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CHANGE IMPLEMENTATION AND COMPETITIVE POSITIONING

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ABSTRACT

Implementing complex organisational changes involves collective action by many people, each of whom contributes something. Implementation of a change may face significant problems if the requisite environment, technique and technologies are lacking. To test the relationship between change implementation and competitive positioning, this paper adopted the descriptive survey research design. The sample size for this study comprised 43,820 management employees of the telecommunication industry (NCC, 2012). Based on a proportional stratified sampling technique, the survey sample size calculator software was used to select 2,312 employees. A six-point Likert scale-type questionnaire used to collect data was validated by experts and a 0.81 Cronbach alpha coefficient confirmed its reliability. Of the 2,312 questionnaire copies administered, 1,435 were returned filled out. Change implementation had a significant relationship with competitive positioning ($R^2=0.251$, $p\text{-value}=0.0000 < 0.05$); hence, the result showed a positive significant relationship. The study concluded that change implementation significantly determined competitive positioning. The study recommends, among other things, that managers should make change implementation an integral part of change management so as to ensure competitive positioning. A major implication of the findings for the industry is that it has provided an insight into some of the implications change implementation can have on competitive positioning in the Nigerian telecommunications industry. The study argues that implementing change judiciously is necessary.

Key words: change implementation, competitive positioning, change management, competitive positioning

INTRODUCTION

A lot of resources may be committed towards bring a change but when the change implementation stage is erroneous, the intended firms' objectives may not be achieved. Implementing complex organisational changes involves collective action by many people, each of whom contributes something to the implementation effort. Because implementation is often a "team sport", problems arise when some feel committed to implementation but others do not. Herscovitch and Meyer (2002) observe that organisational members can commit to implementing an organisational change because they want to (they value the change), or they have to (they have little choice), or they ought to (they feel obliged). Commitment based on "want to" motives reflects the highest level of commitment to implement organisational change. Change implementation may be hampered by a lack of support for the change. Implementation of change may face significant problems if the required environment, techniques and technologies are lacking. Efforts to implement change could be institution-wide or focused at the departmental level; the reason for failure can nearly always be traced back to a lack of effective change management skills exhibited by the leader. More specifically, it is

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most often a leader's misunderstanding of organisational culture and human relations within that culture that may prevent successful implementation of change strategies. Implementing change in the Nigeria telecommunications industry might have been affected by the unstable economic and social factors of the Nigerian business environment.

Employee resistance to change is a complex issue facing management in the complex and ever-evolving Nigeria telecommunications industry of today. The process of change is ubiquitous, and employee resistance has been identified as a critically important contributor to the failure of many well-intended and well-conceived efforts to initiate change within organisations. In many cases, organisations have expended vast amounts of resources to adjust employees to a new way of achieving their desired goals. The natural propensity for individuals to "defend the status quo" presents a set of challenges that management must overcome in order to bring about the desired change. The objective of this study is to illustrate the significance of change implementation on competitive positioning.

HYPOTHESIS

H₀: There is no significant relationship between change implementation and competitive positioning.

The role that change implementation plays has not been clearly defined. The discrepancies in the steps needed to be taken when implementing change needs to be made clear.

SCOPE OF THE STUDY

The scope of this study covered the management level employees of the Nigerian telecommunications industry with a population of 30,724 employees. The sample representatives for this study are 2,312 employees. The proportional stratified sampling technique was adopted for this study. This study was carried out in Lagos State, Nigeria, where the head offices of the telecommunication companies are situated.

CHANGE IMPLEMENTATION

Whatever has been planned now needs to be implemented and focus should be shifted from planning to action. Attention also needs to be given to monitoring and control to ensure that things happen as intended. There are two basic approaches to implementing change. Sometimes change involves moving from A to B, where, before implementation, the nature of B is known and clearly defined. This kind of change is sometimes referred to as "blueprint" change. Typical examples of a blueprint change include relocation, the computerisation of a business process, or the introduction of a new appraisal or grading system. In these circumstances, it is easier to view the management of change from the perspective of "planned change" that involves a predetermined linear process (Nelson, 2003).

Often, however, it is not possible to specify the end point of a change in advance of implementation. While a need for change might be recognised, for example, if the organisation is losing market share or is failing to innovate as fast as its competitors, it may be less obvious what needs to be done to improve matters. There may be a broadly defined goal and a direction for change – for example, improving competitiveness – but it may not be possible to provide a detailed specification of what this end state will look like. In some situations, it may not even be helpful to think in terms of a specific end state because the rate of change in the operating environment may be such that the precise definition of a desirable end state may be subject to constant revision. In these circumstances, a blueprint approach to change is inappropriate. Change need to be viewed as a more open-ended and interactive process that emerges or evolves over time. Buchanan (2011) argues that this is not unusual and that change often unfolds in an iterative fashion and can involve much backtracking. Collins (2001) echoes this view and argues that the change process is often more like a series of loops rather than a straight line, reflecting the reality that things rarely progress as planned, and even when plans are

implemented as intended, there are often unanticipated consequences. Managers frequently report that for every step forward, they seem to fall back two steps and they constantly have to “fix things” to keep the change on track.

