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Customer Relationship Management and Organizational Survival of Telecommunication Firms in Port Harcourt

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Abstract: *The study investigated the relationship between Customer Relationship Management and organizational survival of Telecommunication Firms in Port Harcourt, where it measures organizational survival using profitability, customer base, and sales volume. The cross sectional explanatory survey research design was adopted for the study. The population of the study consisted of two hundred and eight (208) Information Managers from selected fully registered telecommunication firms in Port Harcourt. Using census sampling technique, the sample size became 208. 208 questionnaires were distributed and 187 copies were retrieved. Spearman's Rank Order Correlation Coefficient via the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 20.0 was used to carry out the test of hypotheses. The Spearman's (rho) correlation was used to analyze the relationship between independent and dependent variables at $P < 0.05$ (two-tailed test). The study revealed that there is a very significant positive relationship between Customer Relationship Management and organizational survival of Telecommunication Firms in Port Harcourt in terms of profitability, customer base, and sales volume. The study therefore concludes that the adoption of Customer Relationship Management to effectively establish the organization/customer relationship management enhances the survival of the organization, manifesting in terms of profitability, customer base and sales volume. Among others, the study recommended that in order to keep a competitive advantage, businesses, especially telecommunications companies, should maintain good relationship with their customers.*

Keywords: Customer Relationship Management, Organizational Survival, Profitability, Customer Base, and Sales Volume.

Introduction

Every company transaction and activity depends on customers. In reality, how an organization treats or manages its customers determines whether it will survive. Businesses must make an effort to develop and keep strong customer relationships if they want to survive in today's cutthroat business environment. Regardless of the products that a business offers to its customers, if it doesn't live up to their expectations, it is not performing well (Asieh et al., 2016). This is due to the fact that the company's revenues, profits, market share, and even the salaries of its employees all eventually derive from just one source, namely its customers. This is due to the fact that without consumer support, businesses run the risk of seeing their profit margins decline, making it difficult for them to pay their employees and keep the company operating.

This makes using customer relationship management to create proper customer/organization relationships very important for business organizations like telecommunications companies. Customer relationship management (CRM) is the operational term for the use of digital technological platforms to stay in contact with customers and make sure that their complaints are addressed without having to visit a physical telephone booth. CRM is concerned with the use of digital technology to educate customers about their dealings with the telecommunications service provider. Courtesy, politeness, transparency, and integrity are some characteristics of excellent client relationships (Laketa et al., 2015). As a result, customer relationship management can also be thought of as a structured method of creating, managing, and upholding a profitable connection with their clients. This is due to the fact that every company' goals center on how to utilize its limited resources effectively in order to turn a profit and advance. Additionally, customer relationship management is a difficult process that depends on a thorough understanding of the requirements and habits of customers with the intention of staying in constant contact with the aid of digital technology (Shadi et al., 2018). Since the intentio n is to provide customers with solutions based on their needs, it presumes ongoing gathering of information about customer behavior.

CRM (Customer Relationship Management) aids in customer happiness because happy clients stick with a company and promote it positively through word-of-mouth. Through the use of social networking sites, surveys, interactive blogs, and various mobile platforms, this can be achieved by encouraging customer involvement. In addition to managing current clients, it also educates potential customers who have not yet made a purchase. It facilitates building and managing a sizable customer group that ensures ongoing financial success. Notwithstanding, it is believed by many that organizations who find it difficult to survive have lost it on proper customer management. This means that CRM is key to organizational survival of any organization, especially a telecommunication firm.

Organizational survival offers a logical, evidence-based method for developing a long-lasting business strategy that will satisfy the demands of modern clients and position a company to succeed while having a positive impact on society, the environment, community, and the bottom line (Gregory & Nathalie, 2013). According to Balestrero and Udo (2013), a company must take a logical, research-based approach to developing a long-lasting business strategy that is tailored to the needs of today's consumers and positions it to outperform while having a positive impact on society, the environment, the community, and the bottom line. According to Raphan and Friedman (2014), businesses that want to succeed should broaden their scope rather than limiting it to identifying and meeting the requirements of a particular consumer segment. Instead, they must be flexible and constantly on the lookout for new areas where they can grow and where threats might arise. For their part, Koronis and Ponis (2017) adopted a strategic perspective on organizational survival and contend that organizational drivers of resilience include preparedness, responsiveness, adaptability, and learning abilities. They also propose a novel approach to crisis management. In the context of this study, organizational survival encompasses more than just a company's continued inclusion in a database of active or registered businesses; rather, it refers to a company's ongoing capacity for innovation and the generation of fresh concepts that will boost its revenue, expand its market share, and continue to be profitable despite all odds. Therefore, the study aims at investigating the relationship between Customer Relationship Management and organizational survival of Telecommunication Firms in Port Harcourt, where it measures organizational survival using metrics such as profitability, customer base, and sales volume.

