



**AN IMPACT ASSESSMENT OF STRATEGIC MANAGEMENT IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF
THE TELECOMMUNICATIONS INDUSTRY IN SIERRA LEONE
CASE STUDY: AFRICELL SIERRA LEONE**

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Abstract

The study aimed at assessing the effectiveness of strategic management in the growth of telecommunication companies. To achieve the purpose of the study, the researchers used the following objectives:

- To access the various strategies implemented by strategies in the field of telecommunication and to explore whether or not these strategies are subject to change in an organization.
- To identify the individuals responsible for strategic decisions that has a bearing on the growth and development of an organization
- To analyze the strength, weakness, opportunities and threat of an organization
- To explore to which extent employees are knowledgeable about the concept “strategic management” and how this has enabled an organization to achieve its goals.

In the end, there is still a gap in customer satisfaction among respondents, competitive tariff even though there are challenges in doing so and employees’ motivation was not considered very important.

The researcher uses a sample size of fifty (50) respondents and a descriptive study design. The researcher also used a questionnaire to elicited information from respondents.

According to findings, effort should be made by service providers to take the necessary action for them to know the effect that will make customers more satisfied in choosing their services and also retain the existing customers and attract new customers into their company. The telecommunication industry should adopt first mover advantage strategic concept whereby a firm that is early in the market can establish a customer base, which increases the firm’s likelihood of surviving a price war that might ensure following the entrance of rivals, and discourage entering rivals from starting a price war, since they are likely to lose. Empowerment should be given to employees.

Keywords: Effectiveness, Strategic Management, Growth, Telecommunication Companies, Strength, Weakness, Opportunities, Threat, Price war, Empowerment

Introduction

To start with, strategic management is an art and science put together to formulate, implement and evaluate cross-functional decision that enables an organization to achieve its objectives.

Strategic management focuses on integrating management, marketing, finance/accounting, production, operation, research and development and computing information system to achieve organizational success.

Strategic management is not static in nature; the model often includes a feedback loop to monitor execution and inform the next round of planning.

Strategies are another key aspect in strategic management. These are the means by which long-term objectives will be achieved. Therefore, business strategies include: integration strategies, intensive strategies, diversification strategies and defensive strategies.

In order for an organization to be proactive rather than being reactive to management, time and resources to identify objectives, strategic management must be given due consideration.

Africell-Sierra Leone launched its operation in 2005 and now covers more than 76% of the population in Sierra Leone. Africell has been the market leader since 2009, with more than four million active subscribers and a growing footprint of 3G and 4G services. Data revenues drive Africell growth with 20% of customer recharges being for data products, a rate of which is trending upwards. Moreover, Africell-Sierra Leone holds a wide-ranging list of accomplishments and awards including the “All Works of Life” award and was previously granted the “The Company of the Year” award as well.

Africell is a Gambian Telecommunication Company with its headquarters located at Wilberforce in the west end of Freetown, Sierra Leone. It has several offices and smaller outlets in the western, northern, southern and eastern regions of Sierra Leone, in order to increase effective service delivery to their valued subscribers. This telecommunication company is shaped by traditional African values, placing the communities they operate in the heart of their business. Africell’s core strategy is to connect and empower local communities and targets the youth population of Sierra Leone.

Despite the endless effort by strategists in the telecommunications management domain, poor network coverage’s especially in remote communities, poor service deliveries, poor employment motivational strategies, poor motivational strategies for customers etc. still prevail in telecommunication companies’ right across Sierra Leone.

These problems lead to reduction in the accessibility in telecommunication by customers, subscribers switching to other telecommunication companies seeking better and affordable services, a decline in the efficiency and productivity of employees that might lead to total break-down or closure of non-competitive mobile companies.

The objectives of this paper are:

The main objective of this study is to critically assess the effectiveness of strategic management in organizational growth of mobile companies.

- To assess the various strategies implemented by strategists in the field of telecommunication and to explore whether these strategies are subject to change in an organization.
- To identify the individuals responsible for strategic decisions that have a bearing on the growth and development of an organization.
- To explore to the extent to which employees are knowledgeable about the concept of “strategic management” and how this has enabled an organization to achieve its goals.

Literature Review

Theoretical Literature

Strategy: This can be seen as the means by which long term objective can be achieved within the business environment. Business strategies may include geographical expansion diversification, acquisition, product development, market penetration, retrenchment, divestiture, liquidation, and joint venture.

However, strategy can also be seen as creating opportunities by building on an organization’s resources and competence. This is called resources-based view of strategy.

Stages in Strategic Management

The strategic management process consists of three stages. These include Strategy formulation, Strategy implementation and Strategy evaluation.

- Strategy formulation is the first stage in strategic management. It involves developing a business mission, identifying an organization external opportunities and threats, determine internal strength and weakness, establishing long term objectives, generating alternative strategy and choosing particular strategy to pursue. Strategy formulation issues include deciding what new business to enter, what business to abandon, how to allocate resources, whether to expand operation or diversify, whether to enter international market, whether to merge or form a joint venture and how to avoid hostile takeover. Top managers have the best perspective to fully undertake the ramifications of formulation decision they have the authority to commit the resources necessary for implementation.
- Strategy implementation is often called the action stage in strategic management. Implementation means mobilizing employees and managers to put formulated strategies in action. This stage is often considered to be the most difficult stage in strategic management; strategy implementation requires personal discipline, commitment and sacrifice. Strategy implementation activities affect all employees and managers in an organization. Every division and department must decide an answer to question such as “what must be done to implement our part of the organization strategy?” “And “how best can we get the job done?” The challenge of implementation is to stimulate managers and employees throughout an organization to work with pride and enthusiasm towards achieving stated objectives.
- Strategy evaluation is the final stage in strategic management. Managers desperately need to know what particular strategies are not working well. Strategy evaluation is the primary means for obtaining this information. All strategies are subject to future modification because internal and external factors are constantly changing. The three fundamental strategy evaluation activities are: reviewing internal and external factors that are the basic for current strategy measuring performance and taking corrective actions. Strategy evaluation is needed because success today is not guarantee of success tomorrow.