An emergent or evolutionary approach to change involves taking tentative incremental steps in what is hoped is the right direction. After each step, the step itself and the direction of the change are reviewed to establish if the step has worked and if the direction still holds good. As the process unfolds, it may be possible to define the end state more precisely or to take future steps with more confidence.

Even with blueprint changes, these feedback loops are important because feedback from implementation can lead to the identification of new problems and possibilities. It may have implications for planning further activities to bring about change and may even affect the definition of a more desirable end state, thus leading to a revision of the blueprint.

Sometimes the feedback may also alert change managers to the possibility that was originally perceived as a blueprint change so that it might be more appropriately approached and managed as an evolutionary change. But this feedback is not always available.

COMPETITIVE POSITIONING

Competitive position refers to the position a firm occupies in a market or is trying to occupy relative to competition. Competitive positioning is a summary of the way a company wants its target audience to perceive its products, its brands and its corporate reputation. Understanding how competitive rivals are positioned in the marketplace helps refine an organisation’s own business strategy so that competitive threats can be assessed to strengthen its own position. To build an understanding of a competitor’s positioning, it is important to analyse their communications, monitor analysts’ views of the marketplace, and research customers’ attitudes towards competitors. Competitive positioning is about defining how you will “differentiate” your offering and create value for your market. It is about carving out a spot in the competitive landscape and focusing your company on delivering on that strategy. Some of these strategies involve getting the market profile (i.e. size, competitors, stage of growth), customer segment (i.e. groups of prospects with similar wants and needs), analysis of the competition (i.e. strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats in the landscape), positioning strategy (i.e. how you will position your offering to focus on opportunities in the market) and value positioning (i.e. the type of value you will deliver to the market).

When your market clearly sees how your offering is different from that of your competitors, it is easier to generate new prospects and guide them to buy. Without differentiation, it takes more time and money to show customers why they should choose you. As a result, you often end up competing on price – a tough position to sustain over the long term.

One of the key elements of this positioning strategy is value proposition. There are three essential types of value: operational excellence, product leadership and customer intimacy.

Lewin’s Three-Step Change Theory and Model

Kurt Lewin (1945) introduced the three-step change model. This views behaviour as a dynamic balance of forces working in opposing directions. Driving forces facilitate change because they push employees in the desired direction. Restraining forces hinder change because they push employees in the opposite direction. Therefore, these forces must be analysed; Lewin’s three-step model can help shift the balance in the direction of the planned change.

According to Lewin (1945), the first step in the process of changing behaviour is to unfreeze the existing situation or status quo. The status quo is considered the equilibrium state. Unfreezing is necessary to overcome the strains of individual resistance and group conformity. Unfreezing can be achieved by the use of three methods: first, increasing the driving forces that direct behaviour away from the existing situation or status quo; second, decreasing the

restraining forces that negatively affect the movement from the existing equilibrium; and third, finding a combination of the two methods listed above. Some activities that can assist in the unfreezing step include: motivating participants by preparing them for change; building trust and recognition for the need to change; and actively participating in recognising problems and brainstorming solutions within a group (Robbins, 2003).

Lewin's second step in the process of changing behaviour is movement. In this step, it is necessary to move the target system to a new level of equilibrium. Three actions that can assist in the movement step include: persuading employees to agree that the status quo is not beneficial to them and encouraging them to view the problem from a fresh perspective; working together on a quest for new and relevant information; and connecting the views of the group to well-respected, powerful leaders that also support the change. The third step in Lewin's three-step change model is refreezing. This step needs to take place after the change has been implemented in order for it to be sustained or "stick" over time. It is most likely that the change will be short lived and the employees will revert to their old equilibrium (behaviours) if this step is not taken. It involves the actual integration of the new values into the community values and traditions. The purpose of refreezing is to stabilize the new equilibrium resulting from the change to balance both the driving and restraining forces. One action that can be used to implement Lewin's third step is to reinforce new patterns and institutionalise them through formal and informal mechanisms, including policies and procedures (Robbins, 2005).

In Lewin's model, there is a stipulation for three distinct steps in change management if it is to be effective. Those are unfreezing the present, moving from the present, and freezing the new model; without the last step, any change will be short-lived. In other words, you can cause needed change to occur. However, in order for change to be permanent, you must dismantle the present (and the capability to move back to the present), move from the present to the future and put in place the people and processes to ensure permanency (Lewin, 1951).

