

Proactive strategy and marketing effectiveness of consumer goods firms in Nigeria

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Abstract

The aim of this study is investigate the association between proactive strategy and marketing effectiveness in quoted consumer goods firms in Nigeria. This study used a structured questionnaire to collect data from respondents in the consumer goods firms in Nigeria. The questionnaires were designed in a five point Likert scale of strongly disagree to strongly agree. The questionnaires retrieved after distribution were analyzed with both descriptive and inferential statistics. Descriptive statistics of mean, standard deviation and variance were used. Also the Pearson product moment correlation inferential statistics was used to determine the association between proactive strategy and marketing effectiveness of quoted consumer goods firms in Nigeria with the help of a statistical package for social sciences (SPSS version 22.0). From the analyses, it was found that there are different degree of positive and statistically significant association between proactive strategy and the metrics of marketing effectiveness used in this study (customer loyalty and market share). Hence the study concludes that proactive strategy is vitally important in achieving marketing effectiveness. More importantly it will help give more ecological sustainability where all stakeholders will benefit knowing that one of the factors that drives effectiveness in marketing is the strategy that the firm use to achieve its set objectives. The study recommends that quoted consumer goods firms should be proactive with their strategy most especially as it relates to the environment and other stakeholders that are influenced by their activities, and whom also influences the organizations' activities.

Keywords: Proactive strategy, Green Marketing strategy, Marketing Effectiveness, Customer Loyalty, Market Share.

1. Introduction

The recent environmental issue confronting firms has led firms and other stake holders to increase the protection of the marketing environment. Firms do not solely dwell on creating wealth for shareholders, they are now concern with the protection of their operating environment. The conduct of business with an interest in safeguarding the environment is anchored on green marketing-business activities designed to generate and facilitate exchange aimed at satisfying customers' requirements with minimal detrimental impact on the environment (Polonsky, 1994). Green marketing activity's aid in reducing the negative social and environmental impact of existing products and production systems, and promote less harmful goods and services (Peattie, 2001); and has created opportunities, as well as threats to both firms and the environment.

The successful implementation of the green marketing concept require firms to develop and implement both short and long term green marketing strategies (Pujari, Wright & Peattie, 2003). Most consumer goods firms are adopting green marketing strategies to gain marketing effectiveness. Reactive and proactive approaches are prominent green marketing strategies

identified in literature (Sharma, 2000). These Green marketing strategies are vital to consumer goods firms as it allows them to contribute to the wellbeing of the environment through designing and redesigning of products and manufacturing technologies (Shrivastava, 1995), cited in Buysse and Verbeke, (2003). Murthy (2011), explain that green marketing strategies involves how the firm uses its limited resources to produce green products that are not harmful to the environment in achieving its goal. The goal of green marketing strategies is to minimize environmental hazard caused by manufacturing processes and also to give strength to corporate environmental image in marketing (Kinoti, 2011).

The intention of an organisation is to satisfy the needs of customer, and this intent has to be reached in order for them to be effective in their marketing efforts. Marketing effectiveness in terms of customer loyalty, improved market share and brand recognition (Ambler, 2003) confers competitive advantage on firms. Webster (1995) as cited by Nwokah and Ahiauzu, (2007), marketing effectiveness requires management to have sufficient and accurate informations that will help them in allocating their resources effectively and planning of their various product, market / marketing tools.

The Environmental Development Commission (1978) as cited in Eneizan, Wahab and Kalsom (2016), posit that green marketing is a facilitator of sustainable development which means fulfilling stakeholders need. In their operation, manufacturing firms that are environmentally compliant uses proactive approach referred to as proactive strategy to fulfil societal demands. There are studies on green marketing as regard proactive strategy relating to various aspect of marketing performance in developed western countries (Hasan & Ali, 2014; Harun, 2012; Solvalier, 2010). However such are scant in the developing economies. Therefore, this study intends to fill this literature gap by ascertaining the level of proactive strategy that will lead to achieving marketing effectiveness in consumer goods firms in Nigeria.

