

STRATEGY IMPLEMENTATION DRIVERS IN CORRELATION WITH STRATEGIC PERFORMANCE

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Abstract:

The saturation of the telecommunications market has led to intense competition among firms in Nigeria. In light of Resource-Based Theory, mobile telecommunications firms can use their human resources, financial resources, flexible organizational structure, strong organisational policies and employee commitment to execute effective strategies and enhance strategic performance. This study used correlation analysis technique to examine the relationship between strategy implementation drivers and strategic performance. The authors used a census survey method to collect data from managers who are responsible for executing strategy and strategic decision making in four mobile telecommunication firms in Nigeria. All the five hypotheses were found to be statistically significant. Strategy implementation drivers of human resources, financial resources, organizational structure, organisational policy and employee commitment to strategy implementation were positively and significantly correlated with strategic performance. The authors concluded that mobile telecommunication firms must pay close attention to strategy implementation drivers to improve strategic performance.

Keywords: telecommunication firms, organisational policy, strategic performance, employee commitment, strategy implementation.

1. Introduction

Recently, the awareness about strategy implementation has been on the increase because of its importance to business performance. To cope with fast changing and complex business environment, it is not enough for firms to develop strategies but also to execute these strategies. Past studies suggest that firms find it difficult to implement strategies successfully (Neilson et al., 2008; Beer & Nohria, 2000; Miller, 2002) which lead to failure of strategic decisions (Nutt, 2009). Strategy

implementation is a complex process that has serious implications on people, processes, structures, technologies, suppliers and business partners. Thus, the complex nature of strategy execution increases the risk of failure due to oversight (Johnson-Cramer et al., 2007). Poor strategy implementation initiative can be expensive in terms of cost, time and low employee morale. Top managers must ensure that employees understand the strategic direction of their firms. Failure of firms to secure and optimize their resources may hinder successful strategy implementation (Lovallo & Kahneman, 2003). Therefore, it is important to give attention to specific factors during strategy implementation. Firms must develop and sustain favourable environment that supports effective and efficient strategy execution. Prior studies in strategic management literature suggests that leadership style, structural adaptations, human resources (Sabourin, 2015; Ngugi et al., 2017; Kihara, 2016; Sorooshian et al., 2010), motivation of the top management (Brenes et al., 2007), organizational culture (Abass et al., 2017), employee commitment (Kohtamäki et al., 2012) and technology (Kihara, 2016) are important strategy implementation drivers that impact positively on performance. Most of the past studies used financial indicators to measure business performance in SMEs, hospitality, public, banking and manufacturing sectors. Moreso, some authors have called for more research on other drivers of strategy implementation (e.g. Nwachukwu et al., 2018). This study attempts to fill the conceptual and contextual gaps in the literature on strategy implementation drivers and performance. The study therefore introduces organizational policy, financial resources and strategic performance to fill a conceptual gap. Contextually, this study focuses on strategy implementation drivers in mobile telecommunication companies in Nigeria. In this study, we propose that in addition to human resources, organizational structure and employee commitment, organizations in Nigeria that optimize their financial resources and adopt strong organisational policies are more likely to achieve better strategic performance. Therefore, organizations that want to deliver superior value to their various stakeholders must consider strategy implementation-specific factors. Organisational policies improves the ability of employees and managers to implement appropriate strategies (David, 2009). Likewise, financial resource is an important predictor of firm competitive advantage and performance (Ainuddin et al., 2007; Morgan et al., 2004) because financial resources help firms to acquire other strategic assets. Globally, the telecommunication industry is seen as one sector that has a positive impact on other sectors of the economy. Telecommunications have contributed to globalization, creates a huge global economy and has a major impact on national security issues (Klaić & Turek, 2002, p. 101). In Nigeria, the mobile telecommunication sectors contribute to gross domestic products (GDP), attract direct foreign investments, creates more job opportunities, better education and training facilities. The objective of this study is to examine the relationship between strategy implementation drivers and strategic performance in the mobile telecommunication industry in an emerging market such as Nigeria.

2. Literature Review

2.1 Resource-Based Theory

Strategic assets, resources and capabilities owned and controlled by firms help them to develop and execute strategies that enhance performance and competitive advantage (Barne, 1991; Wernerfelt, 1984). These resources and capabilities must be valuable, rare, imperfectly imitable, and hard to substitute to give firms competitive edge (Barney, 1991). From RBT perspective, firms can efficiently utilize resources during the process of strategy implementation to create value for their stakeholders. Close attention to specific factors such as human resources, financial resources, organizational policy, organizational structures and employee commitment during strategy implementation can enable a firm achieve superior strategic performance. The RBT suggests that valuable resources help firms to exploit opportunities and/or neutralize threats. Linking resources with the overall firm strategy contributes to better performance (Mugera, 2012; Barney & Hesterly, 2010). Furthermore, resources may be used to create entry barriers, increase flexibility in strategic choices, and explore new market. Firm's unique skills and capabilities are important to make strategic choices (Barney, 1986), which gives firms competitive advantage (Wright et al., 2001; Grant, 2007). Arguably, human resources, financial resources, organisational policy, organisational structure and employee commitment are important drivers of strategy implementation that may enhance strategic performance.