However, it seems that some telecom companies are having a very difficult time surviving due to low productivity, which results from little to no desire for their goods or services. Due to their inability to provide accurate and equitable services to their customers, telecommunication companies working in the Port Harcourt metropolis are not performing perfectly. It is possible that they do not have excellent relationships with their clients as a result of this. Smith's (2017) research results back up the claim that many Nigerian businesses find it difficult to increase their profitability, save customers time, or even increase their market share. As a result of poor digital customer relationship management, the researcher's observation and experience also demonstrate that the performance of telecommunication firms in Port Harcourt is characterized by little to no profitability, unnecessary delays in addressing customers' needs, and a lack of sufficient market share.

Perceived dearth of empirical studies on the relationship between of Customer Relationship Management and organizational survival of Telecommunication Firms in Port Harcourt is another challenged that birthed this study (Nouman et al., 2015; Baiyewu, 2022; Shabir, 2016; Leton, 2023; Omotayo et al., 2011). None of these studies was carried out in telecommunication firms nor in Port Harcourt. This implies that research on Customer Relationship Management and organizational survival of Telecommunication Firms in Port Harcourt is seriously begging for research effort. Much effort is therefore required to increase research in this dimension. This study therefore seeks to seal this knowledge gap as explained.

Literature Review

Concept of Customer Relationship Management

A broad term known as "customer relationship management" (CRM) includes a methodology as well as practices, procedures, and a strategy. CRM is a continuous process, not just something you do once with new clients. CRM is an important component of modern company management. The definition of "customer relationship management" is "the alignment of business strategy, organizational structure and culture, and customer information and technology so that all customer interactions are conducted for the long-term satisfaction of the customer as well as the benefit and increased performance of the organization (Osmana & Ghiran, 2019). One of the most recent developments in customer support at the moment is CRM, claims (Newell, 2000). CRM assists management and customer support personnel in addressing client complaints and issues. The tactic entails gathering a ton of information about a customer, which is then used to speed up customer service interactions by making the knowledge required to address the problem or concern accessible to those engaging with the customer. This almost always results in greater customer satisfaction and a more successful and effective business.

In essence, CRM tools aid management in making choices about the company's future course (Gummesson, 2014). According to Greenberg, "the approaches, plans, tools, and web-based tools that assist an organization in planning and managing client encounters" (2015). It involves gathering and sending all client data to different company divisions. CRM is an idea that seeks to improve a business' ability to retain customers while also giving it a competitive advantage. It focuses on using a variety of information technologies to thoroughly and accurately analyze consumer data in order to better create and manage customer relationships (Gosney & Thomas, 2000).

Customer relationship management (CRM) is frequently defined as a methodology, plan, and set of practices. Customer relationship management is a continuous procedure, not just something that is done once for new clients. Modern company management must include customer relationship management. As Claudia (2011) noted, "customer relationship management can be seen as the alignment of business strategy, organization structure and culture, and customer information and technology so that all customer interactions can be conducted to the benefit and increase in performance of the organization."

One of the most recent advancements in customer care, according to Newell (2015), is customer relationship management. Management and customer support personnel use customer relationship management to address customer concerns and problems. In order to ease customer service interactions, the strategy entails gathering a lot of data about the customer. This data is used to provide those working with the customers with quick access to the knowledge they need to address their concerns or issues. This will frequently increase customer satisfaction and improve the profitability and efficiency of the company. Customer relationship management tools essentially greatly assist management in determining the future direction of the company (Gummesson, 2014).