Benefit of Strategic Management

Strategic management allows an organization to be more proactive than reactive in shaping its own future. It allows an organization to initiate and influence (rather than just respond to) activities, and thus to exert control over its own destiny. Small business owners, chief executive officers, presidents, and managers of many profit and nonprofit organizations have recognized and realized the benefits of strategic management.

Historically, the principal benefit of strategic management has been to help organizations make better strategies through the use of a more systematic, logical and rational approach to strategic choice. This certainly continues to be a major benefit of strategic management, but research studies now indicate that the process, rather than the decision or document, is the more important contribution of strategic management. The manner in which strategic management is carried out thus is important. A major aim of the process is to achieve understanding and commitment of all managers and employees; understanding maybe the most important benefit of strategic management followed by commitment. When managers and employees understand what the organization is doing and why, they often feel a part of the firm and become committed to assisting it. This is especially true if employees also understand linkages between their own compensation and organizational performance. Managers and employees become surprisingly creative and innovative when they understand and support the firm’s mission, objectives and strategies. A great benefit of strategic management then is the opportunity that the process provides to empower individuals. However, the benefits of strategic management are divided into two:

(a) Financial benefits.

(b) Non-financial benefits.

(a) Financial Benefits: Studies indicate that organizations using strategic management concept are more profitable and successful than those that do not. For example, a longitudinal study of 101 retail, service and manufacturing firms over a three-year period concluded that businesses using strategic management concepts showed significant improvement in sales, profitability and productivity compared to firms without systematic planning activities. High performing firms tend to do systematic planning to prepare for future fluctuations in their external and internal environment. Firms with planning systems more closely resembling strategic management theory generally exhibit superior long-term financial performance related to their industry. Although many factors besides a lack of effective strategic management obviously can lead to business failure, this statistic suggests that strategic management concept could yield substantial financial benefits for many organizations.

(b) Non-Financial Benefits: Besides helping firms avoid financial demise strategic management offers other tangible benefits, such as an enhanced awareness of external threats and improves understanding of competitors' strategies, increases employees' productivity, reduces resistance to change, a clearer understanding of performance reward relationships. Strategic-management enhances the problems-prevention capabilities of organizations because it promotes interaction among managers at all divisional and functional levels. Interaction can enable firms to "turn on" their managers and employees by nurturing sharing organizational objectives with them empowering them to help improve the product or service in recognizing contributions. In addition to empowering managers and employees, strategic management often brings order and discipline to an otherwise floundering firm. It can be the beginning of an efficient and effective managerial system. Strategic management may renew confidence in the current business strategy or point to the need of corrective actions. The strategic-management process provides a basis for identifying and recognizing the need for change to all managers or employees of all firms; it helps them view change as an opportunity rather than a threat.

Types of Strategies

Integration Strategy: Forward integration, backward integration and horizontal integration are sometimes collectively referred to as vertical integration strategy. Vertical integration strategies allow all firms to gain control over distributors, suppliers and competitors.

A) Forward Integration: Forward integration involves gaining ownership or increased control over distributors or retailers.

B) Backward Integration: Both manufacturer and retailers purchase needed materials from suppliers. Backward Integration is a strategy of seeking ownership or increasing control of firm's suppliers. This strategy can be especially appropriate when the firm's current suppliers are unreliable, too costly or cannot meet the firm's needs. More and more, customers are buying product according to environmental conditions. This includes recyclability of the package. Some firms are thus using backward integration to gain control over suppliers of packages.

C) Horizontal Integration: Horizontal integration refers to a strategy of seeking ownership of or increased control over a firm's competitor. One of the most significant trends in strategic management today is the increased use of horizontal integration as a growth strategy. Mergers, acquisition and takeovers among competitors allow for increased economies of scale and enhance transfer of resources and competencies.

Intensive Strategy: Market penetration, market development and product development are sometimes referred to as "intensive strategy" because they required intensive effort to improve a firm's competitive position with existing products.

A) Market Penetration: market penetration strategy seeks to increase market share for present product or services in present market through greater marketing efforts. This strategy is widely used along and in combination with other strategies. Market penetration includes increasing the number of sale person, increasing advertising expenditures, offering intensive sales promotion items or increase publicity efforts.

B) Market Development: Market development involves introducing present products or services into a new geographical area. The climate for international market development is becoming more and more favorable. In my industries it is going to be hard to maintain a competitive edge by staying closed at all times.

C) Product Development: Product development is a strategy that seeks increased sales by promoting or modifying present product or services. Product development usually entails large research and development expenditures.

Diversification Strategy: There are three general types of diversification strategy; Concentric, Horizontal and Conglomerate.

A) Concentric Diversification: Adding new, but related products or services is widely called concentric diversification.

B) Horizontal Diversification: Adding new, unrelated products or services for present customers is called horizontal diversification. This strategy is not as risky as conglomerate diversification, because a firm should already be familiar with its present customers.

C) Conglomerate Diversification: Adding new unrelated product or services is called conglomerate diversification. Some firms pursue conglomerate diversification based in part on an expectation of profit from banking up acquired firm selling divisions piecemeal.

Defensive Strategy: In addition to integrative, intensive and diversification strategy, organization could also pursue joint venture, retrenchment, divestitures, or liquidation.

A) Joint Venture: joint venture is a popular strategy that occurs when two or more companies form a temporal partnership or consortium for the purpose of capitalizing on some opportunities. This strategy can be considered defensive only because the firm is not undertaking the project alone. Often two or more sponsoring firms form a separate organization and have shared equity ownership in the new entity.