2. Theoretical foundation

The sustaining theory for this study was the stakeholder's theory of an organisation. Stakeholder (s) is an individual, group or organisations that is impacted by all the outcome of an activity, and sometimes are within or outside the organisation that is sponsoring the activity (Laudau 2017). Stakeholder theory according to Maignan and Ferrell (2004); Lamberg, Savage and Pajunen (2003) is a process that entails identifying, conceptualizing and prioritizing the needs of the stakeholders in order to address the demands of the environment. This implies that in addressing the demands of the environment, firms should begin with what the problem, how we make sure such issue doesn't come up again and highlighting the various stakeholders (people, profit and planets) needs.

Stakeholders influences the decision taken by organisations to an extent that it could centre on expectation and forecast which arises from the interaction with the institutional environment (levy& Rothenberg 2002). Blatterberg (2014) stakeholder theory should be more of patriotic conception of a corporation. That is; for an organisation to meet its objective, it should look into the needs of its various stakeholders because they influence proactive corporate proactiveness. Proactive environmental strategies is the step used by firms to apprehend and reports environmental stakeholder demand in the future (Hart, 1995). Therefore a firm's green marketing strategies can be accustomed by the perceived pressure from stakeholders (Clarke & Fineman

1996; Briscoe, Rothenberg Maxwell, & Marcus 1997). According to Weick (1995) Firms will swift into socialization to obtain acceptability and responsibility if they see demand as restriction but when demand is seen as opportunity, they will act as enticement to the proactive corporate behaviour with a view to gaining positive public attention and increase stakeholders support.

3. Green Marketing Strategy

The concept of green marketing strategies came into existence in 1980 after the first workshop on ecological marketing (Singh 2012); and was advanced as a means that can be used to provide the needs of the present without ignoring the need of future generations. Green marketing strategies according to Thomas and Pacheco (2014) is a form of organizational behavior that results from following an organizational green marketing policy. Sharma (2000), identify reactive and proactive strategy within the green marketing strategic sphere. The green business literature usually make distinction between firms that are compliance driven and merely aimed at meeting legal requirements from those that adopt proactive strategy in green marketing, thereby taking into consideration affected stakeholders (Schot & Fisher ,1993 cited by Buysse & Verbeke 2003). Reactive strategy also known as compliance strategy comes into play when organization respond to changes appearing in the external environment (Sharma, 2000).

4. Proactive Strategy

Proactive strategy is use by firms that act ahead of any situation that is foreseen that is, before they are forced to respond to the external threats and forces, and create new innovative opportunities in the environment (Sharma, 2000). In the view of Charter and Polonsky (1999); Banerjee, Iyer and Kashyap (2003), proactive green marketing is an inventive strategy where the firm takes an initiative of customer satisfaction, value creation, positive company image, green product launch, research and development and enhanced competitive advantage as cited in (Solvalier, 2010). The objective of proactive strategy in green marketing is important as it ideally address what is referred to as the "triple bottom line" (Sharma & Vredenburg, 1998). In the sense that the organisation meets its target objective, are socially responsible and their activities are environmentally friendly. Also, Peattie and Crane (2005), posit that proactive approach in green marketing encourages organisations to be committed to environmental corporate policies that reflects on managerial level of performance and employee involvement.

5. Concept of Marketing Effectiveness

Many researchers and organizations have recognized the imperative of effectiveness in marketing. Empirical literature has revealed that marketing effectiveness is often discussed in marketing with several definition and nomenclature. According to Solcansky (2010), marketing effectiveness is seen as the value with which managers go to the market to optimize their spending in order to achieve good results in short term and long term period. Simberova (2010), explains marketing effectiveness as optimizing quality of spending to achieve the desired results in a period of time. Zostautiene and Vaiciulenaite (2010), defined it as the process where value is created using organisational resources for marketing activities and creation of competitive advantage.

