. H. (2016). The effect of product quality and delivery service on online-customer satisfaction in zaloraindonesia. *Jurnalemba*, 4(1): 1189-1199
- lii. Lars N, Michael D. J, and, Anders G (2001) The impact of quality practices on customer satisfaction and business results: product versus service organizations. *Journal of Quality Management*, 6 (1): 5-27
- liiii. Lee, C, Lee, K and Pennings, J.M (2001). Internal capabilities, external networks, and performance: A study on technology-based ventures', *Strategic Management Journal*, 22(6/7): 615-640.
- liv. Meyers-Levy, J., &Maheswaran, D. (2004). Exploring message framing outcomes when systematic, heuristic, or both types of processing occur. *Journal of Consumer Psychology*, 14(6): 159-167.
- lv. Musalem, A., Olivares, M., Bradlow, E.T., Terwiesch, C., &Corsten, D. (2010). Structural Estimation of the Effect of Out-of-Stocks. *Management Science*, 56(7): 1180-1197.
- lvi. Mittal, V., Anderson, E. W., Sayrak, A., and Tadikamalla, P. (2005). Dual Emphasis and the Long-Term Financial Impact of Customer Satisfaction. *Marketing Science*, 24(4): 544-555.
- lvii. Oghojafor, B. A. Ladipo, P. K. A. and Rahim, A. G (2013). Approaches for generating and evaluating product positioning strategy, *International Journal of Business Administration*, 4(1): 46-52.
- lviii. Olawale, O. (2000). *Impact of positioning in marketing*, Workshop on: Marketing for Excellence, Organized by KachiKonsult.
- lix. Osei Mensah J., Lawer D. R and Aidoo, R. (2012) 'Consumers" Use and Understanding of Food Label Information and Effect on their Purchasing Decision in Ghana; a Case Study of Kumasi Metropolis', *Asian Journal of Agriculture and Rural Development*, 2(3): 351-365.
- lx. Penttinen, E. and Palmer, J. (2007). Improving firm positioning through enhanced offerings and buyer-seller relationships. *Industrial Marketing Management*, 36(6): 552-564.
- lxi. Pinya, S. and Mark, S. (2007). The importance of packaging attributes: a conjoint analysis approach, *European Journal of Marketing* 41(11/12): 1495-1517.

- lxii. Prathiraja, P. H. K. and Ariyawardana, A. (2003). Impact of nutritional labeling on consumer buying behavior', *Sri Lankan Journal of Agricultural Economics*, 5(1): 35-46.
- lxiii. Raghunathan, R., Naylor, R. W., and Hoyer, W. D. (2006). The unhealthy = tasty intuition and its effects on taste inferences, enjoyment, and choice of food products, *Journal of Marketing*, 70(4): 170-184
- lxiv. Rita, K. A. (2009). Impact of package elements on consumer purchase, Kauno technologies Universities, Lietuvaekonomikairvadyba.
- lxv. Roland Berger Strategy Consultants. (2003). ECR - Optimal Shelf Availability Increasing Shopper Satisfaction at the moment of truth. Preuzetosawww.ecr-austria.at/index.php?...optimal-shelf
- lxvi. Rundh, B., 2005. The multi-faceted dimension of packaging. *British Food Journal*, 107 (9): 670-684.
- lxvii. Sanjiwani, J. K and Srivastava, R.K (2013). An exploratory study of product and brand positioning typologies with respect to pharmaceutical companies, *Review of Integrative Business and Economics Research*. 2(2): 638-654.
- lxviii. Simon, K. (2004). Positioning and branding your organization, *Journal of Product & Brand Management*, 13(4): 105-115.
- lxix. Sebastianelli, R. and Tamimi, N., (2002). How product quality dimensions relate to defining quality. *International Journals of Quality & Reliability Management*, 19(4): 442-453.
- lxx. Sirmon, D.G, Hitt, M.A and Ireland, R.D. (2003). Managing the firm's resources in order to achieve and maintain a competitive advantage, paper presented at the annual Academy of Management meeting, Seattle.
- lxxi. Silayoi, P. & Speece, M. (2004). Packaging and purchasing decision: An exploratory study on the impact of involvement level and time pressure. *British food journal*, 106(8): 607 – 628.
- lxxii. Sweeney, J. C., & Soutar, G. N. (2001). Consumer perceived value: the development of a multiple item scale. *Journal of Retailing*, 77(9): 203-20.
- lxxiii. Soundararaj, J. J., & Rengamani, J. (2002). The inevitability of 'Positioning' in the present marketing scenario. *Indian Journal of Marketing*, 32(3): 3-5.
- lxxiv. Trautrim, A., Grant, D. B., Fernie, J., and Harrison, T. (2009). Optimizing On-shelf Availability for Customer Service and Profit. *Journal of Business Logistics*, 30(2): 231-247.
- lxxv. Ton, Z., & Raman, A. (2010). The Effect of Product Variety and Inventory Levels on Retail Store Sales: A Longitudinal Study. *Production and Operations Management*, 19(5): 546-560.
- lxxvi. Underwood, R. L. (2003). The communicative power of product packaging: creating brand identity via lived end mediated experience. *Journal of Marketing theory and practice writer*, 14(6): 62-76.
- lxxvii. Underwood, R. L. and Klein, N. M. (2002). Packaging communication intentional effects of product imagery: *Journal of Product and Brand Management* 10(7): 403 – 422.
- lxxviii. Underwood, L.R, Klein N.M & Burke, R.R, (2001). 'Packaging communication: intentional effects of product imagery, *journal of product and brand management* 10(7), 403 – 422.
- lxxix. Vukasovic, T. (2009). Searching for competitive advantage with the aid of the brand potential index. *Journal of Product and Brand Management*, 18(3): 165-176.
- lxxx. Wang, H. (2014). *Theories for competitive advantage*. In H. Hasan (Eds.), *Being Practical with Theory: A Window into Business Research*: Wollongong, Australia: Theori.
- lxxxi. Warf, F. P. Stutz, B. (2007). *The world economy: resources, location, trade and development* (5th ed. ed.). Upper Saddle River: Pearson.
- lxxxii. Wild, T. (2002). *Best Practice in Inventory Management*. Hoboken: John Wiley & Sons.
- lxxxiii. Asika, N. (1991). *Research Methodology in the Behavioural Sciences*. Lagos, Longman Nigerian Plc.
- lxxxiv. Easterby-Smith, M., Richard T., Andy L. (2004). *Management/ Research* (2th edn). London: Sage.
- lxxxv. Mark.S, Philip.L, & Adrian.T. (2009). *Research Methods for Business Students* (Fifth edition) Pearson Education Limited.
- lxxxvi. Yomere, G. O, and Agbonifoh, B. A. (1999). *Research Methodology: in the Management and Social Sciences*, Benin City, Uniben Press.