Customer relationship management is the creation, growth, maintenance, and optimization of long-term, mutually beneficial relationships between consumers and companies, according to Antonides et al. (1999), a definition that is frequently referenced. According to Greenberg (2001), Customer Relationship Management (CRM) encompasses the methodologies, strategies, tools, and web-based features that support an organization's management of its customer interactions. It is the gathering and distribution of all client data to various business areas.

The idea behind customer relationship management (CRM) is to improve a business's capacity for client retention and give it a competitive edge. Through thorough and accurate analysis of consumer data using a variety of information technologies, it focuses on building and managing customer interactions more successfully (Gosney et al., 2000). Customer relationship management enhances the customer experience while also assisting the company in achieving its goals.

A study conducted in the United States in 2006 came to the conclusion that an organization's profitability is influenced by the level of services it provides to its customers, so it is important to manage these customers to get the most out of them. CRM as a plan goes beyond raising sales and transaction levels. Increasing profitability, revenue, and customer satisfaction are its primary goals. CRM is not a technical problem, but rather a strategic procedure. This represents a major paradigm shift and a quantum leap in the way we view our business activity.

Customer relationship management and relationship marketing are words that are frequently used interchangeably in marketing literature. According to Nevin (2015), these terms have been used to express a range of topics and viewpoints. Some of these topics present a constrained functional marketing perspective, whereas others present a broad, somewhat paradigmatic perspective. Database marketing has a limited view of customer relationship management because it emphasizes the marketing promotions connected to database work (Bickert, 2012).

CRM, in the opinion of Boulding et al. (2005), indicates a development past the preexisting notion. They looked at how CRM goes beyond current ideas by integrating all firm-wide activities, connecting them to both firm and customer value, extending this integration along the value chain, and developing the capacity to integrate these activities across the network of firms that cooperate to generate customer value while creating shareholder value for the firm. Additionally, CRM is regarded as an innovation in this study due to its novelty for organizations that have not yet adopted it and the technological component of its definition.

Concept of Organizational Survival

There are many meanings associated with the word "survival," both subjective and objective. Observing an organization's continued existence is the most scientific method to gauge its survival. Given the nature of mergers and acquisitions, this is troublesome (Delacroix & Glenn, 2013). To shed more light on the situation, consider using a resource dependence strategy (Pfeffer & Gerald, 2016). An organization "acquires inputs from suppliers and gives outputs to a given public (customers, clients, patients, etc.)" in order to continue operating. 1 When coalitions of resource providers are unable to be persuaded to provide resources and the company is unable to pay resource providers for prior assistance, the organization fails (Sheppard, 2012). The owners generally concur that the company has failed once it has filed for Chapter 11 bankruptcy (Moulton, 2008). In other words, the company has failed to return capital to investors and creditors in the agreed-upon way, to guarantee job security for employees, to pay taxes to cities, etc.

Organizational survival and expansion are implicit objectives that must be pursued with resources and effort (Jones & Bartlet, 2008). Organizations that don't prioritize life should reevaluate their strategy (Gross, 2018). All other objectives are supported by the objective of organizational survival (Gross, 2018). The achievement and execution of other organizational goals are aided by paying attention to this objective. According to Gross, every group has an unwritten rule based on the idea of survival. Organizational life cycle theory is based on the structure found in living things (Bernstein, 2015). Instead of using calendar years, organizations are evaluated according to their stages of growth and development. The stages are connected in a subtle and undetectable way, but it is important to remember that not every organization exhibits the characteristics of each phase as it advances.

Groups make an effort to keep things as they are, but the majority of their efforts are focused on surviving (Mindy, 2008). Therefore, it is crucial to spot both internal and external threats to an organization's survival. Mentoring is one of the variables in the idea of succession planning, according to Roddy (2004). Furthermore, he contends that the effectiveness of mentoring as a variable of succession planning on the organization depends significantly on the mentoring abilities of the mentors (Roddy, 2004), and the protégé should be provided with an environment that will encourage him to stay with the company (Amburgh et al., 2010). Additionally, organizational survival can further be expressed in terms of profitability, customer base, and sales volume.