B) Retrenchment: retrenchment occurs when an organization regroup through cost and asset reduction to reverse declining sales and profit. Sometimes called a turning around or reorganizational strategy retrenchment is designed to fortify an organization based distinctive competence. During retrenchment strategists work with limited resources and face pressure from shareholders, employee and the media. Retrenchment can entail selling lands and buildings to raise needed cash, purring product lines, closing marginal businesses, closing absolute factories, automating process reducing the number of employees and instituting expenses control system. In some cases, bankruptcy can be effective types of retrenchment strategy. Bankruptcy can allow a firm to avoid major debts obligation and to avoid union contracts. There are five major types of bankruptcy.

Chapter Seven bankruptcy is a liquidation procedure used only when a corporation sees no hope of being able to operate successfully or to obtain the necessary creditor agreement. All the organization assets are sold in part for tangible worth.

Chapter Nine bankruptcy: applies to municipalities as some states do not allow municipalities to declare bankruptcy.

Chapter Eleven bankruptcy: allows organization to recognize and “come back” after filling a petition for protection.

Chapter Twelve bankruptcy: was created by the Family Farmer Bankruptcy Act 1987. This law became effective in 1987 and provides special relief to family farmers with debt equal to or less than \$1.5 million.

Chapter Thirteen bankruptcy: is a reorganization plan similar to chapter eleven but available only to small businesses owned by individuals to unsecured debts less than \$100,000 and secured debts of less than \$350,000. These chapter thirteen debtors are allowed to operate the business while a plan is being devolved to provide for a successful operation of the business in future.

C) Divestiture: selling a division or part of an organization is called divestiture. Divestiture is often used to raise capital for further strategy acquisition or investments. Divestiture can be part of an overall retrenchment strategy to an organization of businesses that are unprofitable, that require too much capital or that do not fit well with the firm's other activities.

D) Liquidation: Selling all a company's assets, in parts for their tangible worth is called liquidation. Liquidation is recognition of the defeat and consequently can be an emotional difficult strategy. However, it may be better to cease operation than to continue using large sum of money.

E) Combination: Many, if not most organizations pursue a combination of two or more strategies simultaneously, but a combination strategy can be exceptionally risky if carried too far. No organization can afford not to pursue the strategy that might benefit the firm. Difficult decisions must be made. Priorities must be established; organizations, like individuals, have limited resources. Both organizations and individuals must choose among alternative strategies to avoid excessive indebtedness.

Empirical Literature

According to the study conducted by Rowland Thomas at all in 2009," introduction of 4G internet services, reduction in internet data cost, introduction of mobile banking has penetrated deeply into telecommunication industry. As a result of this, telecommunication companies in Nigeria that have successfully implemented these innovation strategies have gained 85% of the market share than those of their competitors who fail to implement these strategies.

According to Gould and Desjardins (2015), concluded that telecommunication companies must be able to adapt to change, information technology and transforming businesses and society today."

According to Michael Brown James William, (2012), most part of strategic management is done through strategic decision making; crucial but also critical and complex. Strategic decision is made top level management. Strategic decision is related to the contribution of the organizational objectives and goals significantly. They determine the direction and destination of the organization."

According to Nancy Scott et al in 2010, employee motivation is vital for the growth and development of telecommunication companies. When employees are motivated, they become more efficient, effective, productive, and punctual in performing their various duties in an organization. When employees become motivated, it helps the organization to be able to achieve its derived goal(s) that should be implemented within a given period. An organization that fails to prioritize employee motivation may lead to delay or failure in achieving its goal(s)."

According to Kenneth et al in 2012, "Telecommunication companies must be able to set certain strategies that may attract their customers / subscribers or the general public. This is because the revenue generated depends on the number of subscribers, they can be able to get.

Various ways telecommunication companies in Ghana were able to attract their customers /subscribers or the general public, was providing free sim cards to the general public and also providing mobile lottery programs for their customers /subscribers. The above-mentioned strategies helped the organization to increase their revenue generated.

According to Michael Taylor et al, "The executive committee is often officially responsible for making a company's big decisions while another, unofficial group, led by the CEO, seems to hold the real decision-making power. Although that informal (kitchen cabinet) lacks a proper name, everyone knows who's in it."

According to De Smet and Weiss, "Decision makers in any organization take decisions depending on the types of decisions. The type of decisions and by who is taken are as follows: big-bet decisions, or those you can't easily reverse, such as acquisition of another firm. This might be an individual decision, such as by the CEO, or a small-group decision made by a select group of top management.

Cross-organizational or cross-functional decisions "where many different parts of the organization are involved and there are lots of little decisions that accumulate to a larger decision," De Smet says. These, then, can be a series of individual and group decisions.

Delegated decisions are given to someone who has enough knowledge to make a good decision. This is a classic example of an individual decision. Determine who has the knowledge to make the decision and assign the decision to be made. That person researches the issues and makes an individual decision, then announces it to the group or company.

Ad hoc decisions, which are infrequent and reasonably small and contained, where you don't try to figure it out or map it out ahead of time, De Smet says, adding: "You just say, well there's a bunch of stuff that might bubble up, and we'll deal with it as it comes up. We'll cross that bridge when we come to it." This is a clear example of a group decision, though it may be made in a somewhat chaotic fashion.

Swot Analysis

According to Mary Peterson et al (2013), "SWOT analysis is a useful technique in understanding the strength and weaknesses and for identifying both the opportunities opened to telecommunication companies and the threats they face. Strength and weakness are often internal to the company whilst opportunities and threats generally relate to external factors. For this reason, SWOT is sometimes, called internal \ external analysis."

According to Albert Humphrey in 2015 "SWOT analysis (or SWOT matrix) is a strategic planning technique used to help a person or organization identify strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats related to business competition or project planning. It is intended to specify the objectives of the business venture or project and identify the internal and external factors that are favorable and unfavorable to achieving those objectives. Users of a SWOT analysis often ask and answer questions to generate meaningful information for each category to make the tool useful and identify their competitive advantage. SWOT has been described as the tried-and-true tool of strategic analysis.