In the view of Powell (2008), marketing effectiveness optimizes marketing spending for the period in which the organisation will be in business be it short or long term period, and aligns it with the business strategy by building a market model using a valid and objective marketing metrics. Appiah-Adu, Fyall and Singh (2001), in their study concluded that marketing effectiveness

depends on the ability of the manager to implement marketing plan successfully at different levels of the organisation. Which implies that they must have sufficient and accurate information for the purpose of effective resource allocation and planning to different markets, products and territories. Marketing effectiveness is also dependent on the skills of managers in delivering profitable strategies from their philosophy, organisation and information resources (Reza, Mohammad & Hossein 2012).

Marketing effectiveness according to Nwokah (2006), have four basic dimension and they are corporate, competitive, customers and exogenous factors in nature. Furthermore, Nwokah (2006); Nwokah & Ahaiuzu (2008), identify marketing strategy, marketing creative, marketing execution, marketing infrastructure and exogenous factors as enablers of marketing effectiveness. Marketing strategy. Marketing strategy is paramount in achieving marketing effectiveness for an organisation. In understanding marketing strategy. They further posited that there is a need to draw an insight from market research and also position the product or brand mix correctly. Using a superior marketing strategy will lead and improve marketing effectiveness. Thus marketing strategy should be done properly and in a timely manner. Marketing creative on its own can increase as well as decrease growth rate. The introduction of new creative concept in an organization can increase growth rate.

Marketing execution Here marketers can improve on how they go to market to achieve results without altering their strategy or creativity in execution. Marketing execution entails making small changes in any of the marketing mix or all of the elements in the marketing mix (product, price, place and promotion) without making changes to the strategic position or the creative execution, marketers can improve their effectiveness and deliver increased revenue. At the program level marketers can improve their effectiveness by managing and executing each of their marketing campaigns better. Whether it is improving on direct mail through a better call-to-action. A proper management of agencies, budgeting, motivation and coordination will bring a significant gain for an organization in a competitive environment. Generally, once an activity is out of control of marketers, it influences how marketers can improve their results. Taking advantage of seasonality, interests or the regulatory environment can help marketers improve their marketing effectiveness.

6. Measures of Marketing Effectiveness

In measuring marketing effectiveness Kokkinaki and Ambler (1999) as cited in Reza et al (2012) established six metric for marketing effectiveness which are; Financial measures (turnover, Contribution margin, profit), Competitive market measure (market share, advertising and promotional share), Consumer behaviour metrics (consumer penetration, loyalty and customer gained), Consumer intermediate measure (Brand recognition, Satisfaction, and Purchase intention), Direct customer measures (Distribution level, Profitability of intermediaries, Service quality) and Innovativeness measure (Product launched and their revenue). From the above mentioned; Market share and customer loyalty was used as measures in this paper.

6.1 Customer Loyalty

Customers buy product on a daily basis and loyalty is seen as when a person or group of persons purchases a product on an on-going basis. Rai and Srivastava (2013), define customer loyalty as a psychological trait formed by sustained satisfaction of customers in addition to emotional

attachment formed with the product that leads to a state of willingness and consistency in the relationship with the preference, patronage and premium. Onyeaso and Johnson (2006), define it as an incorporeal strategic strength that will augments marketing effectiveness of an organisation. Customer loyalty, according to Oliver (2007) is an emotional attachment of a buyer to a firm's product.

To be precise, the approach of customer loyalty according to Zeithaml (2000), is seen from two great points which are attitudinal and behavioural in nature. The attitudinal shows how customers continually desire to stick to a product (Al-Azzam, Khanfar & Khizinder, 2015) whereas the behavioural stipulate customer's continuous purchase and patronage from the same company. Customer loyalty ensues from satisfying customers' expectations. Hence, Ogunnaike, Adeniye, Berishade and Salau (2014), saw customer loyalty as a phenomenon that is based on customer passion and values from an expectation of conviction and trust on manufacturing firms. Looking critically on the definition, the organisation is meant to win customer loyalty through the value that it adds to its products. Howbeit, this cannot be achieved without the assessment of individual customers need and attending to them better than competitors.