This model is still relevant in terms of what to do. However, the speed at which it must be done has increased dramatically. Lewin's model is one for planned change, which does not respond to unplanned change, yet it is applicable when unplanned change occurs.

Two of the most urgent challenges to radical change management are setting out appropriate aspirations and mobilising energy and ideas. However, a change path must be outlined and defined. Planning a change effort should involve various facets of an organisation and it is imperative for its people to be considering communication initially and throughout the change process. It is through the deliberate and disciplined action of management that organisations effectively implement change initiatives that cultivate success (Lloyd, 2009). Similarly, Suresh (2001) contests that the strategic goals of the firm must lead the change effort. The change effort must always take into account the firm's competitive strategy. A change implementation process has been posited as a process that includes the following: generating urgency; creating a vision; developing political support; managing the transition; and to sustaining momentum.

Some techniques focus on change in the task while others focus on the plans for attaining these goals. The commonly used structural approaches to change are goal-setting, job redesign, quality circles and strategic planning. All of these techniques of organisational development attempt to produce some kind of change in individual employee work group and or the entire organisation (Lunenborg, 2012). In line with the findings of Hans-Jurgen (2002), organisational change management methods and tools during implementation can play an important role in facilitating a change in process as well as in the corporate culture. The role change implementation can play has not been clearly defined and the discrepancies in the steps which are required to be taken when implementing the change need to be made stated clearly.

The study adopted a cross-sectional survey research design. The reason for the choice of this design was necessary because none of the variables was manipulated and no experiment was performed, as done in the study by Lunenburg (2012).

POPULATION

The population of this study consisted of all employees at the management level in the Nigerian telecommunications industry. The population is 30,724 management staff, as shown in Table 1 below.

Table 1 Population and sample size table

Firm	Population	Sample size
MTN Nigeria	11430	1860
Airtel Nigeria	15820	1190
Globacom Nigeria	2003	151
Etisalat Nigeria	1100	83
Visafone	300	23
Stacomms	71	05
Total	30724	2312

Source: Nigeria Communication Commission 2012

Sample Size and Sampling Techniques

In order to determine the sample size of 2,312 management employees in Table 1 above, to be extracted from the total number of management level staff, the sample size calculator from the survey software (developed by Creative Research System) was used (www.surveysystem.com), which has room for a confidence level of 95% to 99%, but 98% was used as the generally accepted standard for social and management sciences. The confidence interval is also 1.96 according to the level of confidence used from the normal statistic table.

However, after using this software, a sample size of 2,312 was generated by the software. To determine the number of samples of the communication company, each of the communication companies served as a stratum, making six strata in total. Proportional allocation was used to determine the number of samples selected from each company since the stratum size differs.

At this point, the researchers selected the numbers of respondents from the total size from each of the telecommunications companies. A random number generator was used from Smith's Statistical Package.

SAMPLING METHOD

The proportionate stratified random sampling method was used for this study. Jankowicz (2003) described this method as dividing the population into sub-groups on the factor in question, keeping the list separate in your frame, and choosing sub-samples at random with each separate list. However, the sum of each of the sub-samples amounts to the sample size. The stratified random sampling method is a type of probabilistic sampling method.

2,312 copies of the questionnaire were administered on the respondents with the help of three research assistants at the head offices of the selected telecommunications firms. After two weeks of administration, 1,402 questionnaires were returned, out of which 1,345 were subjected to analysis.

Table 2. Change implementation

QUESTIONS	MEAN	MODE	STD. DEV.	VAR	SUM	N
The project lead for the change is known and project champions aid the planning and implementation	4.43	4	1.191	1.418	6358	143
There are long periods of planning before the change is delivered	4.38	5	1.008	1.016	6281	1435
The implementation of the change within your role is managed solely by the organisation	4.26	4	1.040	1.082	6109	1435
There are logical reasons for change which are visible and the goals are transparent	4.22	4	1.048	1.098	6053	1435
Good ideas for change are hidden and used for personal agendas	4.13	4	1.116	1.246	5922	1435
Change is expected without being linked to incentives	4.20	4	1.041	1.084	6008	1429
Communication about change is limited to only those directly concerned with the project	4.32	4	1.149	1.321	6202	1434
There are delays in the timescales that are set in the change project	4.11	4	.979	.958	5899	1435
The process of implementation for the change is flexible and reactive	4.19	5	.873	.762	6010	1435
Once the implementation has taken place user involvement in the project begins	4.44	4	.940	.884	6371	1435
There are predetermined guidelines for how the system implementation is to be managed and these are followed	4.61	5	1.178	1.388	6621	1435
Implementation leadership is unclear and champions are not utilised effectively	4.21	4	1.102	1.214	6047	1435
The reasons for change are unclear and there are different views of the goals of the implementation	4.24	5	1.173	1.375	6078	1435
Ideas are openly communicated and encouraged within the implementation	4.30	5	.970	.940	6137	1426
The direction of the implementation is influenced by resistance	4.16	4	.972	.946	5948	1429
Incentives are linked with the implementation to aid the process of change	4.20	4	1.045	1.092	6025	1435
Implementation communications are open and readily available	4.31	4	1.029	1.059	6171	1432
Key implementation personnel are chosen, put in charge and left unchanged	4.24	4	1.073	1.150	6074	1434