Strengths and weakness are frequently internally-related, while opportunities and threats commonly focus on the external environment. The name is an acronym for the four parameters the technique examines:

Strengths: characteristics of the business or project that give it an advantage over others.
Weaknesses: characteristics of the business that place the business or project at a disadvantage relative to others.

Opportunities: elements in the environment that the business or project could exploit to its advantage.
Threats: elements in the environment that could cause trouble for the business or project.

The degree to which the internal environment of the firm matches with the external environment is expressed by the concept of strategic fit. Identification of SWOTs is important because they can inform later steps in planning to achieve the objective. First, decision-makers should consider whether the

objective is attainable, given the SWOTs. If the objective is not attainable, they must select a different objective and repeat the process.”

Methodology

A descriptive type of study design is the most appropriate for this study, preferably ecological study because it involves collecting data from small portion of Sierra Leone (Africell) and generalizing the findings to the entire portion of the country.

The type of population was heterogeneous because both Africell’s employees and customers were targeted.

From the sample size determination, a sample of 20 employees and 30 customers /subscribers was obtained from various branches of Africell offices to conduct the study.

The most appropriate sampling technique was the probability sampling. The suitable probability sampling methods used for the study was stratified to obtain separate strata for employees and customers / subscribers and from each stratum, simple random sampling was used so that all participants had equal chances to be selected thereby avoiding any form of bias.

Data was obtained from two sources which were primary and secondary: The researcher used questionnaire to elicit information from respondents. The researcher also used text books, pamphlets (lecture notes on Strategic Management by Economist Justice Ganawah) and the Internet as secondary sources of information for the study.

The research used questionnaires with structured closed ended questions to elicit information from respondents. The questionnaires were divided into two Sections: Section A consists of the demographic data of the respondents while Section B consists of the study subject.

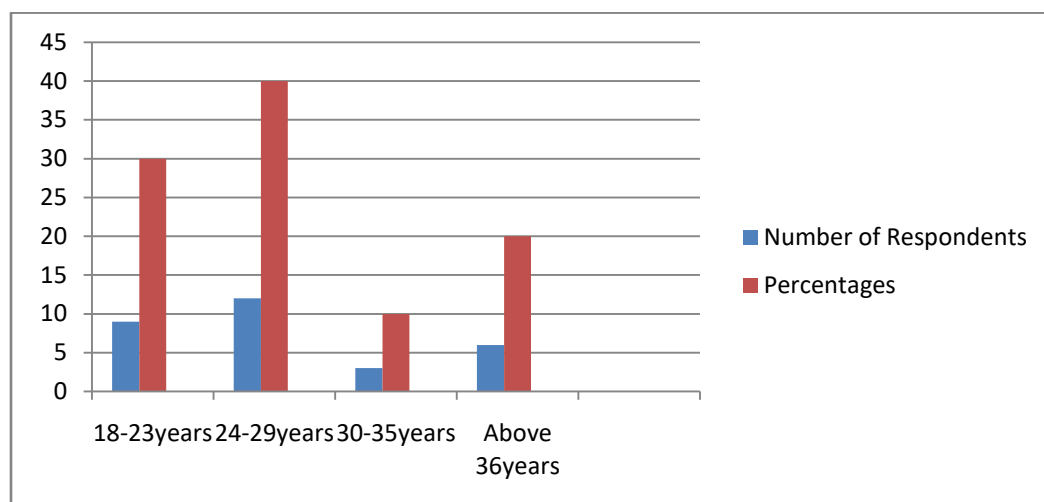
The data were collected by the researcher through admonishing of self-structured questionnaires.

The data collected were analyzed through the use of percentages and presented in distribution in table and charts (both pie and bar charts).

Data Analysis and Interpretation

Quantitative Analysis

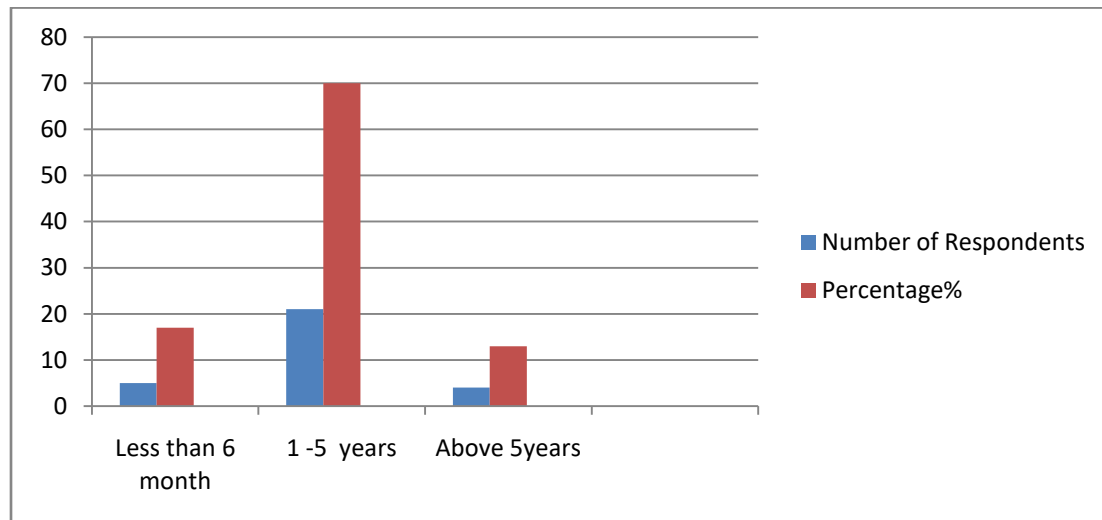
Figure 1: Percentage distribution of respondents (subscribers) in terms of age at Africell - Sierra Leone in August 2019.



Source: Field survey

According to Figure 1, 30% of the Africell subscribers were between the ages of 18 - 23 years, 40% were between the ages of 24 - 29 years, 10% were between the ages of 30 - 35 years, and 20% were above 36 years.