2.2 Higgins 8-S Strategy Implementation Framework

The 8-S's framework suggests that aligning the key organizational components (the 8-S's) with the strategy that the firm intends to implement will lead to a successful strategy. However, managers must continually revise their strategies to cope with changes in their environment. Considering the challenge involved in implementing strategies successfully, it is imperative for firms to constantly realign the eight cross-functional components in line with the new strategy (Higgins, 2005). The purpose of a firm includes strategic intent, vision, focus, mission, goals and strategic objectives that defines a firm strategy. Therefore, a change in strategic purpose may affect the strategic direction and overall strategy of a firm. According to Higgins (2005) organizational structure consists of five parts; jobs, the authority to do those jobs, the grouping of jobs in a logical fashion, span of control and mechanism of coordination. Arguably, the structure of a firm may facilitate or hinder effective decision making in term of how resources are allocated during strategy implementation. Higgins noted that systems and processes are formal and informal procedures that allow a firm to execute daily activities. Thus, systems and processes are important elements for successful strategy implementation. Management and leadership style refer to the behaviour and attitude of managers towards their subordinates and other employees. The way management treats their colleagues and other employees have a far-reaching implication for strategic performance. It is important for firms to have the right number of skilled and competent employees to drive their strategic purpose. Firms need to give attention to human resource practices such as staff training and development, career management and promotion of employees. Access to adequate resources such as people, money, technology and other management systems are crucial for successful strategy

execution. Higgins further affirms that the values shared by the members of the organisation make it unique and enhance strategy implementation. Higgins (2005) asserts that strategic performance is derived from the other seven 'S's (strategy and purpose, structure, systems and processes, styles, staff, resources, shared value).

2.3 Strategy Implementation and Performance

Organisations need to create and execute strategies to survive, grow and to achieve competitive advantage (Nwachukwu et al., 2018). Implementation of strategy is a part of strategic management which success depend on managers, employees, their organization, and the transformation of company's culture (Mišanková & Kočíšová, 2014). The main task of strategy implementation is to bring the strategy into the life as a part of everyday decision-making process of the company (Mišanková & Kočíšová, 2014) strategy implementation is a critical process that guarantee proper functioning and survival of an organization during turbulent times (Sial et al., 2013). Arguably, implementing robust strategies gives any organization better performance and competitive edge. It has been argued that the process of execution is more important than the strategy itself (Aaltonen & Ikävalko, 2002; Zagotta & Robinson, 2002). Similarly, Hrebiniak (2006) opined that effective strategy implementation leads to business success. Empirically, Maroa and Muturi (2015) observed that strategy implementation has a positive impact on the performance of flower firms in Kenya. Kumar (2015) found that strategy implementation dimension of strategic planning significantly influences firm performance. In the study of strategic management practice in Sarova Town hotels, Wanjiru (2016) concluded that strategic management practices affect performance of Sarova Town hotels. In commercial Banks in Kenya, Njagi and Kombo (2014) found a moderate positive association between strategy implementation and organisational performance indicators of financial, customer satisfaction, internal business process, innovation and learning. In Banks in Nigeria, Aremu and Oyinloye (2014) established a positive relationship between strategy implementation and performance. Empirically, Ibrahim et al. (2012) found a significant relationship between strategy implementation and performance in manufacturing companies in Indonesia.

2.4 Human Resources and Performance

Human resources (HR) are strategic assets that give firms competitive advantage. Human resource is a bundle of education, employment or industry experience and other types of experiences that enable firms to deliver superior performance (Nwachukwu & Chládková, 2019). The collective behavior of a firm depends on individual actions, interactions and skills. Additionally, firms with valuable, skilled, competent and organized employees may be able to execute successful strategies and improve strategic performance. Langford and Male (2008) note that well managed human resources can make companies more efficient and increase their financial performance. Likewise, adopting a robust human resource management practices can improve employee satisfaction (Nwachukwu & Chládková, 2017) and business performance. Human resources support the process of strategy execution by using strategic capabilities of a firm (Khan et al., 2014). Empirically, Karari, Kihara and Munga (2017), examined the connection between strategy implementation drivers and performance of High-Growth Firms in Kenya. It was observed that human resource contributes significantly to the performance of

