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# MARKETING STRATEGIES OF INDIGENOUS COMPANIES IN THE NIGERIAN ENVIRONMENT

BY

SAMSON OLANREWAJU IBIDUNNI

and

RASAQ ADEDOYIN HASAN

## ABSTRACT

The study investigated how indigenous companies operating within the turbulent Nigerian marketing environment utilized the mixes of different marketing strategies at different periods of products' supply situations for their economic growth and development, and how these strategies were effectively managed in the acquisition of market shares within the food and beverage industry. Theoretical models were used in developing the only hypothesis that was investigated through the survey of one-hundred and twenty indigenous companies which were randomly selected. With four copies of the questionnaire administered to each of the 120 companies, additional 20 copies were added to round up 500 copies administered to respondents in the companies. The findings revealed that Nigerian indigenous companies were unable to effectively use different marketing strategies at periods of products' supply situations; also they could not effectively use marketing strategies to acquire the desired market share within the industry in the last five years. The conclusion drawn from the findings was that Nigerian indigenous companies exhibited low skill in the adoption and mixes of marketing strategies. It was recommended that Nigerian indigenous companies should take advantage of the knowledge of their environment and people, and adopt marketing strategies, while academics, consultants, professionals and relevant government agencies need to train the operators of indigenous companies.

**Key words are:** Indigenous companies, Turbulent Nigerian marketing environment, Marketing strategies, Acquisition of market shares, Foods and beverage, Economic growth and development.

## INTRODUCTION

### Background to the Study:

As early as 1900s, many indigenous companies started springing up alongside their foreign counterparts. Examples of these are Lishabi Mills Nigeria Limited, established in 1938, Cocoa Industry Limited, established in 1965, Adebowale Industries Limited, established in 1970, and Concord Press Nigeria Limited, established in 1978. Mostly found of these organizations were sole proprietorship and partnership business organizations, while quite few were private limited liability companies. Public limited liability companies were rare to come by then. Some of the companies engaged in

manufacturing, service or combination of the two, that is, manufacturing and service. However, even today hardly is any of them able to sustain the harsh economic situation being faced despite owning greater proportion of productive resources like land, labour and unprocessed raw materials (Kleiman, & Young, 1995, Lawal & Sulaimon, 2007). Mccarty (2006) claimed that operating successfully in a turbulent business environment entails adoption of precise marketing warfare strategies. Porter's (2008) "generic" strategies and other marketing strategies that abound based on the potentials of a market segment were recommended to operating business concerns. According to Onah (2000) and Ogwo (2000), the sole aim of any business enterprise are profitability and survival. Incidentally, in a competitive and volatile business environment like Nigeria, Ayozie (2006) reported the various successes and failures recorded by Nigerian indigenous companies. It is therefore justified to attempt an extensive study of the strategies adopted in managing these companies; that have resulted in their acquisition of market shares. This study therefore has two objectives to fulfill (i) to reveal different marketing strategies available to Nigerian indigenous companies at different periods of product supply situations, and (ii) to show the significance of effective use of competitive marketing strategies in the acquisition of desired market share in the last five years, The significance of this study stemmed from the fact that operators of Nigerian indigenous companies will learn better and more about the dynamism of Nigerian business environment, different marketing strategies available to use in different market segments, and at different periods of products' supply situation. Secondly, the operators will be exposed to how marketing strategies can be used in the acquisition of desired market share. Academics need to use the gaps identified in this study for criticisms, and propound further concepts and theories in the areas of competitive marketing strategies in other to support the growth of Nigerian indigenous companies. Consultants and professionals in marketing would also have opportunity to identify the areas of training the operators of Nigerian indigenous companies and possibly carry out further studies on it.