Beckell (2000), explains why customers in some instance will prefer to be loyal to a particular product and firm irrespective of their state of dissatisfaction with the firm which could be due to convenience and high cost of switching (cited in Eshiet, 2017). However Petasis and Opoku-Mensah (2009), state that customer loyalty is practically a product of the resources and structure of an organisations management/ employee which is focused or aimed at satisfying customers. Customer loyalty starts when organisations inform customers about the unique product of their firm in offering, packaging and delivered in satisfactory manner. In initiating loyalty programmes, firms can win customers confidence by establishing a long term relationship with them and examples are in gifts (Ngugi & Kihara, 2014; Ndubisi, 2005).

6.2 Market Share

Market share is simply the percentage or portion of the market which a particular company or product controls. A firm's market share is an indicator of how well the firm is doing in the market compared to its competitors. McGrath and Michael (2007) as cited in Didia and Nwokah (2015), explains that 'market share is a subset of a market formed by the supply/demand equilibrium for the marketers specific offering and the level or incidence of market access created by the marketers distribution channel for that offering and the level of incidence of market recognition (awareness) of a given marketer and / or that marketers distribution channels as a source of supply for said offerings". Market share is the percentage or segment of the total available market that is been served by a firm.

Robinson (2003), saw market share as the sales of the company relative to other competitors in the market. Market share represent the percentage of a market's total sales that is earned by a particular company over a stipulated time period. O'Regan (2000), is of the view that market share is the comparison of a company's total sales in relation to the total industry sales, usually in a particular country or region over a specific period. Companies use market share to ascertain the effectiveness of the market campaign and strategies. Market share is calculated by taking the company's sales over the period and dividing it by the industry sales over the same period.

$$\text{Market share} = \frac{\text{firms sales}}{\text{total industry sales}}$$

Market share is use to give an idea of the size of the company in relation to its market and its competitors. Market share usually expresses competitive position of a company in the market. It is also generally accepted that increased market share can be equated with success whereas decreased market share is a sign of unfavourable actions by the firms which could be an indication of failure (O'Regan, 2000). Firms that enhance their market shares aim at achieving greater scales in its operation and improve profitability. Due to this, managers always desire to expand their market share by been proactive with their strategy. Therefore every firm who intends to be successful must be encouraged to increase its market share

7. Proactive Green Marketing Strategy and Marketing Effectiveness.

The environment is usually seen as an opportunity arena to gain competitive advantage and business success. An investigation conducted by Eneizan et.al (2016) on the effect of green marketing on customer satisfaction in Jordan posit that firms that use proactive approach in as regards its activities in the environment end up been more competitive compare to firms who tackle problems as it comes to their notice. This is corroborated in the empirical study conducted by Bodloj (2010), the impact of a responsive and proactive market orientation and business performance in Slovenian firms. The data for the study were collected from both an in depth interview and internet survey. Also a confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) and structural equation model (SEM) were used to test the relationship between proactive market orientation, and market performance. From the findings, it was found that proactive market orientation has a positive and direct relationship with marketing performance.

Furthermore Gyulavari and Kolos (2015) examines the impact of proactive strategy on marketing performance in economic downturn in Hungary using survey research design with sample size of 173 companies and regression analysis. The study found a positive relationship between proactive strategy and marketing performance. Hence Srinivasan, Rangaswamy and Lilien (2005) posit that proactive strategy in marketing leads to a superior business performance. Mirjavadi (2015) also relied on the concept of proactive strategy in marketing and confirmed that its aids in improving customers loyalty and business performance

H₀₁: There is no significant association between Proactive strategy in green marketing and market share.

H₀₂: there is no significant association between Proactive strategy in green marketing and customer loyalty.