Wide timescales for the implementation deliverables are set and goals are met	4.25	4	.917	.842	6086	1432
The project is implemented by people with the necessary core skills in a clearly defined and tracked manner	4.48	5	1.009	1.019	6427	1434
There is a feeling that everyone is focused on the same goals and objectives	4.42	5	1.087	1.181	6346	1435
Employees are able to take ownership and influence details of the change	4.41	5	1.057	1.117	6324	1435
There is appreciation of how the change will take place and how it will be effectively communicated	4.48	4	.951	.905	6431	1435
There is assistance from the project owners, project infrastructure and training specialists to create a supportive environment	4.35	5	1.035	1.071	6249	1435

The respondents were also evaluated on their readiness for change implementation in their various units. The researcher uses twenty-four questions for this, based on a six-point likert scale. However, it was observed in Table 2 that the majority of the respondents picked “fairly agreed” to implementing change with an average for each of the question ranging from 4.11 to 4.61. This shows that since the managers were not ready for change, they found it difficult to implement it.

DESCRIPTIVE STATISTICS OF CHANGE IMPLEMENTATION

335 respondents (23.3%) strongly agreed that the project for change is known and project champions aid the planning and implementation. 371 (25.9%) respondents agreed, while 384 (26.8%) respondents fairly agreed. However, 272 respondents (19.0%) fairly disagreed, 68 respondents (4.7%) strongly disagreed. 167 respondents (11.6%); 527 respondents (36.7%) and 486 (33.9%) strongly agreed, agreed and fairly agreed, respectively, that there is a long period of planning before the change is delivered. However, 198 respondents (13.8%) fairly disagreed, 49 respondents (3.4%) disagreed while eight respondents (0.6%) strongly disagreed. 171 respondents (11.9%) strongly agreed that implementation of the change within their role is managed solely by the organisation. Similarly, 374 respondents (26.1%) agreed, while 631 respondents (44%) fairly agreed. However, 204 (14.2%) fairly disagreed; 22 (1.5%) respondents disagreed and 33 respondents (2.3%) strongly disagreed.

It was observed that 140 respondents (9.8%) strongly agreed that there are logical reasons for change which are visible and the goals are transparent. 417 respondents (29.1%) agreed while 601 respondents (41.9%) fairly agreed. In contrast, 204 respondents (14.2%) fairly disagreed, 39 respondents (2.7%) disagreed and 34 respondents (2.4%) strongly agreed.

185 respondents (12.9%) suggest that good ideas for change are hidden and used for personal agendas; 305 respondents (21.3%) agreed while 556 respondents (38.7%) fairly agreed. In contrast, 317 respondents (22.1%) fairly disagreed, 40 respondents (2.8%) disagreed and 32 respondents (2.2%) strongly disagreed.

That change is expected without being linked to incentives was strongly agreed to by 118 respondents (8.2%); 440 respondents (30.7%) agreed while 618 respondents (43.1%) fairly agreed. In contrast, 147 respondents (10.2%) fairly disagreed, 81 respondents (5.6%) disagreed while 25 respondents (1.7%) strongly disagreed.

Some of the respondents (259), representing 18%, strongly agreed that communication about change is limited to only those directly concerned with the project. 357 respondents

(24.9%) agreed while 502 respondents (35.0%) fairly agreed. However, 251 respondents (2.6%) disagreed and 28 respondents (2%) strongly disagreed.

136 respondents (9.5%) strongly agreed that there are delays in the time scales that are set in the change project, while 302 respondents (21.0%) agreed and 645 respondents (44.9%) fairly agreed. In contrast, 291 respondents (20.3%) fairly disagreed, 59 respondents (4.1%) disagrees and 2 respondents (0.1%) strongly disagreed.

Very few respondents (33), representing 2.3%, strongly agreed that the process of implementation for the change is flexible and reactive. Similarly, 559 respondents (39%) and 529 respondents (36.9%) agreed and fairly agreed, respectively. However, 281 respondents (19.6%) fairly disagreed, 25 respondents (1.76%) disagreed and eight respondents (0.6%) strongly disagreed.

149 respondents (10.4%) suggest that implementation leadership is unclear and champions are not utilised effectively. 453 respondents (31.6%) agreed and 505 respondents (35.2%) fairly agreed. In contrast, 253 respondents (17.6%) fairly disagreed, 34 respondents (2.4%) disagreed and 41 respondents (2.9%) strongly disagreed.