Profitability: Profit is defined as the difference between a business's revenues and outlays and expenditures over a specific time period, typically an accounting period or a year (Baer & Sonnentag, 2015). It is the financial worth that a company receives as a return on investment. It is typically practically measured in monetary terms. According to Richard et al. (2017), when #2,500 is invested in a company and #3,000 is returned after transactional and commercial activities are completed, it is assumed that profit has been made, which is #500 (Profit = Return - Investment). Return on assets is one of the most popular metrics, as an illustration (Khandekar & Sharma, 2016). The yearly profit or net income is calculated as the net income divided by the average assets for the year. Profitability is a measure of an organization's ability or degree of greater financial gains from its business transactions, and as such, it is a measure of organizational success. This refers to the highest level of financial gains that groups realize from all of their business dealings over a specific time frame (typically a year). Since organizations' main goal is to maximize profit, profitability is an unquestionable indicator of their overall success. As a result, their capacity to increase revenue above and beyond costs can be used to assess their success.

Traditional accounting profit measures are frequently used in study. The yearly profit or net income divided by the average assets over the year is roughly how much return on assets is calculated. Researchers typically deduct the interest expense and the interest tax savings from the annual profit in order to calculate the numerator more accurately. Return on assets is a gauge of operational effectiveness that reflects an organization's long-term financial stability, as Baer and Sonnentag (2015) pointed out. It is impossible to say that an organization is operating well if it is experiencing cash flow problems or is losing money. Return on assets is a common metric, but it's not always the best metric. For instance, it is improper to compare businesses in various sectors using return on assets. Any industry's peculiarities will skew this score. For instance, because of the enormous reserves in the financial and insurance sectors, return on assets will typically understate these companies' profitability. According to Richard et al. (2017), managing working capital is crucial because it directly affects the firm's revenue and liquidity.

The main indicator of an enterprise's overall performance is profitability (Velnampy & Nimalthasan, 2016). Analysis of profitability ratios is crucial for the government, bankers, creditors, potential investors, and stockholders equally. Sales are favorably correlated with profitability ratios, with the exception of return on investment, according to Velnampy and Nimalthasan's (2016) analysis. Conversely, depositor numbers are negatively correlated with profitability ratios, with the exception of return equity. While Chandler and Jensen (2014) discovered that sales growth and profitability were unrelated, Sexton and Kasarda (2018) discovered a correlation between firm profitability and sustainable development.

This study defines profitability as the degree to which a corporate entity continues to generate financial resources above its financial costs. It also represents a measure of the gain from a material input. Every business organization has this as its primary goal, even when the emphasis is occasionally on offering services rather than on making a profit. The long-term objective is still to generate enough profit to offset periods when there is no profit or possibly a loss as they provide services. Organizations that want to be profitable always carefully calculate the profitability of any business endeavor they wish to engage in. The organization will not confidently enter the market until it is pleased with the calculation's outcome and other relevant variables. A business idea's capacity to be profitable is a key indicator of its viability. This is why it indicates whether a company is still in operation. And for that reason, it is a parameter used to assess an organization's success. When a business organization's profitability is assessed using its net interest margin, return on investment, and return on equity and is found to be insignificant, the organization is deemed to be earning little to no profit (Aljbiri, 2016). As a result, the business group will be considered to be performing poorly because of its poor profitability performance. A successful and powerful organization is better equipped to handle negative shocks and actively contribute to the security of the economy (Aljbiri, 2016).

Customer Base: One of the most important indicators of an organization's ability to survive is its customer base, which highlights the fact that every industry has a target market and that each business within that industry holds a share of that market (Kimberlee, 2018). According to Adamu (2019), a company's customer base is equivalent to the proportion of a market's overall sales that it generates over a given length of time. Operationally, the customer base of an organization is defined in terms of the number of account users who conduct business with the establishment. To determine a particular customer base, it is determined on a national level as well as more localized regional and local levels. The simplest method of determining a company's customer base is to take its total annual sales and split them by the total annual sales of the sector (Kimberlee, 2018).