Figure 2: Percentage distribution of respondents (subscribers) in terms of duration as Africell-Sierra Leone subscribers in August 2019



Source: Field survey

In Figure 2 above, out of the 30 Africell subscribers that participated in the study, 5 (17%) had been Africell-Sierra Leone subscribers for under six months/21 (70%) between 1-5 years and only 4 (13%) over 5 years.

Table 1: Percentage distribution of respondents (subscribers) in terms of reason for joining Africell-Sierra Leone subscribers in August 2019.

Reason for joining Africell Sierra Leone	Number of Respondents	Percentages (%)
Low calls and internet cost	12	40%
Wider coverage	15	50%
Promotions	3	10%
TOTAL	30	100%

Source: Field survey

According to table 1, out of the 30 Africell subscribers that participated in the study, 12 (40%) reported to join Africell-Sierra Leone because of low calls costs, 15 (50%) because of wider coverage and only 3 (10%) because of promotions.

Table 2: Percentage distribution of respondents (subscribers) in terms of customers satisfactions at Africell- Sierra Leone subscribers in August 2019.

Customer Satisfaction	Number of Respondents	Percentage %
Had customer satisfaction	24	80%
Had no customer satisfaction	6	20%
TOTAL	30	100%

Source: Field survey

Table 2 illustrates customer satisfaction for subscribers of Africell – Sierra Leone, out of the 30 respondents that participated in the study, 24 (80%) reported to have had customer satisfaction whilst only 6 (20%) had no customer satisfaction.

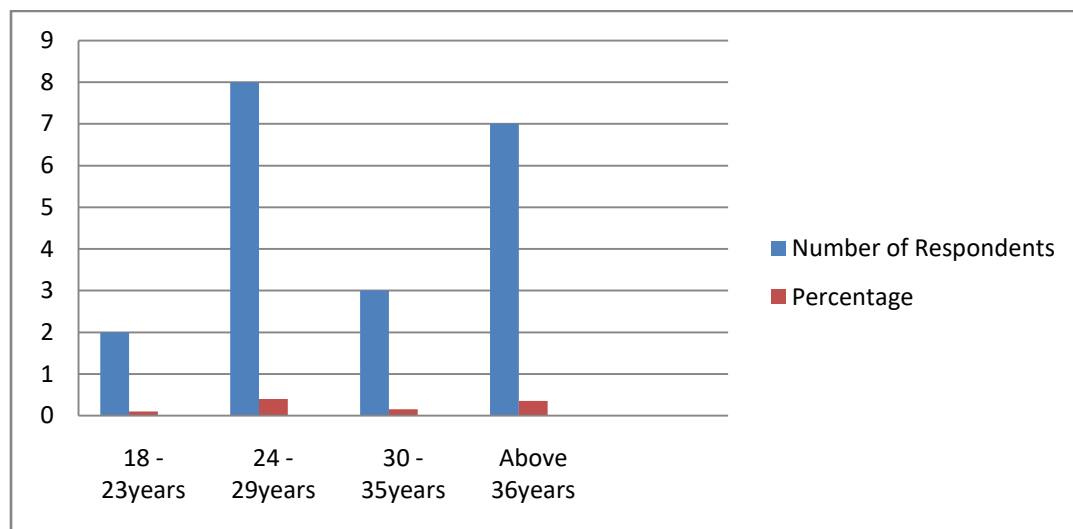
Table 3: Percentage distribution of respondents (subscribers) in terms of whether or not Africell-Sierra Leone offered competitive tariff in August 2019.

Competitive Tariff	Number of Respondents	Percentage%
Offers competitive tariff	17	57%
Does not offer competitive tariff	13	43%
TOTAL	30	100%

Source: Field survey

According to Table 3, out of the 30 subscribers that participated in the study, 17 (57%) reported that Africell – Sierra Leone offers competitive tariff while 13 (43%) reported that Africell Sierra Leone does not offer competitive tariff.

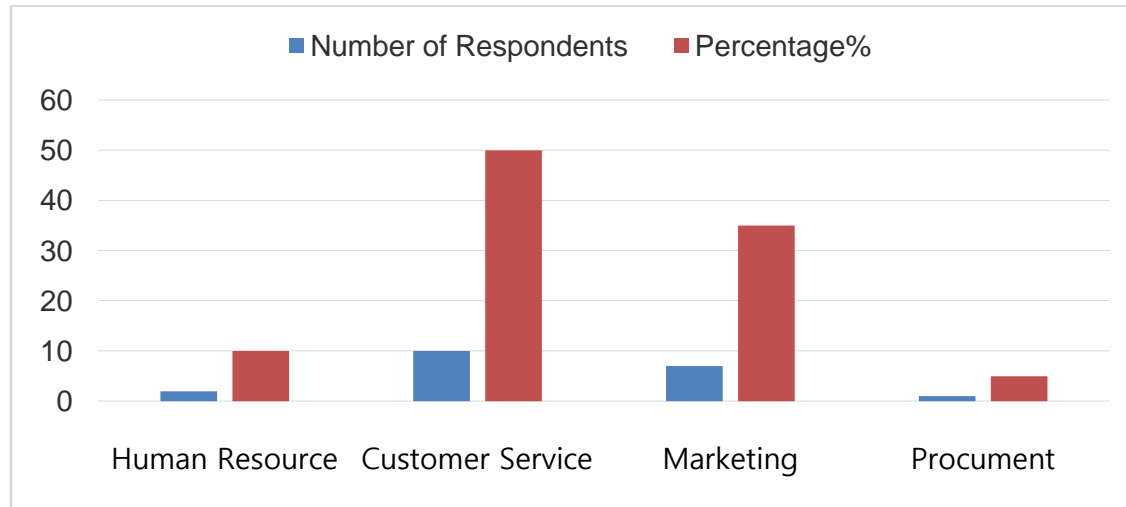
Figure 3: Percentage distribution of respondents (employees) in terms of age at Africell-Sierra Leone subscribers in August 2019.