high growth firms. They concluded that adequate training of employees and recruiting the right staff enable these firms to implement strategies that enhance their growth. Arguably, employees with the right skills should be part of strategic decision making to facilitate strategy implementation. Empirically, Lee, Lee and Wu, (2010) observed that there is a relationship between firm's strategy and the use of its human resource. Other scholars affirm that human resource contributes positively to organisational performance (Lee et al., 2010; Ahmad & Schroeder, 2003; Higgins, 2005; Okumus 2003). According to Teece (2014), the human resources of a firm need to be well aligned with the dynamism of the environment if superior performance is to be realized. Okumus (2003) observed that firms need people to drive successful strategy implementation. Shigang and Guozhi (2016) found that HR management capability helps Chinese construction firms achieve low labour costs and improve their performance. In Nigeria hospitality industry, Ologunde, Monday and James-Unam (2015) found a connection between strategic human resources management, profitability and market share. Using correlation and regression analysis, Oladipo and Abdulkadir (2011) observed that SHRM has significant impact on organisational performance of manufacturing companies in Nigeria. Empirically, Sorooshian et al. (2010) found that attention to human resource during strategy implementation contribute positively and significantly to financial performance. We hypothesize that;

H1: Optimizing human resources during strategy implementation is positively correlated with strategic performance.

2.5 Financial Resources and Performance

The efficient use of financial resources enables firms to improve their profit (Inmyxai & Takahashi, 2010). Arguably, implementing appropriate financing strategy is crucial to achieving business success, sustainable growth, performance and to develop innovative activities. Likewise, availability and efficient use of financial resources can support successful strategy execution. Arguably, financial resources can help companies acquire other productive resources or assets, which can facilitate the process of strategy implementation and drive successful business operation. Firms need adequate financial capital to execute internal growth strategies and to achieve superior return on investment (Barney, 1986). Using self-administered questionnaires, Nwachukwu and Chládková (2019) found that financial resources positively impact strategic performance and organizational structure moderates the relationship. Likewise, Neneh (2016) concluded that SMEs has low levels of financial literacy and availability, financial literacy enhances SME performance and the relationship is positively moderated by financial capital availability. Shigang and Guozhi (2016) found that financial capability has a positive impact on the performance of Chinese construction firm. Hence, financial capability does impact firm performance. In a study of thirty-nine cooperatives registered in Malaysia using content analysis approach, Othman et al. (2015) observed that availability of current asset and business finance significantly influence gross profit, net profit and total reserves. Clarke, Seng and Whiting (2010) found a positive relationship between financial capital and firm performance. Nonetheless, there are very few studies if any that examined the use of financial resources during strategy implementation and performance in Nigeria. Thus, it is imperative for firms to optimize their financial resources during the process of strategy implementation to

survive in a competitive and rapidly changing business environment. We, therefore, hypothesize that;

H2: Optimizing financial resources during strategy implementation is positively correlated with strategic performance.

2.6 Organisational Structure and Performance

Firms need speed and flexibility to survive in a dynamic global marketplace. Robbin and DeCenzo (2005) contend that organisational structure performs an important function in facilitating firm objectives and strategic goals. Additionally, firms must adopt flexible organisational structures and governance models to support their strategy implementation efforts to generate value for various stakeholders. Organisational structure includes the pattern of communications and the processes for making and implementing decisions within the organisation. It is the official arrangement of relationships between people, tasks and resources (Pearce II and Robinson Jr, 2011). Arguably, organisational structure is an important factor in strategic management because it is the basis on which a firm strategy process is built on. Several studies have established a relationship between organizational structure and performance in different contexts (e.g. Okeke et al., 2016) SMEs performance in Delta State Nigeria, (Nwosu, 2015) brewing companies in Nigeria, (Akinyele 2011) organisational structure and market share of oil and gas marketing companies in Nigeria, (Awino, 2015) customer perspective and internal process dimensions of non-financial performance and organisational structure, (Oyewobi et al., 2013) organisational structure, financial and non-financial performance of construction companies in Nigeria. Nonetheless, few studies have attempted to connect performance to strategy implementation using structure as a driver of strategy implementation. For instance, Ngugi, Kihara and Munga (2017) found that organizational structure is a determinant of strategy implementation that influence the performance of insurance companies in Nairobi-Kenya, Sorooshian et al. (2010) concluded that 'Attention to structure' impacts positively on performance. However, Awino (2015) observed that return on asset a financial performance indicator is not positively related to organisational structure in large firms in Kenya. The findings on organisational structure and performance nexus seem to be inconsistent and unclear. Nevertheless, attention to organisational structure during strategy implementation will have a significant association with strategic performance of mobile telecommunication firms in Nigeria. Structure enhance business performance by facilitating decision making and decision implementation. It can be argued that a flexible and robust organizational structure that supports a firm's strategy implementation initiative can improve strategic performance.