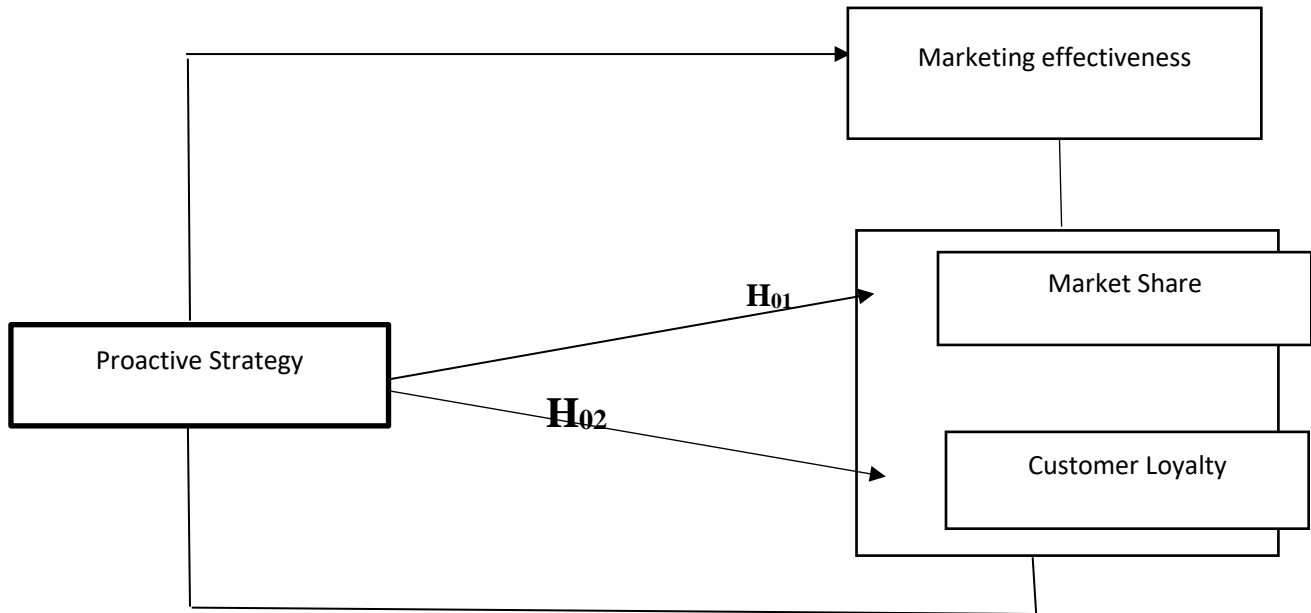


Fig. 1 Operational Framework of hypothesized association between proactive strategy and marketing effectiveness

Source: Researchers conceptualization from review of literature (2018)

8. Methodology

This study adopted a descriptive survey research and a correlational style of analysis to examine the association between proactive strategy and marketing effectiveness in a natural environment. The unit of analysis is at the micro level comprising of different sectors of the quoted consumer goods firms in Nigeria. The population of the study is made up of the twenty one (21) quoted consumer goods firms in Nigeria namely; Cadbury Nigeria Plc, Champion Brew Plc, Dangote Flour Mills Plc, Dangote Sugar Refinery Plc, Dn Tyre & Rubber Plc, Flour Mills Nig Plc, Golden Guinea Brew Plc, Guinness Nig Plc, Honeywell Flour Mill Plc, International Breweries Plc, Mcnichols Plc, Multi-Trex Intergrated Foods Plc, N Nig.Flour Mills Plc, Nascon Allied Industries Plc, Nestle Nigeria Plc, Nigeria Brew Plc, Nigeria Enamelware Plc, Pz Cussons Nigeria Plc, Unilever Nigeria Plc, Union Dicon Salt Plc, Vitafoam Nig Plc. The sample size for the study is drawn from the population of the study. Sample element comprises of five managerial staffs each of the twenty one(21) quoted consumer goods firm in Nigeria totally 105 target respondents.