Source: Field survey

In Figure 3 above, out of the 20 respondents (employees) in Africell-Sierra Leone that participated in the study, 2 (10%) were between the age of 18 – 23 years, 8 (40%) were between the age of 24 -29 years, 3 (15%) were between the age of 30 – 35 years and 7 (35%) were above 36 years.

Figure 4: Percentage distribution of respondents (employees) in terms of departments at Africell-Sierra Leone in August 2019.



Source: Field survey

Figure 8 represents the various departments of Africell - Sierra Leone employees. It was found that 2 (10%) were in the Human Resource department, 10 (50%) were in the customer services department, 7 (35%) were in the Marketing department and only 1 (5%) was in the procurement department.

Table 4: Percentage distribution of respondents (employees) in terms of length of service Africell-Sierra Leone in August 2019.

Length of Service	Number of Respondents	Percentage
Below a year	3	15
1 - 2 years	6	30
3 -5 years	11	55
TOTAL	20	100

Source: Field survey

According to Table 4, out of the 20 Africell- Sierra Leone employees, 3 (15%) had worked for Less than a year, 6 (30%) had worked for between 1 - 2years and 11 (55%) had worked for between 3 - 5years.

Table 5: Percentage distribution of respondents (employees) in terms of knowledge level on strategic management at Africell - Sierra Leone in August 2019.

Knowledge Level	Number of Respondents	Percentage%
Had knowledge	17	85
Had no knowledge	3	15
TOTAL	20	100

Source: Field survey

In Table 5 above, an analysis of knowledge level on strategic management was done. It was observed that out of the 20 Africell - Sierra Leone employees that participated in the study 17 (85%) reported to have heard about strategic management while 3 (15%) reported to have not heard about strategic management.

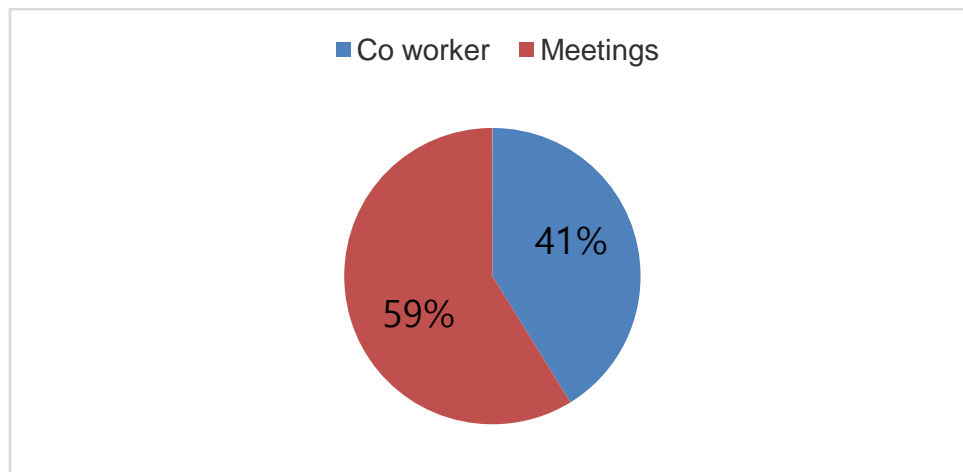
Table 6: Percentage distribution of respondents (employees) that had knowledge on strategic management and can either or not define it at Africell - Sierra Leone in August 2019.

Definition of Strategic Management	Number of Respondents	Percentage%
Can define strategic Management	16	94
Cannot define strategic Management	1	6
TOTAL	17	100

Source: Field survey

According to Table 6 above, out of the 17 Africell - Sierra Leone employees that had knowledge on strategic management, it was observed that 16 (94%) were able to define it whilst only 1 (6%) was unable to do so.

Figure 5: Percentage distribution of respondents (employees) that had knowledge on strategic management and source of their knowledge at Africell - Sierra Leone in August 2019.



Source: Field survey

According to Figure 5 above, out of the 17 Africell - Sierra Leone employees that had knowledge on strategic management, it was found that 7 (41%) heard about it from a co-worker while 10 (59%) heard about it during meetings.

Table 7: Percentage distribution of respondents (employees) that had no knowledge on strategic management and reason for the lack of knowledge at Africell - Sierra Leone in August 2019.

Reason for lack of Knowledge	Number of respondents	Percentage%
Job not concerned with management	2	67
Short length of Service	1	33
TOTAL	3	100

Source: Field survey

In Table 7 above, an analysis of the reason for lack of knowledge on strategic management was done. It was observed that out of the 3 Africell employees that had no knowledge on strategic management, 2 (67%) attributed it to their job not concerned with management while only 1 (33%) attributed it to short length of service.

Table 8: Percentage distribution of respondents (employees) in terms of strategies implemented to improve the growth of Africell - Sierra Leone in August 2019.

Strategies implemented to improve the growth of Africell-Sierra Leone	Number of Respondents	Percentage%
Introduction of 4G internet services and reduction of internet data costs	10	59
Introduction of the free sim cards and mobile banking	5	29
Employee motivation	2	12
TOTAL	17	100

Source: Field survey

According to Table 8 above, an analysis of the strategies implemented to improve the growth of Africell - Sierra Leone was done.

It was found that out of the 17 Africell - Sierra Leone employees that had knowledge on Strategic management, 10 (59%) attributed the growth of the company to the introduction of 4G services and reduction of internet data cost, 5 (29%) attributed it to the introduction of free Sim cards and mobile banking while only 2 (12%) attributed it to employees' motivation.

Table 9: Percentage distribution of respondents (employees) in terms of change of strategies implementation of Africell -Sierra Leone in August 2019.

Change of Strategies Implemented	Number of Respondents	Percentage%
Have changed strategies	16	94
Have not changed strategies	1	6
TOTAL	17	100

Source: Field survey

According to Table 9 above, it was found out that out of the 17 Africell – Sierra Leone employees involved in strategic management, 16 (94%) reported to have changed their strategies while only 1 (6%) reported not to have changed their strategies.