A company's customer base is regarded as a crucial sign of its market competitiveness, or how well it is performing in comparison to its rivals (Corina et al., 2011). This metric aids managers in assessing both primary and selective demand in their market, along with changes in sales income. In other words, it allows them to assess trends in customers' choices among rivals in addition to the total customer base or decline. Sales growth that is driven by main demand (total customer base) is typically less expensive and more profitable than growth that is attained by stealing market share from rivals. Conversely, losses in customer base can indicate significant long-term problems that require strategic adaptations. Businesses with clientele below a certain threshold might not be able to survive. Similar to this, within a company's product line, customer base trends for specific goods are regarded as early warning signs of potential opportunities or issues in the future (Farris et al., 2010).

Although a company's customer base does not directly correlate to its profitability, it does offer important information about its revenues, development, and net profits. This relates to economies of size. The ability to service a greater number of customers more effectively and economically increases with an organization's size. From the standpoint of the average person, a business can serve each customer more cost-effectively the larger it is. Due to big wholesale orders, products or supplies are purchased at lower discounts (Kimberlee, 2018). A larger business with a larger customer base can therefore have a higher net profit even at the same price point as its rivals, making it a stronger company overall. As the business gains new customers from its rivals, it also allows it to offer more promotions or sales, increasing its customer base even further. Deposit money banks' customer bases typically act as a driving factor with a cumulative effect.

Sales Volume: The quantity sold during a reporting time is known as the sales volume (Raymond, 2020). This number is watched by investors to determine whether a company is growing or shrinking. Sales volume within an organization may be tracked at the level of a product, product line, client, subsidiary, or sales area. Any of these investments may be changed as a result of this knowledge.

A company may also keep track of its break-even sales volume, which is the quantity of units it must offer to break even. In order for management to decide when to implement cost reductions, the concept is helpful when sales are declining. When there are many various products, and particularly when each product has a different contribution margin, it can be challenging to apply this concept. Services can also use the idea of sales volume. For instance, the total number of hours invoiced in a month could be considered the consulting firm's sales volume. In this work, sales volume is defined as the quantity of goods and services sold over a given accounting time. For instance, if a business sold 100 medication strips per month for the entire year, its sales volume would be 1200. Sales volume and overall sales are completely unrelated. Total sales are calculated by multiplying the number of units sold by the product's unit cost, whereas sales volume represents all units sold during a specific time frame.

The quantity of items sold during a specific time period is used to calculate sales volume. As a result, the time is crucial for determining the sales volume. Calculating sales number can be done for any time frame, including weekly, monthly, quarterly, and yearly. To determine the sales volume, multiply the total number of products sold daily by the number of days. On the other hand, using the provided sales volume, it is possible to determine the estimated duration. For instance, if a business sells 500 pieces in a quarter, the monthly average would be 500/3, which is roughly 166.66 and 167. Therefore, the monthly sales number is approximately 167 units.

Sales volume is equal to the amount of units a business sold during the accounting period, such as a year (Ericson, 2018). In contrast to total sales, the sales volume metric places more emphasis on the number of goods sold than on financial profit. Contrary to appearances, sales volume is not less significant than overall sales. A key metric of a company's wellbeing is sales volume. It makes it possible to monitor the effectiveness of marketing campaigns, assess the work of sales representatives, and calculate the regions selected for physical shops.

Marketing professionals look for ways to sell more goods while keeping an eye on sales volume and total sales in order to increase income. If you operate a number of offline shops in the same city and the volume of goods sold varies significantly, you should pay close attention to the location decision because shopping opportunities are what drive this factor. Additionally, you can monitor sales amount for each sales rep. This will enable you to identify the staff member who sells the best, get rid of apathetic coworkers, or spend money on their education. Additionally, you will have a clearer idea of your best-selling goods as well as those that either require more promotional efforts or need to be terminated.

Methodology

The cross sectional explanatory survey research design was adopted for the study. The population of the study consisted of two hundred and eight (208) Information Managers consisting of 65 secretaries/administrative officers and 143 product/service representatives from selected fully registered telecommunication firms in Port Harcourt. Using census sampling technique, the entire population of 208 Information Managers became the sample, since it was not much for the researcher to handle.