H3: Attention to organizational structure during strategy implementation is positively associated with strategic performance.

2.7 Organisational Policy and Performance

Firms require guidelines, rules, and procedures to implement and support strategy implementation. Companies use policies to solve recurring problems, guide managerial actions and to implement effective strategy. Policies allow consistency and coordination within and between departments in an organization (David, 2011). This can facilitate decision making and successful strategy implementation efforts.

Policies set boundaries, constraints, and limits on the decisions that can and cannot be taken by employees of the organisation. Besides, organisational policies support management control, coordination, and speed up managerial decision-making. Singar and Ramdsen (1972) note that organisational policies are principles established to guide the company activities toward achieving stated objectives. Arguably, establishing guides and rules in functional areas such as human resource, finance, marketing among others may enable firms to implement better strategy and improve strategic performance. Several studies have established the link between human resources policies (Kim & Lee, 2012; Lopez et al., 2005; Sun et al., 2007; Vlachos, 2008), financial policies (Salawu et al., 2012; Akhigbe & Madura, 2008; Bokpin & Abor, 2009) and organizational performance. Most of these studies found positive relationship between organisational policies and performance. Arguably, firms that develop relevant policies to support strategy implementation efforts will have better strategic performance.

H4: Organisational policy support during strategy implementation is positively associated with strategic performance.

2.8 Employee Commitment to Strategy Implementation and Performance

An organizational climate that encourages employee commitment is important to implement successful strategy (Nwachukwu et al., 2018). Commitment is required to implement new ideas and initiatives (Ramus & Steger, 2000). Moreso, employee commitment may help firms link strategy implementation to strategic objectives. Top management commitment to a firm strategic direction is important to implement successful strategy (Rap, 2005). Firms can implement strategic change by involving and eliciting the commitment of employees (Fiegenger, 2005; Elbanna, 2008). Arguably, firms can commit employees to implement strategic change by involving as many managers and employees as possible in the process. Additionally, employees will be committed to strategy implementation if they understand their firm strategy. Empirically, Nwachukwu et al. (2018) concluded that firms that give attention to employee commitment to strategy implementation will have productive and satisfied employees. Ramaseshan, Ishak, and Rabbanee (2013) found that marketing managers' commitment to strategy implementation dimensions of top management support, innovative culture, and job autonomy impact positively and significantly on organisational performance. In the same direction, Kohtamäki et al. (2012) concluded that employee commitment to strategy implementation contributes positively and significantly to company performance. Dooley et al. (2000) observed that employees' commitment to strategy implementation can enable firms to speed up strategy implementation. In Indonesia, Yuliani et al. (2003) found that many firms give low priority to individual employee's commitment as part of the strategy to improve their effectiveness and competitiveness. We hypothesize thus;

H5: Employee commitment to strategy implementation is positively associated with strategic performance.

Strategy Implementation Drivers

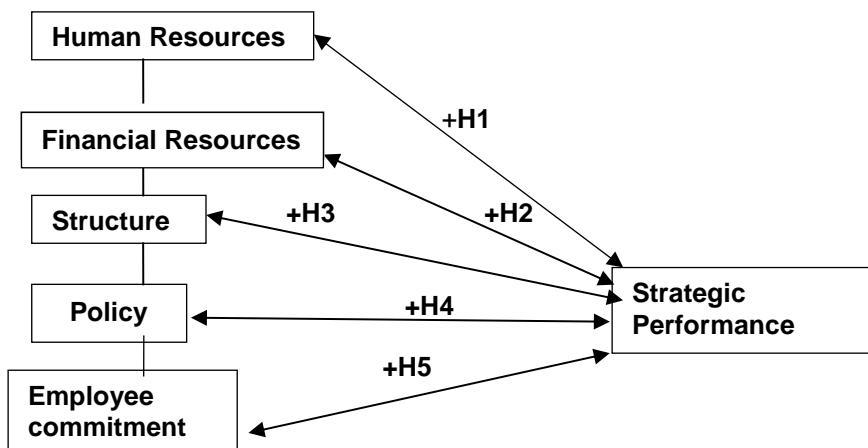


Figure 1: Conceptual model showing the relationship between the research variables

Source: Authors work, 2018

3. Methodology

3.1 Participants and settings

This study employed a census survey of one hundred and twenty managers who are responsible for strategic decision-making in mobile telecommunication firms in Nigerian. Authors used a web-based survey and emails to send questionnaires to participants (Andrews et al. 2003). Questionnaires were sent to employees who work in sales, marketing, finance/audit, customer service and engineering departments in the sample firms head offices and eight regional offices. The survey was carried out between June 2017 and November 2017. Participation in the survey was voluntary and at the convenience of respondents. The sample size of one hundred and twenty respondents is appropriate for a correlational study (Bryman, 2004).