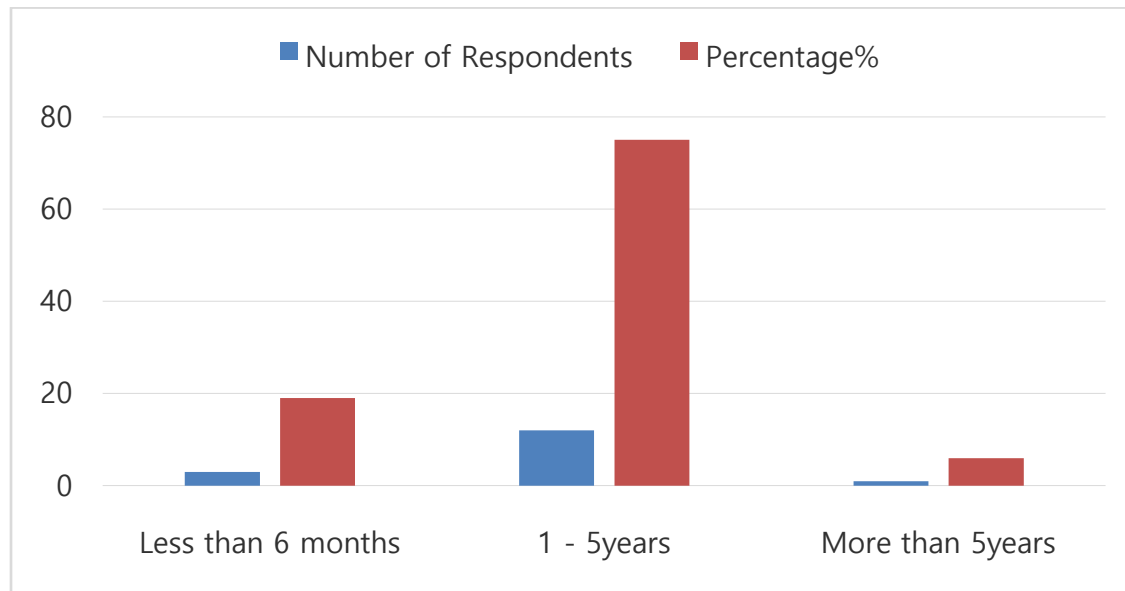
Table 10: Percentage distribution of respondents (employees) in terms of reasons for change of strategies at Africell - Sierra Leone in August 2019.

Reasons for change of strategies Implemented	Number of respondents	Percentage%
Competitive advantage	5	31
Low market share	9	56
Maximize profit	2	13
TOTAL	16	100

Source: Field survey

Table 10 illustrates the reason for change of strategies at Africell -Sierra Leone. It was observed that 9 (56%) of the employees have changed their strategies as a result of low market share, 5 (31%) as a result of competitive advantage and only 2 (13%) as a result of maximizing profit.

Figure 6: Percentage distribution of respondents (employees) in terms of frequency of change of strategies at Africell-Sierra Leone in August 2019.



Source: Field survey

According to Figure 6 above, an analysis of how often strategies were changed at Africell- Sierra Leone was done. It was found that out of the 16 employees that reported to have change their strategies, 3 (19%) did so every six months, 12 (75%) every 1 – 5 years and only 1 (6%) did so after 5 years.

Figure 7: Percentage distribution of respondents (employees) in terms of parties responsible for making strategic decisions at Africell-Sierra Leone in August 2019.



Source: Field survey

In Figure 7 above, out of the 17 Africell-Sierra Leone employees that had knowledge on strategic management, 16 (94%) reported that top managers are responsible for strategic decisions while only 1 (6%) reported that marketing officers are responsible for strategic decisions.

Table 11: Percentage distribution of respondents (employees) in terms of frequency of making strategic decision at Africell-Sierra Leone in August 2019.

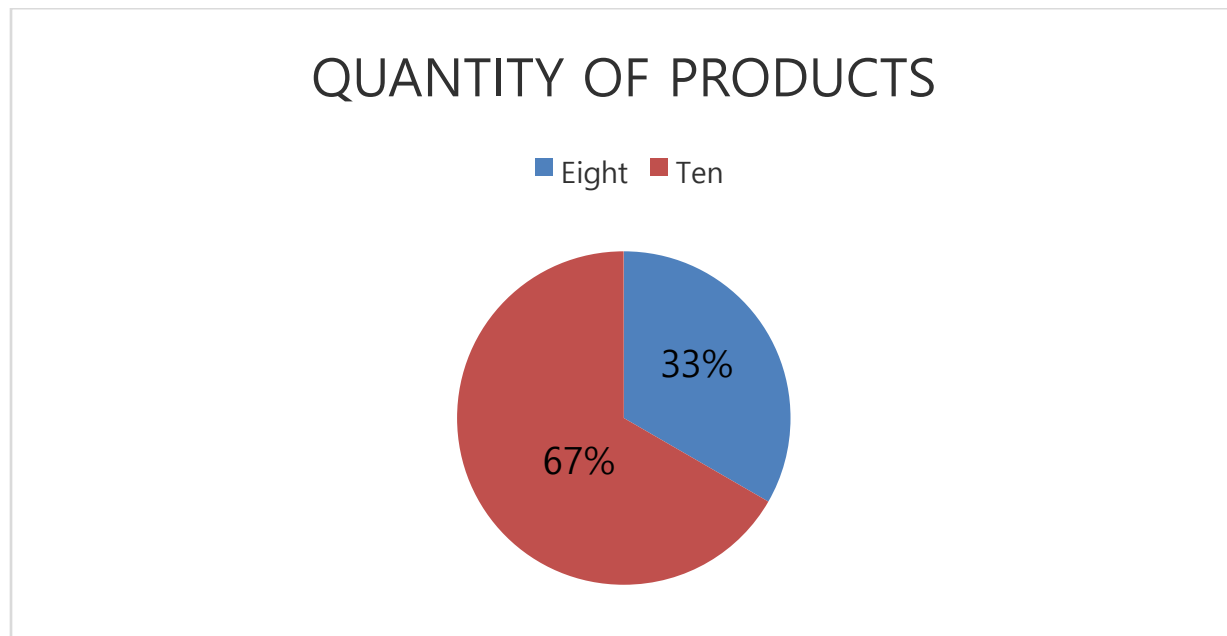
Frequency of making strategic decisions	Number of Respondents	Percentage%
Every 6 months	13	76
1 – 5 years	3	18
More than 5 years	1	6
TOTAL	17	100