158 respondents (11%) strongly agreed, 526 respondents (36.7%) agreed, while 405 respondents (28.2%) fairly agreed that the reasons for change are unclear and there are different views of the goals of the implementation.

It was observed that 189 respondents (13.2%) strongly agreed that once the implementation has taken place, user involvement in the project begins. Similarly, 478 respondents (33.3%) agreed while 578 respondents (40.3%) fairly agreed. However, 163 respondents fairly disagreed, 19 respondents (1.3%) disagreed and eight respondents (0.6%) strongly disagreed. 24.7% of the respondents, amounting to 354 respondents, strongly agreed that there are predetermined guidelines for how the system implementation is to be managed and are followed. Similarly, 538 respondents (37.5%) agreed, while 252 respondents (17.6%) fairly agreed. In contrast, 249 respondents (17.4%) fairly disagreed, 10 respondents (0.7%) disagreed and 32 respondents (2.2%) strongly disagreed.

It was observed that 95 respondents (6.6%) strongly agreed that ideas are openly communicated and encouraged within the implementation. 562 respondents (39.2%) agreed while 533 respondents fairly agreed (37.1%). However, 175 respondents (12.2%) fairly disagreed, 39 respondents (2.7%) disagreed and 22 respondents (1.5%) strongly disagreed.

118 respondents (8.2%) strongly agreed, 353 respondents (24.6%) agreed and 694 respondents (48.4%) fairly agreed that the direction of the implementation is influenced by resistance, while 181 respondents (12.6%) fairly disagreed, 73 respondents disagreed and 10 respondents (0.7%) strongly disagreed.

It is observed that 169 respondents (11.8%) strongly agreed that incentives are linked with the implementation to aid the process of change; 281 respondents (19.6%) agreed, 781 respondents (54.4%) fairly agreed. However, 110 respondents fairly disagreed, 58 respondents disagreed while 36 respondents (2.5%) strongly disagreed, 194 respondents (13.5%) strongly agreed, 374 respondents (26.1%) agreed and 617 respondents (43.0%) fairly agreed with the statement that implementation communications are open and readily available. However, 195 respondents (13.6%) fairly disagreed, 32 respondents (2.2%) disagreed while 20 respondents (1.4%) strongly disagreed.

Some of the respondents (186), representing 13%, strongly agreed that key implementation personnel are chosen, put in charge and left unchanged. 377 (26.3%) agreed while 532 respondents fairly agreed. In contrast, 293 respondents (20.4%) fairly disagreed, 20 respondents (1.4%) disagreed and 26 respondents (1.8%) strongly disagreed.

57 respondents (4.0%) strongly agreed, 540 respondents (37.6%) agreed and 628 respondents (43.8%) fairly agreed with the statement that a time scale for the implementation deliverables is set and goals are met. However, 144 respondents (10.0%) fairly disagreed, 37

respondents (2.6%) and 26 respondents (1.8%) strongly disagreed. 21 respondents (14.7%) strongly agreed that the project is being implemented by people with the necessary core skills in a clearly defined and tracked manner. 524 respondents (36.5%) agreed while 506 respondents (35.3%) fairly agreed. However, 154 respondents (10.7%) fairly disagreed, 16 respondents (1.1%) disagreed and 23 respondents (1.6%) strongly disagreed.

212 respondents (14.8%) strongly agreed that there is a feeling that everyone is focused on the same goals and objectives. Similarly, 518 respondents (36.1%) agreed while 458 (31.9%) fairly agreed. In contrast, 193 respondents (13.4%) fairly disagreed, 19 respondents (1.3%) disagreed and 35 respondents (2.4%) strongly disagreed. 172 respondents (12%) strongly agreed, 558 respondents (38.9%) agreed while 495 respondents (34.5%) fairly agreed that employees are able to take ownership and influence details of the change. However, 132 respondents (9.2%), 48 respondents (3.3%) and 30 respondents fairly disagreed, disagreed and strongly disagreed, respectively. It was observed that 235 respondents (16.4%) strongly agreed, 425 respondents (29.6%) agreed while 598 respondents (41.7%) fairly agreed that there is appreciation of how the change will take place and be effectively communicated. In contrast, 154 respondents (10.7%) fairly disagreed, 19 respondents (1.3%) disagreed and four respondents (0.3%) strongly disagreed. 168 respondents (11.7%) strongly agreed that there is assistance from project owners and training specialist to create a supportive environment. Similarly, 518 respondents agreed while 478 respondents (33.3%) fairly agreed. However, 214 respondents (14.9%) fairly agreed, 40 respondents (7.8%) disagreed and 17 respondents (1.2%) strongly disagreed.