3.2 Data Collection Instrument

Respondents were allowed time to fill-in the questionnaires at their conveniences while they remain anonymous. The questionnaire was used to collect data on the respondents' characteristics, human resources, financial resources, organisational structure, organisational policy, employee commitment and strategic performance. Strategy implementation drivers' measures were based on literature review whereas strategic performance measure was adapted from Santos and Brito (2012). We used structured questions to elicit information from the respondents. The instrument was designed in two main parts; Part A asked questions about respondents' profile. Part B sought information about human resources, financial resources, organisational structure, organisational policy, employee commitment and strategic performance. For easy processing of the responses, a five-point Likert

scale, from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree) was used to measure strategy implementation drivers. Two questions were used to collect data on human resources, which included: (i) Company has human resource capability to manage and implement the current strategy. (ii) Company staff has the competencies to plan, manage and implement strategic initiatives. Two questions were used to collect data on financial resources, which included: (i) Company has the financial capacity to implement strategies (ii) Company is committed to providing financial resources to support the implementation of strategic initiatives. Two questions were used to assess organizational structure, which included: (i) Company current structure is appropriate to support the implementation of strategic initiatives (ii) Company current governance model is effective for the implementation of strategic initiatives. Four questions were used to collect data on organizational policy (i) Company maintains a policy manual that serves as guide to strategy implementation (ii) Company policies are updated on a regular basis (iii) Company's policies are relevant to current business activities (iv) Company management understands and supports formal policy development and implementation. For employee commitment, two questions were used to elicit information, which included: (i) Staff are committed to the implementation of strategic initiatives (ii) Company Management is committed to implementing strategic initiatives. For strategic performance, respondents were asked to choose, among five options, from 1 (below average) to 5 (above average) which best describes the firm overall average performance compared to those of competitors in terms of customers' and employees' satisfaction, social and environmental performance based on managers' perceptions. Descriptive statistics and Pearson correlation technique were used to analyse the resultant data. The hypotheses were tested at 0.05% significance level. Statistical package for social sciences (SPSS 17) software is employed for the analyses conducted.

3.3 Reliability/ Validity test

The authors used KMO, Bartlett's test and Cronbach's alpha to test the validity and reliability of the constructs. Cronbach's alpha for human resources (0.84), financial resources (0.72), organizational structure (0.84), organizational policy (0.79), employee commitment to strategy implementation (0.65) and strategic performance (0.78) shows that the questionnaire is reliable and effectively measure the variables (Zikmund et al., 2013). The KMO and Bartlett's test of sampling adequacy was significant (KMO; 0.730, $P = 0.000 < 0.05$) and above the recommended 0.5 (Hair et al., 2010). The questionnaire items were reviewed by a panel of six academic and non-academic experts' to ascertain face validity, comprehensiveness and coherency.

4. Results and discussion

Out of 120 questionnaires, 105 were returned and used for different analyses conducted. This represents 87.5% response rate which is adequate for data analysis (Bryman & Bell, 2015). In terms of the demographic profile of the respondents, the respondents were classified into four groups of age: between 25-34 years old; 35-44 years old; 45-54 years old; 55 years old and above. 36 % of the respondent's age is between 25-34 years old. More than half 62 % of the respondents were between 35-44 years old. About 2% were between 45-54 years old. There are no respondents whose age was 55 years and above. With respect to educational

qualifications, 44% of the respondents have a first degree (HND/B.SC), 55% have a second degree (MBA/M.SC) and 2% have professional certifications. Regarding work experience, only 7.6% respondents had worked for the firms for less than five years and 92.4% respondents had worked in the firms for 5 years and above. 2% of the respondents were directors, 10% were senior managers, 45% were middle managers, 41% were lower level managers, 2% were analysts and supervisors. The sample may be considered adequate in terms of the distributions of these characteristics