The questionnaire for this study is design in a five point Likert scale of strongly agree to strongly disagree to collect data from the primary source. A total of one hundred and five 105 copies of

questionnaires were distributed to the target respondent, one and four copies were retrieved, two out of the retrieved copies were spoilt and one and two copies of the questionnaire were deemed fit for the study. The study adopted both descriptive and inferential statistics. Descriptive statistics of mean, standard deviation and variance. Inferential statistics of Pearson product moment correlation technique was used to test the hypotheses in order to ascertain the level of association between proactive market strategy and marketing effectiveness (market share and customer loyalty).

Table 1: Reliability results of items on all variables

S/n	Variables	No of items	Cronbach alpha coefficient
1	Proactive strategy	5	0.704
2	Customer loyalty	5	0.814
3	Market share	5	0.819

Source: SPSS Output from survey of questionnaires

From Table 1, it can be seen that a high correlational coefficients that surpasses the threshold standard of 0.70 set by Nunally (1978). This implies that all questions used in the study were reliable to measure the variables in the study.

9. Findings with Descriptive statistics

Table 2 Proactive strategy

		N	MEAN	SD	VAR
1	Your organization makes proactive efforts to reduce negative impacts on the environment.	102	4.77	.543	.295
2	Your organization invests in environmental sustainability.	102	4.88	.447	.200
3	Your firm consistently reduces operational activities that cause harm to the environment.	102	4.64	.728	.539
4	Your firm considers environmental impact of its activities when making decisions.	102	4.64	.888	.788
5	Your firm educates its employees on the importance of environmental Sustainability.	102	4.81	.558	.311

From Table 2, the highest mean score indicates that the respondents tremendously confirms that quoted consumer goods firms in Nigeria are proactive in their activities as regarded environmental issues in marketing. Therefore the score reveals that question 2 and 5 which sought to ascertain the extent to which quoted consumer goods manufacturing firms in Nigeria invest and educates its employees on the vitality of environmental sustainability has the uppermost mean score of 4.83 and 4.81; indicating that question 2 and 5 has the strongest influence on the proactive strategy.

Table 3 Market share

s/n	Item	N	Mean	SD	Variance
1	Your firm experience high customer patronage.	102	4.75	.652	.424
2	Your organization has a large size of the market in the industry.	102	4.61	.846	.716
3	Customers of your firm accept new products introduced by your firm.	102	4.73	.692	.478
4	The product of your firm is distributed in the nooks and crannies of the country.	102	4.74	.744	.553

5	Your easily explores new market segments.	102	4.62	.771	.595
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From Table 3, question 1 which was formulated to ascertain the extent to which quoted consumer goods firms in Nigeria experience high customer patronage has the highest mean score of 4.75; indicating that this question has the strongest influence on market share .

Table 4 Customer loyalty

S/N	Item	N	MEAN	SD	Vari
1	The customers of your firm do exhibit willingness to maintain business relationship.	102	4.72	.619	.384
2	Your customers tell you that minor inconveniences caused by your firm do not deter them from patronizing the firm.	102	4.83	.528	.279
3	Despite the promotional campaigns of other firms; your customers are willing to remain in business with your firm.	102	4.76	.600	.360
4	Your customers confirm that they highly remember your brand amongst other brands.	102	4.73	.566	.320
5	Customers of your firm do not complain about your products' prices.	102	4.76	.548	.301

It can be observed from table 4 that question 2 which was intended to ascertain the degree to which customers ignore minor inconveniences to maintain relationship with firms has the highest mean score of 4.83; indicating that this question has the strongest influence on the customer loyalty.

10. Test of Hypothesis

H₀₁: There is no significant association between proactive strategy and market share.