Table 3. Competitive Positioning

QUESTIONS	MEAN	MODE	STD. DEV.	VAR	SUM	N
The company has a strategy to attract and retain customers	4.59	5	1.137	1.293	6591	1435
The incumbent competitors have products or services that can compete successfully with your company's products or services	4.44	5	1.027	1.054	6373	1435
The incumbent competitors have the operational capacity or capacity to compete successfully against your company's product or services	4.48	5	.986	.973	6328	1414
Your company has introduced your products and services and established a position in the marketplace undetected by your competitors	4.85	5	.983	.967	6933	1430
Specific competitors can be successful in responding to your entry in the market	4.87	5	.985	.970	6972	1431
Your product or service can address 20% of the market size	5.00	5	.944	.891	7091	1418

Our product or service is essential to our prospective customers	4.91	5	1.033	1.067	7026	1430
Our core product or service is also a core product or service for our competitors	4.95	5	.932	.869	7089	1431
Meetings with potential lead customers confirm the “must-have” nature of our products or services	4.71	5	1.060	1.123	6743	1431
Competitors activities confirm that the market is demanding solutions like our products or services as “must-haves” rather than “nice-to-haves”	4.57	4	.997	.995	6503	1422
Our product or service fills gaps in the current product or service offerings of our competitors	4.58	5	1.056	1.114	6549	1431
Many early adopters like to purchase your product and services within the first one to two years after launch	4.45	4	1.153	1.330	6339	1425
The early adopters of your products or services are nurtured when captured	4.61	5	.979	.958	6588	1430
Competitors face barriers in responding to your innovative products or services	4.64	5	1.050	1.102	6646	1431
Competitors chose to deploy their current market position aggressively in response to the entry of your product or services into market	4.64	5	1.155	1.333	6644	1431

On whether their company can complete relatively well with other telecommunication companies within the country, most of the respondents perceived their respective company as being able to complete well with others, as the majority of them “agreed” with the questions. Table (3) above shows the average responses to questions relating to competitive positioning ranging from 4.45 to 4.95. Managers are aware of their roles even at times of change in the competitive market.

DESCRIPTIVE STATISTICS OF COMPETITIVE POSITIONING

It was observed that 371 respondents (24.9%) strongly agreed that the company has a strategy to attract and retain customers. 436 respondents (30.4%) agreed while 346 respondents (24.1%) fairly agreed. However, 248 respondents (17.3%) fairly disagreed, 23 respondents (1.6%) disagreed and 11 respondents (0.8%) strongly disagreed.

208 respondents, representing 14.5 %, strongly agreed that the incumbent competitors have products or services that can compete successfully with their company’s products or services. Similarly, 539 respondents (37.6%) agreed and 407 respondents (28.4%) fairly agreed. But it was also observed that 248 respondents (17.3%) fairly disagreed, 25 respondents (1.7%) disagreed and 9 respondents (0.6%) strongly disagreed. 395 respondents, representing 27.5%, strongly agreed that their company has introduced its products and services and established a position in the market place undetected by their competitors. It was also observed that 571 respondents (39.8%) agreed while 360 respondents (25.1%) fairly agreed. However,

72 respondents (5%) fairly disagreed, 20 respondents (1.4%) disagreed and 12 respondents (0.8%) strongly disagreed.

It was observed that 413 respondents, representing 28.8%, strongly agreed that specific competitors can be successful in responding to their entry in the market. Similarly, 569 respondents (39.7%) agreed and 47 respondents (24.2%) fairly agreed. However, 66 respondents fairly disagreed, 27 respondents disagreed and 9 respondents (0.6%) strongly disagreed. 502 respondents, representing 35.0%, strongly agreed that their product or service could address 20% of the market size; 508 respondents (35.4%) agreed and 341 respondents (23.8%) fairly agreed. It is also observed that 52 respondents (3.6%) fairly disagreed, four respondents (0.3%) disagreed and 11 respondents (0.8%) strongly disagreed.

It was observed that 428 respondents (29.8%) strongly agreed that their product or services was essential to their prospective customers. Similarly, 625 respondents (43.6%) agreed, while 278 respondents fairly agreed. In contrast, 50 respondents (3.5%) fairly disagreed, 22 respondents (1.5%) disagreed and 27 respondents (1.9%) strongly disagree. 433 respondents (30.35) strongly agreed, 634 respondents (44.2%) agreed and 249 respondents (17.4%) fairly agreed that core product or service is also a core or services for their competitors. It was also observed that 97 respondents fairly disagreed, 16 respondents disagreed and two respondents (0.1%) strongly disagreed.

