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# PRAXIS OF COMPETITIVE POSITIONING AND ORGANIZATIONAL STRATEGIC GROUP DYNAMICS IN NIGERIAN TELECOMMUNICATION SECTOR

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## ABSTRACT

*This study investigated the praxis of competitive positioning and organizational strategic group dynamics at MTN Telecommunications in Asaba, Delta State. The specific objectives are to determine the extent to which resource availability and research development contribute to the praxis of competitive positioning and organizational strategic group dynamics at MTN Telecommunications in Asaba, Delta State. Survey research design was adopted in the study, with a population of 193 which consists of all customers of MTN Telecommunications in Asaba, Delta State. Using a 12-item validated structured questionnaire administered to 130 staff members and customers of MTN in Asaba, Delta State, Of the 130 questionnaires distributed, 125 (96.2%) were returned and five were rejected. The analytical tools employed included correlation and multiple regression analysis. The study found out, that resource availability and research development positively impacts the strategic group dynamics within MTN Telecommunications sector, Integrating expertise and capabilities from various organizations enhances product performance, and combining financial resources with strategic alliances further improves product performance. However, strategic resources, which are often intangible, are neither easily identifiable nor quickly developed. Therefore, the researcher recommends that telecommunications management should focus on improving resource availability to boost organizational performance.*

**Keywords:** Competitive Positioning, Organizational Strategy, Group Dynamics, Research Development

## INTRODUCTION

An organization's strategy comprises the moves and approaches designed by management to achieve successful performance. It is essentially a management game plan for the business (Kugun, Wanyonyi, & Sangoro, 2016; Iyamabhor, Ogbor & Ogundare, 2023). As businesses grow, they often encounter a period of disenchantment marked by dissatisfaction with planning due to increased environmental turbulence, reduced business opportunities, and heightened competition. Formulating a competitive positioning strategy is crucial for aligning a company with its environment (Ciobota & Velea, 2015). While developing competitive brand strategies is vital for marketing managers, the way these strategies are positioned is even more critical, as competitors can replicate them. Organizations that implement competitive positioning strategies generally achieve greater success. However, research indicates that competitive positioning can also be risky, with failure being a common outcome (Stanley et al., 2013). Siregar & Toha (2012) argue that the benefits of competitive positioning can vary and may not always materialize. (Tharamba, Rotich & Anyango 2018), suggest the relationship between positioning and performance can be U-shaped, with both high and low levels potentially leading to optimal performance.

Organizational strategy encompasses company plans to achieve long-term goals, forming its strategic plan. These plans typically take a year or more to develop and require involvement from all organizational levels. While top management creates the broader strategy, middle and lower management set goals and plans to implement it step by step (Sophie & Johnson, as cited in Tharamba et al., 2018). Strategy involves long-term direction, addressing challenges from the business environment, such as competitors and evolving customer needs, while leveraging internal resources and competencies effectively to meet these challenges. Competitive positioning involves differentiating a business in a valuable way from its competitors and delivering value to specific customer segments (Wickham, 2021). Organizational strategic position pertains to the impact of the external environment, internal resources, competencies, and stakeholder expectations on strategy, according to Janiszewska (2012), understanding an organization's strategic position involves considering its environment, strategic capability, and cultural and political context. Competitive positioning provides a framework for organizational focus and resource allocation, reducing the complexity of strategic decisions (Janiszewska, 2012; Iyamabhor, Ekpeni, Awosigho & Ubogu, 2023).

The goal of positioning is to establish a distinct brand perception in consumers' minds to maximize the firm's potential benefits (Kotler & Keller, 2006). Successful positioning involves creating a unique market position for a firm and its offerings. Hassan (as cited in Janiszewska, 2012) notes that positioning should be distinctive, providing a simple, consistent message that sets the product or firm apart from competitors. A firm must focus to be flourishing in the long term, differentiating itself from traditional business counterparts. Competitive positioning is a critical task in strategic management. For some marketers, positioning is primarily a communications issue, involving the manipulation of consumer perceptions (Bridoux, 2003).