The instrument for primary data was titled "Customer Relationship Management and Organizational Survival Index (CRMOSI). The design of the questionnaire was a five (5) point rating scale format with the following response options: Very High Extent (VGE) 5, High Extent (GE) 4, Moderate Extent (ME) 3, Low Extent (LE) 2 and Not At All (NAT) 1. The face and content validation of the instrument was done by the researcher's supervisor and two research experts in the Management Department of Ignatius Ajuru University of Education, Port Harcourt, Rivers State. The reliability of the instrument was carried out by Cronbach's alpha via SPSS (Statistical Package for the Social Sciences). The least Cronbach's alpha level obtained was 0.77 which indicated a highly reliable coefficient. Based on Nunnaly (1978) criterion of 0.70, reliability coefficient above 0.70 was considered as indicating good or reliable instruments.

A total of two hundred and eight (208) copies of the questionnaire were distributed to the targeted respondents. The researcher was able to retrieve 187 copies of the questionnaire correctly filled. The test of hypotheses was done using Spearman's Rank Order Correlation Coefficient via the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 20.0. The Spearman's (rho) correlation was used to analyze the relationship between independent and dependent variables at $P < 0.05$ (two-tailed test).

Analysis and Discussion

Stated in their null form, the analysis was carried out based on the hypotheses below:

Ho_1: Customer Relationship Management (CRM) does not any significant relationship with profitability of telecommunication firms in Port Harcourt.
Ho_2: Customer Relationship Management (CRM) does not any significant relationship with customer base of telecommunication firms in Port Harcourt.
Ho_3: Customer Relationship Management (CRM) does not any significant relationship with sales volume of telecommunication firms in Port Harcourt.

Table 1: Correlations between Customer Relationship Management and Organizational Survival

			Customer Relationship Management	**Profitability**	**Customer Base**	**Sales Volume**
Spearman's rho	**Customer Relationship Management**	Correlation Coefficient	1.000	0.667**	0.796**	0.864**
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.	.000	.000	.000
		N	187	187	187	187
	Profitability	Correlation Coefficient	0.667**	1.000	0.772**	0.773**
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.	.000	.000
		N	187	187	187	187
	Customer Base	Correlation Coefficient	0.796**	. 0.772**	1.000	0.639**
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.	.000
		N	187	187	187	187
	Sales Volume Dissemination	Correlation Coefficient	0.864**	0.773**	0.639**	1.000
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000	.
		N	187	187	187	187

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

Source: SPSS Output

Column two of table 1 above shows r value of 0.667 at a significant level of 0.00 which is less than the chosen alpha level of 0.05 for the hypothesis relating Customer Relationship Management and profitability. Since the significant level is less than the alpha level of 0.05, the null hypothesis (Ho_1) which states that Customer Relationship Management (CRM) does not any significant relationship with profitability of telecommunication firms in Port Harcourt was rejected. This implies that there is a strong positive relationship between Customer Relationship Management (CRM) and profitability of telecommunication firms in Port Harcourt.

Column three of table 1 above shows r value of 0.797 at a significant level of 0.00 which is less than the chosen alpha level of 0.05 for the hypothesis relating Customer Relationship Management (CRM) and customer base. Since the significant level is less than the alpha level of 0.05, the null hypothesis (Ho_2) which states that Customer Relationship Management (CRM) does not any significant relationship with customer base of telecommunication firms in Port Harcourt was rejected. This implies that there is a strong positive relationship between Customer Relationship Management (CRM) and customer base of telecommunication firms in Port Harcourt.

Column four of table 1 above shows r value of 0.864 at a significant level of 0.00 which is less than the chosen alpha level of 0.05 for the hypothesis relating Customer Relationship Management (CRM) and sales volume. Since the significant level is less than the alpha level of 0.05, the null hypothesis (Ho_3) which states that Customer Relationship Management (CRM) does not any significant relationship with sales volume of telecommunication firms in Port Harcourt was rejected. This implies that there is a very strong positive relationship between Customer Relationship Management (CRM) and sales volume of telecommunication firms in Port Harcourt. These results showed that the use of Customer Relationship Management (CRM) to manage customer information and carry out some other essentials that pertain to organization/customer relationship, results to improvement in resilience and competitive ability of the organization, especially in terms of profitability, customer base and sales volume.