It was observed that 339 respondents (23.6%) strongly agreed that meeting potential lead customers confirm the “must-have” nature of their products or services. In the same vein, 589 respondents (41.0%) agreed and 310 respondents (21.6%) fairly agreed. But 152 respondents (10.6%) fairly disagreed while 27 respondents (1.9%) disagreed and 14 respondents (1%) strongly disagreed. 260 respondents, representing 18.1%, strongly agreed, 486 respondents (33.9%) agreed and 541 respondents (37.7%) fairly agreed, respectively, that competitors’ activities confirm that the market is demanding solutions like their product or services as “must-haves” rather than “nice-to-haves”. In contrast 105 respondents (7.3%) fairly agreed, 4 respondents (0.3%) disagreed and 26 respondents (1.8%) strongly disagreed.

It was also observed that 275 respondents (19.2%) strongly agreed that their product or service fills gaps in the current product or services offerings to our competitors. Similarly, 520 respondents (36.2%) agreed and 461 respondents (32.1%) fairly agreed. However, 137 respondents (9.5%) fairly disagreed and six respondents (0.4%) disagreed, while 32 respondents (2.2%) strongly disagreed. 314 respondents, representing 21.9%, strongly agreed that many new adopters like to purchase products and services within the first one to two years from launch. But 339 respondents (23.6%) agreed, while 538 respondents, constituting 37.5%, fairly agreed. Nonetheless, 175 respondents (12.2%) fairly disagreed, 24 respondents (1.7%) disagreed and 35 respondents (2.4%) strongly disagreed.

In another observation, 274 respondents, constituting 19.1%, strongly agreed that the early adopters of products or services are nurtured when captured. In a similar vein, 523 respondents (36.4%) agreed, while 461 respondents (32.1%) fairly agreed. In contrast, 147 respondents (10.2%) fairly disagreed, while 19 respondents (1.3%) disagreed and six respondents (0.4%) strongly disagreed. A fair size of the respondents (322), representing 22.4%, strongly agreed that competitors face barriers in responding to their innovative products or services. In a similar vein, 537 respondents (37.4%) agreed, while 328 respondents (22.9%) fairly agreed. However, 136 respondents (9.5%) fairly disagreed, 59 respondents disagree while 21 respondents (1.5%) strongly disagreed.

Hypothesis Test

TABLE 4. Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.501 ^a	.251	.251	.919

a. Predictors: (Constant), there is assistance from the project owners, project infrastructure, and training specialist to create a supportive environment. Once the implementation has taken place, user involvement in the project begins. Good ideas for change are hidden and used for personal agendas. The project lead for the change is known and project champions aid the planning and implementation..The process of implementation for the change is flexible and reactive

TABLE 5. ANOVA^a

Model		Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	1769.831	5	353.966	419.211	.000 ^b
	Residual	5271.356	6243	.844		
	Total	7041.187	6248			

a. Dependent Variable: There is a feeling that everyone is focused on the same goals and objectives

b. Predictors: (Constant), there is assistance from the project owners, project infrastructure, training specialist to create a supportive environment. Once the implementation has taken place user involvement in the project begins. Good ideas for change are hidden and used for personal agendas. The project lead for the change is known and project champions aid the planning and implementation. The process of implementation for the change is flexible and reactive

Model	Unstandardised Coefficients		Standardised Coefficients	T	Sig.	
	B	Std. Error	Beta			
1	(Constant)	.481	.092		5.253	.000
	The project lead for the change is known and project champions aid the planning and implementation	.126	.011	.139	11.677	.000
	Good ideas for change are hidden and used for personal agendas	-.029	.011	-.030	-2.568	.010
	The process of implementation for the change is flexible and reactive	.249	.015	.198	16.516	.000
	Once the implementation has taken place user involvement in the project begins	.228	.014	.200	16.453	.000
	There is assistance from the project owners, project infrastructure, training specialist to create a supportive environment	.332	.013	.293	25.770	.000

TABLE 6. Coefficients

Result: In order to test this hypothesis, primary data was used. Questions relating to the hypothesis were picked and weighed before the regression was built.

The dependent variables (y) for this model is the question whether there is a feeling that everyone is focused on the same goals and objectives.

The independent variables are:

1. There is assistance from the project owners, project infrastructure, (x₃₁) training specialist to create a supportive environment.
2. Once the implementation has taken place, user involvement in the project begins (x₃₂).
3. Good ideas for change are hidden and used for personal agendas.
4. The project lead for the change is known and project champions aid the planning and implementation (x₃₄).
5. The process of implementation for the change is flexible and reactive (x₃₅).

The ANOVA table (Table 5) shows a significant value of 0.000 with a sum of squares regression of 1769.831 and a sum of squares residual at 5271.356. The model is significant, which implies that the model is adequate in establishing the relationship between the dependent and independent variables.