However, positioning extends beyond advertising and promotion, encompassing various strategies based on product attributes, competition, application, consumer types, or product characteristics.

**Statement of the Problem**

The Nigerian telecommunication industry is characterized by numerous players offering similar products, necessitating vigorous product differentiation and heavy investment in technology. Initially, competition was minimal due to a limited number of players, but with new entrants, organizations must engage in extensive marketing to attract and retain customers. The competitive landscape has led to suboptimal performance in some companies, highlighting the need for innovative strategic positioning to compete effectively. A strong strategic position is crucial for ongoing success, sustainability, and competitive advantage, (Kumar, & Shah, 2021). Key parameters for defining strategic position include service, access, innovation, demographics, and quality, (Kumar, & Shah, 2021). With the liberalization of the Nigerian telecommunication sector, organizations face challenges that require adjustments in their operations, including ownership, distribution, and product development, to meet customer needs, (Javier, 2002, as cited in Afande & Uk, 2015). This study aims to analyze competitive positioning and strategic group dynamics within MTN Telecommunications sector in Asaba, Delta State. However, the main objective is examine the praxis of competitive positioning and organizational strategic group dynamics within MTN Telecommunications Asaba, Delta State.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

### Concept of Competitive Positioning

Competitive Positioning refers systematic examination and analysis of how organizations strategically position themselves within competitive markets and how they interact within strategic groups to achieve a sustainable competitive advantage, (Kumar and Shah 2021). This concept explores the complex link between competitive advantage and organizational outcomes. Kumar and Shah (2021) highlight this association, while Grewal and Levy (2022) support the notion that internal resources play a crucial role in enhancing differential advantage. Rose, Abdullah, and Ismad (2010) emphasize the essentiality of internal resources in achieving organizational excellence, and Morris, Kuratko, and Schindehutte (2023) identify industries like pharmaceuticals, brewing, and computing as demonstration of competitive leadership. These studies collectively argue that performance can be influenced by strategic management and the effective use of resources.

**Praxis of Competitive Positioning**

Praxis of competitive positioning refers to the practical application of strategies and actions that a business takes to establish a strong and unique position in the market relative to competitors. It involves a mix of theoretical frameworks (such as Michael Porter's generic strategies) and real-world implementation (such as branding, pricing, differentiation, and market segmentation. In essence, it's about turning strategic positioning concepts into actionable competitive advantages, ensuring a company can attract and retain customers while standing out in a crowded marketplace, Morris, (Kuratko, and Schindehutte 2023)

**Research Development**

Research development refers to the process of planning, supporting, and advancing research activities. It involves identifying funding opportunities, fostering collaborations, refining research ideas, and ensuring projects align with institutional and funding agency priorities. The goal is to enhance the quality, impact, and sustainability of research efforts, leading to innovation and new knowledge, (Zairbani and Jaya Prakash 2025)

**Resource Availability**

Resource availability refers to the extent to which required resources—such as people, materials, equipment, time, and budget—are accessible and ready for use in a project, business, or process. It determines whether tasks can be completed on schedule and within scope, (Zairbani and Jaya Prakash 2025)

**Strategic Group Dynamic**

Ma, Cui, & Xu (2024), Describe strategic groups as providing a mid-level of analysis between industry-level analysis and firm-level analysis that can help explain strategic choices, rivalrous interactions, and firm and industry performance.

**Resource Availability and Organizational Strategic Group Dynamics**

Telecommunication companies often form strategic alliances with other organizations to enhance market penetration. These alliances allow firms to share resources and capabilities, creating opportunities for new competitive advantages (Janiszewska, 2012). By combining expertise and resources, companies can improve product performance. However, strategic resources are often intangible, making them difficult to identify and develop rapidly (Onguko & Ragui, 2014). The three major firms in the industry, MTN, Globacom and Airtel telecommunication are interdependent, the actions of one firm affect the others. Recent price wars have led to increased tariffs across the industry, with similar product pricing among competitors. While Safaricom Ltd continues to lead through innovations like electronic money transfer and data services, other firms employ similar business practices and marketing strategies. For example, promotional activities such as free airtime on top-ups are common across these firms (Gilbert & Bower, 2021).