#### Literature Review

Marketing strategies, according to Laermer and Simmons (2007) represent the overall thrust of a company's marketing activities with three facets. The first facet given comprises the growth strategies of marketing penetration, market development, product

development, and diversification, the second facet of marketing strategy is given as to determining how a company will compete in the turbulent business environment. This category of types of competitive strategies in marketing was proposed by Porter. (1998). Porter (2008) referred to these strategies as “generic” strategies, and they are (i) cost leadership strategies (ii) differentiation strategies and focus strategies, and the third facet of marketing strategies as given by Thompson and Stickland (2003) are (i) defensive strategies (ii) offensive strategies (iii) vertical integration strategies, and (iv) “first mover” strategies; which they claimed are being used amongst competing organizations during different periods of products' supply situations. Different periods of products' supply situations enumerated are ample supply of product situation, short supply of product situation, period of recession, and period of inflationary situation.

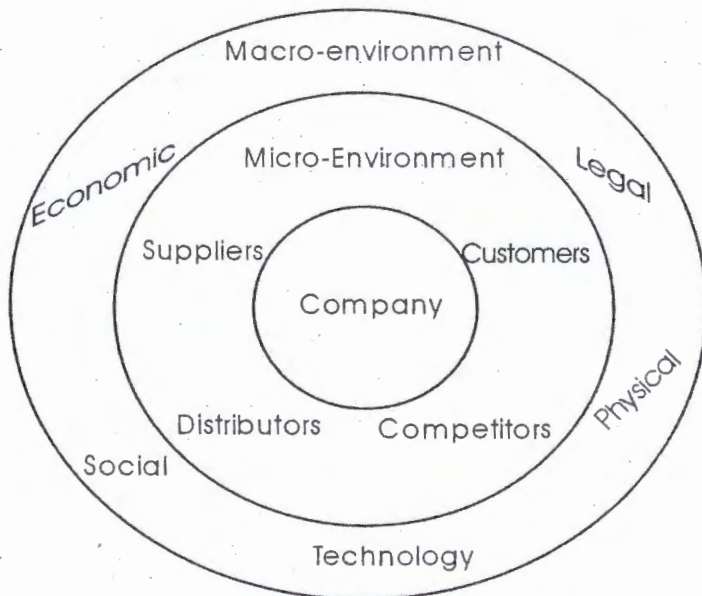
Porter (2008) propounded that cost leadership strategy emphasizes efficiency and if a firm can achieve and sustain overall cost leadership, it will be an above-average performer in its industry, provided it can command prices at or near the industry average at all periods of products' supply. However, low cost leadership is attached to a disadvantage which is less customer loyalty (Laermer & Simmons, 2007). Relatively low prices will result in creating a negative attitude towards the quality of the product in the mindset of the customers (Miller, Eisenstat, & Foote (2002). Porter also discussed differentiation strategy to involve creating a product that is perceived as unique, and that the unique features or benefits should provide superior value for the customer if this strategy is to be successful. To maintain this strategy, Porter (1986) emphasized that the firm should have strong research and development skills, strong product engineering skills, strong creativity skills, good cooperation with distribution channels, strong marketing skills, incentives based largely on subjective measures, be able to communicate the importance of differentiating product characteristics, stress continuous improvement and innovation, and attract highly skilled creative people. Porter, on this strategy, claimed that the firm concentrates on a selected few target markets by focusing marketing efforts on one or two narrow market segments and tailoring marketing mix to these specialized markets, while the needs of the target markets can be met better. Focus strategy is peculiar, as it rests on the choice of a narrow competitive scope majorly segments within an industry.