Table 1

Content, means and standard deviations of the items

Descriptive statistics	Mean	Std. dev
Company has human resource capability to manage and implement the current strategy	3.866	0.844
Company staff has the competencies to plan, manage and implement strategic initiatives	3.990	0.753
Company has the financial capacity to implement strategies.	4.047	0.684
Company is committed to providing financial resources to support the implementation of strategic initiatives.	4.028	0.777
Company current structure is appropriate to support the implementation of strategic initiatives.	3.523	0.931
Company current governance model is effective for the implementation of strategic initiatives.	3.501	0.898
Company maintains a policy manual that serves as guide to strategy implementation	4.152	0.852
Company policies are updated on a regular basis.	3.895	0.919
Company's policies are relevant to current business activities.	4.171	0.765
Company management understands and supports formal policy development and implementation	4.095	0.882
Staff are committed to the implementation of strategic initiatives.	4.047	0.561
Company Management is committed to the implementing strategic initiatives.	4.076	0.689
Our performance, in the last 3 years, in terms of overall customer satisfaction	3.907	0.883
Our performance, in the last 3 years, in terms of overall employee satisfaction	4.029	0.814
Our performance, in the last 3 years, in terms of overall environmental performance	3.824	0.888
Our performance, in the last 3 years, in terms of overall social performance	4.086	0.972

Source: Authors, 2018

A mean score of (1.00-1.99 = strongly disagree), (2.00-2.49 = disagree), (2.50-3.49 = undecided), (3.50 - 4.49 = agree) and (4.50-5.00 = strongly agree). The results in table 1 indicates that the respondents agreed with the following statements based on human resources during strategy implementation: company has human resource capability to manage and implement the current strategy (mean score, 3.866), and company staff has the competencies to plan, manage and implement strategic initiatives (mean score, 3.990). With respect to the financial resources the respondents agreed with the following statements: company has the financial capacity to implement strategies (mean score, 4.047), company is committed to providing financial resources to support the implementation of strategic initiatives (mean score, 4.028). The respondents agreed with the following statements with respect to organisational structure of the firms during strategy implementation: company current structure is appropriate to support the implementation of strategic initiatives (mean score, 3.523), company current governance model is effective for the implementation of strategic initiatives (mean score, 3.501). With respect to organizational policy the respondents agreed with the following statements: company maintains a policy manual that serves as guide to strategy implementation (mean score, 4.152), the company policies are updated on a regular basis (mean score, 3.895), the company's policies are relevant to current business activities (mean score, 4.171), the company management understands and supports formal policy development and implementation (mean score, 4.095). The respondents agreed with the following statements based on employee commitment to strategy implementation: Staff are committed to the implementation of strategic initiatives (mean score, 4.047) and management is committed to implementing strategic initiatives (mean score, 4.076). The firms' performance was assessed using items that intended to capture strategic performance in terms of the overall customer satisfaction, employee satisfaction, environmental performance and social performance based on managers' perception. A mean score of (1.00-1.99 = below average), (2.00-2.49 = slightly below average), (2.50-3.49 = average), (3.50 - 4.49= slightly above average) and (4.50-5.00 = above average). The results further show that strategic performance, in the last 3 years, in terms of the overall customer satisfaction (mean, 3.907) is slightly above average, strategic performance, in the last 3 years, in terms of the overall employee satisfaction (mean, 4.029) is slightly above average, strategic performance in terms of overall environmental performance, (mean, 3.824) is slightly above average and strategic performance, in the last 3 years, in terms of overall social performance (mean, 4.086) is slightly above average.

4.1 Bivariate Correlation results

A bivariate correlation was obtained for strategy implementation drivers (human resources, financial resources, organisational structure, organisational policy and employee commitment to strategy implementation). Table 2 shows that organisational policy, financial resources, employee commitment to strategy implementation, organisational structure and human resources are positively and significantly related to the strategic performance of mobile telecommunication firms ($r = 0.504^{**}$, $P = 0.000 < 0.001$), ($r = 0.415^{**}$, $P = 0.000 < 0.001$), ($r = 0.380^{**}$, $P = 0.000 < 0.001$) ($r = 0.506^{**}$, $P = 0.000 < 0.001$), ($r = 0.299^{**}$, $P = 0.002 < 0.05$) respectively. All the strategy implementation drivers have significant relationship with the strategic performance of the mobile telecommunication firms in Nigeria.