Financial resources refer to the available money for business operations, including cash, liquid securities, and credit lines. Entrepreneurs must secure adequate financial resources before starting a business to operate effectively and promote success (Junqueira, 2016). Managers need to be skilled in tracking financial resources and investing in profitable programs. Effective management involves strategizing, organizing, staffing, steering, and controlling, all of which are significantly influenced by financial constraints (Finkelstein & Hambrick, 2022).

**Research and Development (R&D) and Organizational Strategic Group**

MTN telecommunications has established R&D facilities to enhance their products. The performance of telecommunications products in Nigeria is greatly influenced by R&D, which helps meet customer needs and integrates new technologies (Edmondson, 2021). Successful products also play a significant role in improving performance. Over recent decades, scholars have emphasized the importance of R&D in the manufacturing sector. Technology-based companies invest heavily in R&D to maintain competitive advantage and ensure future viability (Cramton & Hinds, 2023). Firms are compelled to innovate rapidly to stay competitive, developing new products and services that are commercially viable (Ehie & Olibe, as cited in Tharamba et al., 2018). Innovativeness is important for growth, market expansion, and gaining a competitive edge (Jehn & Mannix, 2022). Moreover, R&D activities contribute to broader economic benefits through spillovers that enhance societal well-being (Bednyagin & Gnansounou, as cited in Tharamba et al., 2018).

**Porter's Generic Competitive Strategies**

**Differentiation Strategy**

This strategy involves creating unique product attributes or perceptions of uniqueness to provide value to customers. Firms targeting differentiation invest in product R&D and marketing to establish a unique market position (Porter, as cited in Tharamba et al., 2018). Differentiation allows firms sell their products at a premium, outperforming rivals and achieving above-average returns. Differentiation can be achieved through various means, such as distinctive features, excellent customer service, rapid innovations, technological leadership, and unique design (Porter, as cited in Tharamba et al., 2018).

**Focus Strategy**

Focus strategy targets a narrow market segment, seeking either cost advantage or differentiation within that segment. The idea is that focusing exclusively on specific group allows firm to better serve its needs, leading to customer loyalty and reduced competition (Porter, as cited in Tharamba et al., 2018). Firms using this strategy may face risks such as imitation and shifts in target segments. However, firms that excel in a focus strategy can leverage their deep understanding of the market segment and adapt their product development strengths accordingly. The risks include potential imitation by broader-market leaders and the possibility of competitors carving out sub-segments (Porter, as cited in Tharamba et al., 2018).

**Organizational Strategic Groups Dynamics**

Research into strategic groups has yet to conclusively demonstrate a direct link between strategic group and performance. While the "objective" approach has produced inconsistent results, the cognitive approach has not sufficiently addressed this issue. A more comprehensive perspective that integrates both economic and cognitive factors may offer greater clarity. Since the 1970s, numerous studies have examined strategic groups, with some authors attempting to synthesize these findings (McKinsey Quarterly, 2023). A significant critique of the "objective" approach is its failure to demonstrate substantial performance variations between strategic groups. The theory assumed that performance was relatively homogeneous within groups, with greater performance diversity observed between different strategic groups. Thus, a firm's performance may not be fully explained by its strategic group. (Janiszewska, 2012).

**Strategic Groups and Organizational Positioning**

To determine the optimal positioning of a firm within strategic group dynamics for enhanced performance, it is essential to explore the different types of positioning relative to strategic groups.