Thompson and Stickland, (2003) claimed that offensive marketing warfare strategies are a type of marketing warfare strategy designed to obtain an objective, usually market share, and obtain key customers, high margin market segments, or high loyalty market segments from a target competitor. Defensive marketing warfare strategies are a type of marketing warfare strategy designed to protect a company's market share, profitability, product positioning, or mind share. Vertical integration strategy according to Thompson and Stickland means that a company is producing its own inputs (backward or upstream) integration. Conversely, if it is disposing of its own outputs, it involves forward or downstream integration. Giving credence to vertical integration, the authors claimed it to be another potential growth direction approach, and a company using it has desire to strengthen the competitive position of its original or core business. Lastly, First Mover Strategies as explained by Thompson and Stickland (2003), Blythe, (2003) are strategies being used by the first organization to launch into a new market, and the advantage of creating a lead, which others have to follow. It was claimed that the organization must be strongly endowed in the field to enable it to be the first mover of the product or service. However, it also carries the greatest risk in terms of possible failure in the market, though possibility of gaining an unassailable lead must be offset against the dangers of making a fatal mistake in the early days of an unknown market. Kuhlmeier and Knight (2005) agreed that marketing environment comprises the forces and actors that affect a company's ability to operate effectively in providing products and services to its

Customers. The authors classified these forces into two: (i) micro-environment; also known as internal environment, which consists of the actors in the firm's immediate environment that affects the firm's capabilities to operate effectively in its chosen markets. Examples of these actors given are suppliers that deal directly and indirectly with an organization, distributors, customers and competitors, and that all the forces are controllable; and (ii) macro-environment. Macro-environment was said to consist of a number of boarder forces that affect not only the company, but also other actors in the micro-environment. Examples of these given are economic, social/cultural, demographic, political/legal, ecological/physical, competitive, and technological forces. These shape the character of

the opportunities and threats facing a company, and are largely uncontrollable (Kuhlmeier & Knight, 2005, Yuthas, 2009). However, commenting on Nigerian marketing environment, Ogundele, (2003) and Osuagwu, (2006) unanimously agreed that it is highly dynamic, unstable and uncertain; hence investors and business men and women are scared of its unpredictability. The endemic nature of indigenous enterprises compounded the challenges of the operators' ability to operate within the turbulent environment. Figure 1 below is a model of marketing environment.



**Figure 1: Model of Marketing Environment.**

**Source: Foundations of Marketing By Jobber, D. and Fahy, J. (2003)**

Pie and Dam Theories of Market Shares:

Pie theory connotes that the market is like a fixed sized pie and everybody in that market gets a piece of that pie. If someone new comes into the market, he will be taking some of that pie perhaps some of the pieces. The pie theory comes from fear that every new business coming into the market will reduce share of the market.

Dam theory on the other hand, is of the belief that the market is like boats floating in a lake created by a dam. If market participants work

cooperatively to raise the dam level, the lake will hold more water and float more boats. The dam theory comes from expectation that bringing more businesses to the market expands the entire market, making it larger and more profitable for everyone in it. Comparison: Individuals that accept the pie theory oppose all competition real or imagined, and foreign or domestic. They fear competition from both local and foreign markets. Individuals that accept the 'dam' theory support participants from both local and foreign markets. They believe that more participants from both local and foreign markets expand the markets, while simultaneously creating the competitive pressures that create innovation and improvement. It was agreed that without competition, any industry stagnates into complacency and mediocrity; while open competition creates a vibrant self-sustaining and self-sufficient industry. From the review of literature, one hypothesis to be tested was presented in a null form as follows:

**Hypothesis** (i)  $H_0$  : Effective use of marketing strategies is not significant in the acquisition of desired market share by Nigerian indigenous companies.

### **Methodological Approach:**

Considering the population of the study, survey method was adopted. A well structured questionnaire was developed to gather information from top executives/ management staff involved in marketing activity in companies sampled. Sample population available was 171 indigenous registered food and beverage companies with Manufacturers' Association of Nigeria (MAN) (2006). By probability sampling technique, simple random sampling method was adopted, hence sample size of 120 indigenous companies were selected using Yard's formula as popularly postulated by Guilford and Fruchter (1973) with 95% confidence level at 5% error tolerance. Four (4) copies of the questionnaire were administered in each company; bringing the total to 480 copies administered. Adjustments were made on the copies of questionnaire administered; as the situation dictated in each area. Hence, (480 +20) copies of the questionnaire were administered to top executives/ management staff of indigenous food and beverage companies. Validity and reliability of the instrument were measured at Cronbach's alpha of 0.69 and alternative form

validity of 0.62. Descriptive and statistical analyses were used in analyzing the data collected. Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) was used in testing the stated hypothesis. All the steps recommended in using ANOVA were observed. The population statistical formula is as follows:

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

where:

n = The desired sample size to be determined

N = Total population.

e = Accepted error limit 0.05 on the basis of 95% confidence level.