The model summary (Table 4) shows that there is a weak positive relationship between the dependent and the independent variables (R=0.501). Also, the coefficient of determination is 0.251, which implies that about 23.1% variation change focused on the same goals and objectives is caused by the joint effect of the independent variables considered. The model standard error is 0.919. All the independent variables considered are significant with sig. values less than 0.05 significance level.

The model is:

$$y_3 = 0.481 + 0.126X_{31} + 0.029X_{32} + 0.249X_{33} + 0.228X_{34} + 0.332X_{35}$$

We then conclude by accepting the alternative hypothesis: there is a significant relationship between change implementation and competitive positioning.

DISCUSSION

There is significant relationship between change implementation and competitive positioning. The outcome of these findings confirms that change implementation is an integral path to change management sustaining competitive positioning. Dicke (2012) suggests that in implementing change, it is important not to apply generic solutions to local challenges but rather a customised solution which has not been imported from another organisational context.

Downs (2012) suggests that in implementing planned change, an attempt is made to produce some kind of change in individual employees, work groups and/or the entire organisation. In the same vein, organisational change management methods and tools during change implementation can play an important role in facilitating change in the process as well as in the corporate culture.

Doorewaard and Bens (2002) also supported the findings of this research. However, Dann (2010) suggests that implementing change, and understanding the change management process, should be in the context of organisational culture. Hughes (2011) shared a similar view with the research findings: the change implementation process is a tool for the development of an organisation and its effectiveness as a system. It is through the deliberate and disciplined action of management that organisations effectively implement change initiatives that cultivate success (Lewis, 2000).

Many change projects have been abandoned mid-implementation after huge funds and management time has been committed. It is a pity that some of the organisations with this kind of regrettable experience have either not recovered fully from the wasted investment or have ceased to exist. For instance, efforts to automate the operations of various federal and state government ministries and agencies in Nigeria are far from being realized, despite the commitment of huge amounts of money and time to these tasks over time. Many of the projects have been abandoned and there is hardly any government ministry in Nigeria that is fully automated. Another example is the national identity card programme embarked upon by the Nigerian government more than two decades ago. The change was resisted but the government went ahead with it. However, from all indications, the project has been abandoned and all economic, financial and other resources committed have been wasted. The pre-implementation stage is a foundation for the implementation stage. Faulty pre-implementation programmes often culminate in serious problems that truncate the process of change at the implementation stage.

According to Ogilvie and Stork (2002), it is necessary for management to set up a standing committee to be proactive in identifying problems and resistance during the implementation and to find solutions immediately. When it cannot prevent problems and resistance, it should at least find effective solutions. The standing committee should be composed of all departments affected by the process change and should meet on a regular basis and, when the need arises, discuss problems and solutions.

Min-Chew, Cheng and Lazarevic (2006) submit in their research that to identify the key steps that could improve the management of change, literature relating to organisational culture, the need for change, and types of change and resistance to change was used. The research has demonstrated how well-planned change helps to ensure that it is successfully implemented. Critical to successful change is the alignment of organisational culture to support these new processes.

Lewin identified three steps to change: unfreezing, moving and refreezing (Lewis, 2000). Minimising barriers to change and maximising the opportunities for a change effort are accentuated in the unfreezing process. In the moving stage, recognition of a need for change and the acceptance of change have to take place in the workforce. Accordingly, managers, as change agents, are expected to restore or reinforce the new system actively with all employees in the refreezing step. This simple three-step model explains the importance of implementing

successful change by unfreezing the existing situation, followed by change movement and making the new behaviours and norms standard.

According to Chew, Cheng and Petrovic (2006), change efforts mainly focused on business and cost-driven initiatives. This observation suggests that organisational leaders should give careful attention to how each activity can be designed and well-integrated when planning and implementing organisational change.

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

There is no significant relationship between change implementation and competitive positioning. This objective was tested using primary data extracted from the questionnaires administered. Five independent variables were used to test the hypothesis and it was observed that the significant value was 0.000 from the F-test; all the five independent variables were significant, which implies that all the variables contribute to the dependent variable (there is a feeling that everyone is focused on the same goals and objectives). The model derived is significant; therefore, the paper concludes by accepting the alternative hypothesis that there is a significant relationship between change implementation and competitive positioning. The objective, to illustrate of the significance of change implementation on competitive positioning, was attained.

CONCLUSION

Change implementation contributes significantly to competitive positioning. It can be asserted that the process for the implementation of change should be flexible and that there should be predetermined guidelines for how the implementation is to be managed. These are listed as incentives that are linked with implementation to aid the process of change; the change should be being implemented by people with the necessary core skills and when everyone is focused on the same goals and objectives. Organisations are now finding it more difficult to cope with the myriad changes necessitated by environmental adjustments so as to maximise competitive positioning. Hence, this study has aimed at determining the empirical relationship between change management and competitive positioning.

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