**Strategic Positioning**

Strategic positioning refers to how a company configures the marketing mix (product features, price tag, location, and promotion aspects) to appeal to a specific market segment or niche. It is primarily a differentiation tactic aimed at dominating a market niche by aligning production costs, locations, pricing, and product features to maximize return on investment (ROI) (Onguko & Ragui, 2014). This strategy helps firms acquire market share dominance and maintain high profit margins. By tailoring the combination of these factors to specific market niches, company can optimize its market penetration and operational efficiency.

**Diffusion Theory**

Barney and Hesterly (as cited in Tharamba et al., 2018) propose that a successful strategy generates a competitive advantage by differentiating an organization from its competitors, providing a sustainable edge that is valuable, rare, and difficult to imitate. A well-defined strategy offers coherence and direction for organizational growth (Ansoff & McDonnell, as cited in Tharamba et al., 2018). The link between strategic positioning and firms performance can be explained by diffusion theory and the theory of planned behavior, which view organizational links as resulting from power relations based on resource exchange. Institutions aim to control resources to minimize their dependence on others and maximize others' dependence on them. Achieving either goal impacts organizational exchanges and power dynamics (Janiszewska, 2012).

**Empirical Review**

Ma, Cui, and Xu (2024) investigated how performance feedback influences strategic change among firms affiliated with business groups in China. Their study found that internal social comparison—benchmarking against peers within the same business group—has a more significant impact on strategic change than external comparisons with industry peers. This effect is moderated by factors such as the development level of market institutions, state ownership, and the background of the group's CEO.

Zairbani and Jaya Prakash (2025) conducted a systematic literature review to understand the relationship between competitive strategies—specifically cost leadership and differentiation—and organizational performance. Their findings suggest that strategic growth significantly influences competitive strategy, which in turn enhances firm networks, performance measurement, and organizational behavior. Differentiation strategies were found to support management practices, strategic positioning, product pricing, and overall company performance.

Tharamba, Rotich, and Anyango (2018) examined the critical role of strategic positioning in driving growth and profitability within the telecommunication industry. It revealed that strategic positioning enhances corporate performance by improving market position and competitive advantage. In Kenya's highly competitive and regulated telecommunication sector, companies must adopt effective strategies to ensure survival. The research highlighted Safaricom's success as the most profitable telecommunication firm in East and Central Africa, in stark contrast to struggling competitors like Airtel and Telkom, which are considering exiting the market. Using a descriptive research design and a census approach, the study focused on Safaricom's management staff. Data analysis conducted with SPSS version 18 indicated that factors such as marketing, research and development, resource availability, and diverse product offerings positively impact organizational performance in Kenya's telecommunication industry.

Munyoki (2015) explored the role of organizational autonomy and positioning in the relationship between competitive strategies and performance in Kenyan State Corporations. Adopting a positivist approach, it employed a descriptive cross-sectional survey of 187 State Corporations, gathering primary data via CEO questionnaires and secondary data from performance reports. The findings revealed that competitive strategies significantly influenced performance, while positioning did not mediate this relationship. Instead, organizational autonomy served as a moderator. The study supported various theories, including stakeholder theory, resource-based view (RBV), structural contingency theory, strategic conflict model, and agency theory. It also recommended further research comparing Kenyan State Corporations with publicly quoted companies or private firms in different contexts.

## METHODOLOGY

The study was carried out at MTN Telecommunication in Asaba, Delta State, Nigeria. Survey research design was adopted in this study with a population of 193 and a sample size of 130, Stratified random sampling technique was used in the study, while content validity was given cognizance and Cronbach's alpha was used to determine the internal reliability of the questionnaire used in this study.

Primary data were distributed to 130 staff members and customers. Of the 130 questionnaires distributed, 125 (96.2%) were successfully retrieved, while 5 were discarded. The main analytical methods employed were correlation and multiple regression analysis.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

**Table 1: Correlation Matrix among the Dimensions of analyzing competitive positioning and strategic group dynamics**

| | Availability of Resources | Research Development | Organization Strategic Group Dynamics |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Availability of Resources** | 1 | | |
| **Research Development** | .373 | 1 | |
| **Organization Strategic Group Dynamics** | .445 | .490 | 1 |

Source: Field survey analysis, 2025

The correlation matrix analysis presented in Table 1 revealed that Resources Availability demonstrated a positive and significant correlation with both Research and Development ($r = .373^{**}$, $P < .01$) and Organization Strategic Group Dynamics ($r = .445^{**}$, $P < .01$). Furthermore, Resources Availability showed a strong positive correlation with Research and Development as well as with Organization Strategic Group Dynamics.