Discussion

The empirical analyses carried out above showed that there is a very strong positive relationship between Customer Relationship Management (CRM) and organizational survival of telecommunication firms in Port Harcourt in terms of profitability, customer base and sales volume. This finding is in consonance with the position of Leton (2023) that the adoption of a digital platform such as Customer Relationship Management in managing existing and prospective customers, has proven to be very profitable in keeping business competitively afloat. Most often, digital customer relationship management is used to carry out an organized strategy to creating, managing, and keeping a profitable relationship with customers (Jacobson, 2016). The goal of digital customer relationship management is to partner with a select group of customers to generate superior value for both the business and the customer (Atul & Sheth, 2010). When clients and prospects are handled properly, the organization experiences successful business development (Leton, 2023).

The strategy of customer relationship management (CRM) has an impact on the efficiency of a company. CRM is used by businesses that provide goods and services, like telecommunication companies, to improve customer happiness, client loyalty, customer experience, sales, value, efficiency, and profitability. The telecommunications sector is aware of the value of customer relationship management (CRM) in today's company and how it can support client acquisition, client retention, and client understanding of lifetime value. For instance, the profiles of top clients assist telecommunication companies in finding ways to maximize their connections and organize sales activities to increase output. Companies with strong CRM can generate maximum sales and experience 20% annual growth; by contrast, those with weak CRM generate lower sales and only experience 4% annual growth (Lock, 2016). Friendly customer connections are what drive a company's expansion and profitability, which benefits the bottom line of the company. CRM is therefore used to rebrand the selling strategy of telecommunications businesses, giving them a competitive advantage and increasing productivity. The organization experiences positive business growth, thriving in profitability, customer base, and sales volume when clients and prospects are handled with the appropriate approach or strategies. Providing clients with quality service is one of these tactics, as is being open to their complaints and attempting to address them, as is recognizing their needs and authentically addressing them.

Customer relationship management is a crucial instrument that is designed to assist businesses in using their staff to comprehend the behavior of potential customers or clients and their values (worth). Therefore, it is the responsibility of organizations, through their human resource personnel, to deliver excellent customer service, skillfully cross-sell the company's products, streamline the marketing and sales processes, find new prospects and boost customer revenues, make telecommunication channels more effective, efficient, and accessible, and develop feedback channels to gauge how satisfied customers are with the telecommunications company's services and goods (Onut, 2007).

Customers can benefit from a professional approach to their requirements, up-to-date information, and greater access to telecommunication products and services by using customer relationship management (24-hour telecommunication services). Additionally, the company grows its customer base, maximizes the profitability of their partnership, and has the potential to succeed. A thriving company adds more value to the final product (income is available to be distributed). Organizational survival boosts competitive advantage and is measured in terms of a company's profitability, growth, clientele, volume of sales, and customer happiness. Customers are satisfied with goods and services, and businesses are productive as they flourish and successfully compete.

Findings

From the empirical analysis above, the following were found:

1. There is a strong positive relationship between Customer Relationship Management (CRM) and profitability of telecommunication firms in Port Harcourt.
2. There is a strong positive relationship between Customer Relationship Management (CRM) and customer base of telecommunication firms in Port Harcourt.
3. There is a very strong positive relationship between Customer Relationship Management (CRM) and sales volume of telecommunication firms in Port Harcourt.

Conclusions

According to the research, Customer Relationship Management (CRM) has a positive effect on an organization's success. The organization's continuous survival will be determined by how effectively the customer relationship is managed and how satisfied consumers are with the quality of service they receive. The performance and procedures of the organization's operations have been significantly impacted by the adoption of information technology. The capacity of the business to integrate technology like CRM into its offerings as well as the staff's technological know-how are key factors in determining whether the business will continue to exist. The study therefore concludes that the adoption of Customer Relationship Management to effectively establish the organization/customer relationship management enhances the survival of the organization, manifesting in terms of profitability, customer base and sales volume. Organizations such as telecommunication firms and other product and service organizations that understand the value of CRM and make the right move, will in the long run appreciate the positive outcomes.

Recommendations

Based on the findings, the following recommendations were made:

1. In order to keep a competitive advantage, businesses, especially telecommunications companies, should maintain a good relationship with their customers.
2. Management should regularly invest in staff training and development targeted at fostering long-term customer relationships.
3. Organizations should use technology to enhance internal service delivery as well as technical methods for measuring customer happiness.
4. Organizations should extend customer feedback channels while also continuing to analyze and evaluate customer relationship management.

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