Table 2

**Strategy Implementation Drivers and Strategic Performance:
Bivariate Correlations Coefficients.**

	Policy	Fin.resource	Emp commitment	Structure	Human resource
Pearson	0.504**	0.415**	0.380**	0.506**	0.299**
Sig.	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.002
N	105	105	105	105	105

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

4.2 Discussion

Internal processes, systems, people and the environment are important factors to be considered to implement strategy successfully (Radomska, 2014). Strategy implementation is an integral and essential part of strategic management process and organizations that develop strategic plans must seriously think of a better process of applying them. Therefore, attention to firms' internal resources and capabilities during strategy implementation enables them to execute effective strategies that improve strategic performance. In the light of RBT, mobile telecommunication firms in Nigeria use their human resources, financial resources, organisational structure and policies to enhance strategic performance. Furthermore, the commitment of their employees to strategy implementation contributes positively to performance of the mobile telecommunication firms in Nigeria. The correlation analysis results of strategy implementation drivers in table 2 indicate that human resources ($r = .299^{**}$, $P < .05$) is significant and positively related to strategic performance. Implementing successful strategy requires the support of disciplined, hardworking, motivated managers and employees. Mobile telecommunication firms need competent employees to plan, manage and implement their strategic initiatives to improve strategic performance. Additionally, mobile telecommunication firms can optimize their human resources to implement effective strategies to deliver superior business results to their divergent stakeholders. This is better achieved when there is adequate skill development, strong policies, procedures, competitive rewards systems and top management support. To fully discuss any strategic topic at an organizational level (capabilities, knowledge, learning, identity), one must fundamentally begin with and understand the individuals that compose the whole as the central actors, specifically their underlying nature, choices, abilities, propensities, heterogeneity, purposes, expectations and motivations (Molina-Azorín, 2014). The results from this study is consistent with the studies of other several scholars who found a positive and significant association between human resources and performance. This study supports the work of (Shigang & Guozhi, 2016) who concluded that Chinese construction firms have abundant human resources, which lead to low labour costs and overhead, which in turn impact positively on their performance, (Ologunde et al., 2015) who observed that all the dimensions of strategic human resources were positively related to SMEs profitability and market share, (Sorooshian et al., 2010) who concluded that attention to human resources has positive effect on financial performance. Based on the bivariate correlation result, **H1**: Optimizing human resources during strategy implementation is positively correlated with strategic performance is supported. The bivariate correlation results in table 2 reveals that financial resources have positive and significant association with the performance of

mobile telecommunication firms in Nigeria ($r = 0.415^{**}$, $P = 0.000 < 0.001$). The role of financial resources cannot be underestimated as it serves as one of the important factors that drive the operations of firms (Danso & Adomako, 2014). Firms can use their financial resources to acquire other strategic resources that will enable them to outwit their competitors. Access to financial resources is necessary to achieve sustainable growth, performance and develop innovation activities. Hence, it is important for firms to take optimal financing decisions to survive in a competitive and dynamic business environment. For the mobile telecommunication firms to achieve superior strategic performance, top management commitment to providing financial resources to support strategy implementation efforts is important. The firms need to build and optimize financial resources capabilities to support their strategy implementation initiatives. This finding agrees with observations and conclusions made by earlier scholars that financial resource is an important factor that improve performance (e.g., Clarke et al., 2010; Othman et al., 2015; Neneh, 2016; Shigang & Guozhi, 2016). This study suggests that financial resources contributes positively to the implementation of successful strategies, which in turn enhance strategic performance of mobile telecommunication firms in Nigeria. Thus, **H2** optimizing financial resources during strategy implementation is positively correlated with strategic performance is supported. Results from bivariate correlation ($r = 0.506^{**}$, $P = 0.000 < 0.001$), in table 2, shows that the relationship between organisational structure and strategic performance of mobile telecommunication firms in Nigeria is positive and significant. Firms can use structures to leverage the value of the people who generate ideas, innovate, cooperate with colleagues and customers, and generate future value (Pearce II & Robinson Jr, 2011). This result suggests that mobile telecommunication firms need to examine and re-adjust their structures to ensure that they are appropriate to support the implementation of new strategies, if superior strategic performance is to be achieved. Firms that adopt agile and flexible governance model will experience better business results. This finding aligns with previous studies made by several scholars in management who have explored organisational structure. This study confirms the work of (Okeke et al., 2016) who observed that organisational structure is significantly related to the performance of SMEs in Nigeria, (Nwosu, 2015) who contends that organisational structure has significant and positive impact on the performance of brewing companies in Nigeria, (Akinyele, 2011) who noted that organizational structure has positive association with the market share of oil and gas marketing companies in Nigeria, (Sorooshian et al., 2010) who observed that attention to structure has a positive effect on SMEs performance, (Robbin & DeCenzo, 2005) who concluded that organisation structure is an important factor that enables firms to achieve strategic objectives and goals. However, this study is not consistent with the findings of (Awino, 2015) who observed that return on asset a financial performance indicator is not positively associated with organisational structure in large firms in Kenya and (Oyewobi et al., 2013) who concluded that organisational structure does not have direct effect on both financial and non-financial performance of construction firms in Nigeria. Thus, **H3**, attention to organizational structure during strategy implementation is positively associated with strategic performance. The correlation results show that organisational policy is positively and significantly related to the performance of mobile telecommunication firms ($r = 0.504^{**}$, $P = 0.000 < 0.001$). During strategy implementation, organisational policies are established to guide managerial thinking and decision-making. Organisational policies communicate management expectations from employees.