**Table 2 Multiple Regression Analysis of Availability of Resources and Research Development on Organization Strategic Group Dynamics.**

Coefficients[a]

| Model | | Unstandardized Coefficients | | Standardized Coefficients | T | Sig. |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | B | Std. Error | Beta | | |
| 1 | (Constant) | 8.576 | 1.601 | | 5.357 | .624 |
| | Availability of Resources | .145 | .089 | .163 | 1.618 | .008 |
| | Research Development | .114 | .086 | .126 | 1.329 | . 006 |

Dependent Variable: Organization Strategic Group Dynamics
a.

Source: Feld survey analysis, 2025

**Table 3: ANOVA**

**ANOVA[a]**

| Model | | Sum Squares | Df | Mean Square | F | Sig. |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | Regression | 67.066 | 3 | 22.355 | 7.824 | .000[b] |
| | Residual | 345.734 | 121 | 2.857 | | |
| | Total | 412.800 | 124 | | | |

a. Dependent Variable: Organization Strategic Group dynamics
b. Predictors: (Constant), Availability of Resources, Research Development

**Table 4: Model Summary.**

**Model Summary**

| Model | R Square | R | Adjusted R Square | Std. Error of the Estimate |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | .162 | .403[a] | .142 | 1.6904 |

a. Predictors: (Constant),Availability of Resources, Research Development

Source: Field survey analysis, 2025

**Discussion of Findings**

This study explored the praxis of competitive positioning and organizational strategic group dynamics within MTN Telecommunication, Asaba, Delta State, Nigeria. The correlation analysis results revealed positive correlation coefficients among all indicators of competitive positioning, confirming that the variables are suitable dimensions for analyzing competitive positioning. Additionally, the multiple regression analysis (MRA) highlighted the significant influence of competitive positioning and strategic group dynamics on organizational strategic groups.

Key constructs of competitive positioning, such as Availability of Resources ($\beta = .126$, $P < 0.01$) and Research Development ($\beta = .163$, $P < 0.01$), showed significant positive effects on organizational strategic group dynamics. Specifically, the results supported the findings that Availability of Resources has a significant positive relationship with organizational strategic group dynamics (P(cal) 0.006 < P(crit) 0.05). These findings align with Onguko and Ragui (2014), who posited that inter-organizational relationships facilitate the sharing of resources and capabilities, enabling firms to collaborate and develop new competitive advantages. By integrating expertise and capabilities, organizations can enhance product performance. However, it is noted that strategic resources, often intangible, are neither easily identifiable nor rapidly developed.

Similarly, the findings indicated a significant positive relationship between Research Development and organizational strategic group dynamics ($\beta$ = .163, $P < 0.01$). This supports the second findings, which proposed that Research Development positively impacts organizational strategic groups. These findings are consistent with Salim and Bloch, as cited in Tharamba et al. (2018), who observed that global economic reforms and market-oriented liberalization policies have motivated companies to increase their investment in RD to enhance economic performance.

## CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The study concludes that R&D positively impacts the competitive positioning of MTN companies. The increasing relevance of R&D is reference to global economic policies favoring market liberalization, which aim to enhance economic performance. Furthermore, availability of resource is shown to positively influence the organizational strategic group dynamics of MTN telecommunications. Integrating expertise capabilities from various organizations enhances product performance.

Management should consider using more retained earnings for investment in R&D, as this approach positively impact strategic group dynamics of selected MTN telecommunications. Additionally, is recommended that telecommunication management invest in resource availability to further enhance organizational performance.

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