Where

N = 171

E = 0.05

n = sample size

$$\text{Therefore } n = \frac{171}{1 + 171(0.05)} \frac{171}{1 + 171(.0025)} \frac{171}{1 + 0.4275} \frac{45}{1.4275}$$

$$= 120 \text{ samples.}$$

### **Discussion of the Findings: (Theoretical and Empirical)**

As shown in table 1 below, of the 500 copies of the questionnaire distributed, 340 copies were returned, 16 copies were rejected for not properly completed, while 324 (64.80%) copies were utilized for the study.

**Table 1: Questionnaire Distribution/ Response Rates.  
(Indigenous Companies).**

Region	Registered INCs by Area	Distrib Ution (~)	No.of Returned Question-naire.	No. Of used Question-naire.	No. Of unused Questi on-naire.	% of Used Question-naire to Distribu tion	% To the Nation
Lagos	78	315	208	202	6	64.13	62.35
West	6	25	20	19	1	76.00	5.85
Edo/Delta	6	25	19	16	3	64.00	4.94
East	15	60	38	36	2	60.00	11.11
North-East	6	25	20	20	-	80.00	6.17
Northwest	12	50	35	31	4	62.00	9.57
Average% Response	123	500	340	324	16	64.80	100

**Source: Researcher's Analysis of Field Survey, 2007/2008**

### **Demographic and Socio-economic Characteristics of Respondents:**

Table 2 below signifies that majority of participants in the sample were senior managers, 248(46.2%) and managers, 202(37.6%); while 87(16.2%) were general managers. In terms of gender, 429 (79.9%) were male and 108 (20.1%) were female. Similarly, 395 respondents representing 73.6% were between the ages of 36-45; whereas 71(13.2%) respondents were between ages 26 and 35, and 71(13.2%) were 46 years and above. Regarding working experience, 265(49.4%) respondents possessed 6 to 10 years working experience, 238(44.3%) respondents possessed 11 to 15 years working experience, and 34(6.3%) respondents also possessed working experience of 16 years and over. In terms of nationality, 535(99.6%) respondents were Nigerians, while 2 (0.4%) respondents were foreigners. 475(88.5%) respondents had worked in marketing department, while only 62(11.5%) respondents did not. All the respondents

Worked in marketing sub-sets, such as promotion and sales. Majority, 279(52.0%) respondents worked in promotion division, while 258(48.0%) worked in sales division. Lastly, in terms of qualifications, majority 372(69.3) respondents possessed first degree, while master's degree holders were 175(30.7%).

**Table 2: Demographic and Socio-economic Characteristics of Respondents**

<b>Position</b>	<b>Freq</b>	<b>%</b>
General Manager	87	16.2
Senior Manager	248	46.2
Manager	202	37.6
Total	537	100.0
<b>Gender.</b>		
Male	429	79.9
Female	108	20.1
Total	537	100.0
<b>Age</b>		
26-35yrs	71	13.2
36-45yrs	395	73.6
46 yrs and above	71	13.2
Total	537	100.0
<b>Working Experience</b>		
6-10yrs	265	49.4
11-15yrs	238	44.3
16years and above	34	6.3
Total	537	100.0
<b>Nationality</b>		
Nigerian	535	99.6
Foreigner	02	0.4
Total	537	100.0
<b>Work in Marketing Department Before</b>		
Yes	475	88.5
No	62	11.5
Total	537	100.0
<b>Where Respondents Have worked</b>		
Promotion	279	52.0
Sales	258	48.1
Total	537	100.0
<b>Highest Educational Qualification</b>		
Degree	372	69.3
Masters	165	30.7
Total	537	100.0