Mobile telecommunication firms in Nigeria can perform better when they develop strong policies that are relevant to their current business activities to support their strategy implementation initiatives. This can be achieved if top management show commitment to the formal development of up-to-date policies to support strategy implementation efforts of the firms. The findings of this study affirm the results of previously-mentioned studies (Kim & Lee, 2012; Lopez et al., 2005; Sun et al., 2007; Vlachos, 2008) that HRM policies has positive relationship with performance, financial policy and performance (Salawu et al., 2012; Akhigbe & Madura, 2008; Bokpin & Abor, 2009). It is evident that a well-articulated policy supports the implementation of successful strategies which impact positively on the performance of mobile telecommunication MN firms in Nigeria. In light of this result, **H4**, organisational policy support during strategy implementation is positively associated with strategic performance is supported. The correlation results in table 2 show that employee commitment to strategy implementation has positive and significant relationship with strategic performance of mobile telecommunication firms in Nigeria ($r = 0.380^{**}$, $P = 0.000 < 0.001$). Employee commitment to strategy implementation correlates with the performance of mobile telecommunication firms in Nigeria. This study supports the works of (Dooley et al., 2000) who concluded that employees' commitment to strategy implementation positively affects the success and rapidity of strategy implementation, (Ramaseshan et al., 2013) who submitted that marketing managers' commitment towards strategy implementation has a significant and positive impact on organisational performance, (Kohtamäki et al., 2012) who concluded that employee commitment to strategy implementation has a statistically significant relationship with company performance. However, this study negates the work of (Yuliani et al., 2003) who concluded that many firms do not give high priority to using individual employees' commitment as part of a strategy to increase their effectiveness and competitiveness. This study affirms that employee commitment to strategy implementation is significantly and positively associated with strategic performance of mobile telecommunication MN firms in Nigeria. When employee commitment to strategy implementation is high, the performance of mobile telecommunication firms will improve. Thus, **H5** employee commitment to strategy implementation is positively associated with strategic performance is supported.

5. Conclusions

Mobile telecommunication companies should pay close attention to strategy implementation drivers. Specifically, mobile telecommunication firms should maintain disciplined, hardworking, motivated managers and employees to drive the implementation of appropriate strategies. It is important to actively engage the right number of competent managers and employees in the process of strategy implementation to enhance strategic performance. The mobile telecommunication companies need to maintain flexible organisational structures and appropriate governance model that support the efficient allocation and utilisation of resources. The structures and governance model should match the structural needs of the strategy being implemented at any given time. The mobile telecommunication companies need to develop and implement strong organisational policies that are relevant to the firms' current business activities. This can facilitate rapid decision-making and support their strategic initiatives. During strategy implementation, a strong organizational policy is needed to support efficient utilization of resources.

Mobile telecommunication firms need to create an organizational climate that encourages employees' commitment to strategy implementation. Employees commitment to strategy implementation can lead to the firms implementing successful strategies that will positively impact on strategic performance. The relationship between strategy implementation drivers and strategic performance is statistically significant. Thus, the five hypotheses were accepted. From the resource-based theory perspective, this study extends the existing knowledge about strategy implementation by adding organizational policy and financial resources as strategy implementation variables into the strategy implementation-strategic performance relationship in telecommunication sector in emerging market. Nonetheless, this study like any is limited in its scope and raise a number of issues for future studies. The study employed cross-sectional data obtained from employees of mobile telecommunication MNCs in Nigeria which limits the generalisation of these findings beyond this context. There might be factors unique to the mobile telecommunication companies that differ in other industries. Nevertheless, the single industry research provides enhanced internal validity (Wright, Filatotchev, Hoskisson, & Pen, 2005). The use of longitudinal research approach might give new important insights into existing knowledge. The study used subjective measure to operationalise strategic performance. To get a comprehensive view of performance, other researchers can use both objective and subjective performance measures in a single study. Additionally, the study used quantitative research approach to examine the relationships between the variables. To get an in-depth understanding of the phenomenon, it will be interesting to use the qualitative research approach to explore the subject. This study used descriptive and correlation analysis techniques to analyse resultant data. It will be interesting to use other statistical methods to evaluate the subject.

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