Source: Field survey

According to Table 11 above, an analysis of the frequency of making strategic decisions was done. It was observed that, out of the 17 Africell -Sierra Leone employees that had knowledge

on strategic management, 13 (76%) revealed that it was done every 6months, 3 (18%) between 1 --5 years and only 1 (6%) revealed that it was done after every 5 years.

Figure 8: Percentage distribution of respondents (employees) in terms of quantity of products offered by Africell - Sierra Leone in August 2019.



Source: Field survey

Figure 8 illustrates the quantity of products offered by Africell - Sierra Leone. It was found out that out of the 17 Africell-Sierra Leone employees involved in strategic management, 3 (18%) reported that Africell - Sierra Leone offer 8 products while 14 (82%) reported that the company offers 10 products.

Table 12: Percentage distribution of respondents (employees) in terms of Africell-Sierra Leone interest in showcasing a new innovation in the telecommunication industry in 2019.

New innovation in the telecommunication industry	Number of Respondents	Percentage%
Interested in new innovation	15	88
Not interested in new innovation	2	12
TOTAL	17	100

Source: Field survey

According to table 12 above, an analysis of Africell in terms a new innovation in the telecommunication industry in 2019 was done. It was observed that out of the 17 Africell-Sierra Leone employees involved in strategic management, 15 (88%) reported that the company has interest in a new innovation in the telecommunication industry in 2019 while only 2 (12%) reported that the company has no interest in doing so.

Conclusion and Recommendations

Conclusion

The study investigated the effectiveness of strategic management in organizational growth in telecommunication industries. The case study was Africell-Sierra Leone where all primary data were collected.

The study will serve as empirical evidence to the multiple challenges faced by Africell-Sierra Leone as a telecommunication company in its bid to ensure effective and efficient service delivery to their clients using strategic management as an integral tool. It will also serve as a stimulus that may prompt private organizations and partners with relevant evidence on institutional gaps within Africell-Sierra Leone.

In order to achieve the objectives of the study, the researchers analyzed the concept from various perspectives. These are theoretical literature i.e. strategic management, stages in strategic management, benefits of strategic management, types of strategy, managerial function/processes of management, characteristics of management, and studies conducted on Strategic Management in the field of telecommunication.

The findings of the study however, correlated with some of the literatures done on strategic management by other researchers, as clearly seen in the literature review.

The researchers used a sample size of 50 respondents to conduct the study with a simple random sampling as a technique. The study design used was descriptive type using a questionnaire as a data collection tool.

Both primary and secondary sources were used to elicit information for the study. The data collected was analyzed through percentages and finally presented in tables and charts. After the analysis of the result, I made the following conclusions.

- Majority of the subscribers joined Africell-Sierra Leone because of low calls and internet cost.
- There still exists a gap in customer satisfaction among respondents.

- Africell - Sierra Leone offers competitive tariff even though there are challenges in doing so.
- Most of the respondents had knowledge on strategic management, even though there is still a gap in knowledge level of the concept.
- The strategies used by Africell-Sierra Leone to improve their growth were introduction of 4G internet services and reduction of internet data cost, introduction of free Sim cards and mobile banking, employees' motivation was not considered very important in the growth of this telecommunication company.
- Africell-Sierra Leone changed its strategies due to competitive advantage, low market share, and profit maximization.
- It was observed from the findings that top managers were responsible for making strategic decisions, at Africell-Sierra Leone.

Recommendations

Based on my findings, in order to realize the effectiveness of strategic management in organizational growth in telecommunication industries the following recommendations must be given due consideration:

- Efforts should be made by service providers to take the necessary action for them to know the effect that will make customers more satisfied in choosing their services and also retain the existing customers and attract new customers into their company.
- The mobile network operators should look at whether their services are compatible or not with the price, the quality and also the attitude of the staff handling their customers. The mobile network operators or providers should continuously satisfy their customers by improving all factors.
- Mobile industry should adopt first mover advantages strategic concept whereby a firm that is early in the market can establish a customer base, which increases the firm's likelihood of surviving a price war that might ensue following the entrance of rivals, and discourage entering rivals from starting a price war, since they are likely to lose.
- The mobile network operators should focus on employees' motivation. They must offer opportunities for advancement to the employees. Your employees are more motivated when they know they're working towards something. If they think there's no opportunity for advancement, they don't have much to work for. Nobody wants to work at dead-end job. Motivate your employees by offering training that gives them the skills they need to climb their career ladder. Grooming young employees to move on to better opportunities is valuable to you as well because it enables you to build your company's reputation as a great place to work.
- Another area of employees' motivation is to be an example. You can't expect your employees to work hard or behave the way you want them to if you don't lead by example. If you show your excitement about the company's goals, your employees will get on-board and work to achieve those goals. Good moods are always infectious- especially in the workplace.
- Empowerment should be given to employees. Give your employees more of a say in how they do their job. Ask for their input and get suggestions on how they can improve their performance. Most employees have ideas about how they can be more efficient, but they may not share them with you unless you specifically ask them. Use regular employee reviews to discuss these improvements, but don't just ask. If they really want to empower and motivate your employees, they need to take their advice and implement it. They should also give them the authority to make their own decisions.

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