Source: Researcher's Analysis of Field Survey, 2007/2008

Table 3 below reveals the total number of participants from Nigerian indigenous companies with a total means of 1.82 on cost leadership, 2.16 on product differentiation, 2.26 on focused, 2.18 on offensive, and 2.16 on defensive marketing strategies respectively during ample supply of products in the last five years. Akhavein, Frame, and White (2005) studies suggested that large banks use new lending technologies as marketing strategies to "harden" their credit information about small businesses. An example was small business credit scoring a new technology in the 1990s in which the personal credit and payment history of the small business owner was combined with data about the business and entered into a loan-repayment prediction model. The research indicated that large banks adopted this technology earlier than small banks and used it to expand their lending to small business borrowers, particularly to firms that were likely to be relatively opaque--credits of under \$100,000 with relatively high interest rates and poor risk ratings on average and often located outside the bank's local markets (Frame, Srinivasan, & Woosley, 2001, Frame, Padhi, & Woosley, 2004, Berger, Frame, & Miller, 2005). This in return expanded their market shares.



**Table 3: Summary of Mean and Standard Deviation of Marketing Strategies of Nigerian Indigenous Food and Beverage Companies During Period of Ample Supply of Products (INC<sub>N</sub> = 324)**

Items	N	Mean INCs	Std. Deviation
Our organization uses of cost leadership strategies anytime a brand is in ample supply in order to maintain a leadership position in the industry.	324	1.82	1.14784
We use product differentiation strategy to market most of our products during free supply situation in order to satisfy different classes of customers	324	2.16	1.17338
Focused strategy is used to position our different brands during ample supply situation.	324	2.26	1.06176
We avoided the use offensive marketing strategy in popularizing our products in the time of ample supply situation.	324	2.18	1.09973
We supported our products with defensive marketing strategy in ensuring their survival In the free supply situation.	324	2.16	1.14427

(INC<sub>N</sub>) Number of Participants from Nigerian Indigenous Food and Beverage Companies

**Source: Researcher's Analysis of Field Survey, 2007/2008.**

Table 4 below shows the total number of participants from Nigerian indigenous companies with a total means of 1.82 on cost leadership, 2.16 on product differentiation, 2.26 on focused, 2.16 on defensive, and 2.16 on 'First-movers' marketing strategies respectively during short supply of products in the last five years. This was corroborated by Kotler and Singh (1981) who drew an analogy between military warfare and competitive battles in the market place. In other words, in a period of short products' supply, a business concern should learn a study of warfare in order to be sustained. However, in this study, the indigenous companies studied were unable to effectively and efficiently use different marketing strategies at this period of products' supply, as reflected in the average mean of less than 2.5. Hence, indigenous food and beverage companies lacked the capacity to acquire the desired market shares.

**Table 4: Summary of Mean and Standard Deviation of Marketing Strategies of Nigerian Indigenous Food and Beverage Companies during period of Product Short Supply. (INC<sub>N</sub> = 324)**

Items	N	Mean INCs	Std. Deviation
Our organization uses cost leadership strategies anytime a brand is in short supply	324	1.82	1.13189
We use product differentiation strategy to market most popular products during short supply situation	324	2.16	1.13773
Focused strategy is used to ensure that most essential products get to the target markets during product shortage.	324	2.16	1.03393
Defensive marketing strategy is being used to protect the corporate image during product shortage situation.	324	2.16	1.11498
First-mover strategy is used to maintain the Patronage of our products during Product shortage.	324	2.16	1.13189

(INC<sub>N</sub>) Number of Participants from Nigerian Indigenous Food and Beverage Companies.