Table 5 showing the correlational level of association between proactive strategy and market share

		Proactive Strategy	Market Share
Proactive Strategy	Pearson Correlation	1	.661**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	102	102
Market Share	Pearson Correlation	.661**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	102	102

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

Source: Researchers Data, 2018 (SPSS output, version 22.0)

H₀₂: There is no significant association between proactive strategy and customer Loyalty

Table 6 showing the correlational level of association between proactive strategy and customer loyalty

		Proactive Strategy	Customer Loyalty
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Proactive Strategy	Pearson Correlation	1	.746**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	102	102
Customer Loyalty	Pearson Correlation	.746**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	102	102

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

Source: Researchers Data 2018, (SPSS output, version 22.0)

11. Discussion of Findings

From the analysis on table 5, coefficient of correlation (r) = 0.661 which shows that there is a strong, positive association between proactive strategy and market share at a probability value of $0.000 < 0.05$ (the level of significance). Hence the null hypothesis that state there is no significant association between proactive strategy and market share of quoted consumer goods firms in Nigeria were rejected and the alternate hypothesis accepted. Again table 6 shows a correlation coefficient (r) of 0.746; indicating that there is a strong, positive association between proactive strategy and customer loyalty. This is statistically significant at a probability value of $0.000 < 0.05$, on the premise the null hypothesis that state, there is no significant association between proactive strategy and customer loyalty was rejected and an alternate hypothesis accepted. The result of these study is in agreement with the findings of Bodlaj (2010) that examines the impact of responsive and proactive market orientation on the level of innovativeness and business performance found a positive relationship existing between proactive market orientation and business performance. Also the study validate the findings of Arseculeratne and Yazdanifard (2013) posits that proactive approach is aim at gaining competitive advantage (market share) by strategically growing and maintaining revenue at the same rate as total market with concern to the environment.

Furthermore the finding is in tandem with the result of Buysse and Verbeke (2010) in a study of proactive environmental strategies: A stakeholder management perspective using a survey research design and one way analysis of variance to test the difference in stakeholders among environmental strategies found that effective stakeholder management is crucial in achieving firms objective, satisfaction of stakeholders needs which is important for effective environment management and in turn will result to better organisational performance in marketing. Again the empirical study conducted by Gyulavari and Kolos (2015), to determine the effect of the company size on the relationship between proactive strategy and marketing performance in economic downtown in Hungary. The study adopted a survey research design of experimental attributes and structural equation modelling (SEM), found a positive relationship existing between proactive Strategy and marketing performance. Hence they posit from the survey of 173 companies that the proper application of proactive marketing can lead to superior marketing performance.

This is also supported by the study of Rivera-Camino 2007 as cited in Eneizan et.al (2016) on the effect of green marketing strategy on customer satisfaction in Jordan. The relationship between green marketing strategies and customer satisfaction using a multivariate correlational analysis found a positive relationship between green marketing strategies and customer satisfaction. Hence a satisfy customer has the tendency to become loyal because products that fulfil customers expectation tends to make them exhibit the characteristics of loyalty, and loyal customers give

stability in a business in terms of profitability. Mirjavadi (2015) found a positive impact of proactive strategy on business performance of active companies in Kaveh industrial park. This study confirms that proactive strategy aids in improving customers loyalty and business performance.

12. Conclusion And Recommendations

Based on the result from the study and its connexion to previous studies by scholars already in existence. It is concluded that there is a strong positive association between proactive strategy in green marketing and marketing effectiveness. Proactive strategy in green marketing is seen as been an important strategy that firms can use to attract customers to purchasing from them as it gives a firm a competitive advantage over other firms operating in the same industry. Proactive approach in green marketing is also a source of benefit in the long run relating it to return on investment, greater brand differentiation, customer brand loyalty, enhance corporate reputation, and social image. More importantly it will help give more ecological sustainability where all stakeholders will benefit knowing that one of the factors that drives effectiveness in marketing is the strategy that the firm use to achieve its set objectives. Therefore, it is recommended that marketing managers and policy makers in consumer goods firms understands the importance of proactive strategy in green marketing as it will help in reducing the harmful effect of firms activities on the environment as well as meeting present and future needs of customers, that will result to effectiveness in marketing.

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