**Source: Researcher's Analysis of Field Survey, 2007/2008**

5. The means achieved using all the marketing strategies during free and short supply of products situations by indigenous companies could not meet up to 50%, that is, 2.5 mean of the set marketing goals. The implication of this was that their ability to acquire more market share in food and beverage industry was deficient; as evident in their inability to successfully mix and utilize different marketing strategies at different periods of products' supply situation in order to achieve the economic growth desired by Nigerian indigenous companies.

**Hypothesis Testing:**

Ho: Effective use of marketing strategies is not significant in the acquisition of desired market share by Nigerian indigenous companies.

**Hypothesis Testing:**

**Table 5: Means and Standard Deviations of Marketing Strategies Adopted and the Extent of the Market Shares Attained by Nigerian Indigenous food and Beverage Companies.**

	Freq	Mean	Standard deviation
Marketing strategies adopted by indigenous companies	324	44.28	1.42
Extent of market shares attained By indigenous companies	324	26.12	0.96

**Source: Researcher's Analysis of Field Survey, 2007/2008**

In table 5 above, Nigerian indigenous companies had the mean of 44.28 and standard deviation of 1.42 which were adjudged low, as the acceptable average mean and standard deviation were 50.0 and 2.50 respectively. The question now is, was the difference significant enough or was it as a result of sampling error? The answer is presented in table 7 below.

**Table 6: Summary of Analysis of Variance on Marketing Strategies Adopted and Attained Market Shares by Nigerian Indigenous food and Beverage Companies.**

Source	Type III Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Corrected Model	240.973	9	26.775	26.775	26.774	.000
Intercept	3479.758	1	3479.758	3479.758	3479.629	.000
Competitive Marketing Strategies	5.148	4	1.287	1.287	8.287	.004
Company Type*	10.742	1	4.624	4.624	2.685	.031
Error	527.019	314	1.000	1.000		
Total	6748.000	324				
Corrected Total	767.993	325				

**Source: Researcher's Analysis of Field Survey, 2007/2008**

Table 6 above shows the marketing strategies adopted by indigenous companies which culminated in performance at  $f_{(4, 324)} = 8.287$ , at 0.05 significant level. The fact that these indigenous companies were national in operations contributed to significance performance at only  $f_{(1, 324)} = 2.685$ , at 0.05 significant level. In testing the hypothesis, four key available marketing strategies adoptable by Nigerian indigenous companies were included. The findings indicated that performance at  $f_{(1, 324)} = 2.685$  at 0.05 significant level was less expected with four key marketing strategies. This implied that the hypothesis was accepted and alternative hypothesis rejected; which meant that the effective use of marketing strategies by Nigerian indigenous companies was not significant in the acquisition of desired market share.

**Concluding Remarks/ Recommendations:**

1. The evidence from the findings suggested that Nigerian indigenous companies exhibited low skill in the adoption and mixes of marketing strategies during ample and short supply situations of products supply in the last five years.

2. Effective use of marketing strategies by Nigerian indigenous companies was not significant in the acquisition of desired market share. The study showed that effective adoption of marketing strategies would lead to more acquisition of market shares, hence operators of indigenous companies needed to be trained and developed in this dimension.
3. Management of indigenous companies should take advantage of the knowledge of their environment and people. They should endeavour to carry out periodical environmental scanning to familiarize themselves with (i) government regulations as related to their businesses, competitive activities, trade union activities, importation structure of substitute brands, demand-supply structures of the company's products, real income structure of consumers, and the propensity to consume at a particular time in various regions of the market.
4. As revealed under the demographic and socio-economic characteristics of respondents, there is need to identify Nigerian social classes and their demographic variables. These will assist operators of indigenous companies in decision-making; including appropriate marketing strategies to adopt at different market segments to stimulate class demands.
5. Particular economic period of product supply needs to be identified, studied and understood all the time. This will help to determine relevant marketing strategies to adopt so as not to lose market share being enjoyed.
6. Academics, consultants and professionals in marketing should do more on how to supply literatures on marketing strategies and market share to the understanding of the operators of indigenous companies.

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