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Effects of Strategic Planning and Innovation on Performance of Mobile Telecommunication Firms in Ghana

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study is to assess the effect of strategic planning and constant innovation strategies on the performance of firms in the telecommunication industry. The study used a quantitative method and cross-sectional survey design with a purposive sampling technique to collect data from the offices of Mobile Telecommunication Networks in Ghana (MTN). The findings indicate strategic planning practices of the telecommunication industry had a significant positive relationship with performance. However, the innovation practices were found to have no significant influence on performance. The study findings reveal that the players in the MTN industry who focus more on strategic planning initiatives receive high performance. The outcome of the study findings indicates the need for the telecommunication industry to focus more attention on strategic planning to enhance performance. The paper provides the pathways to policy makers in the telecommunication industry to communicate effectively with their staff about strategic and innovation decisions to ensure efficiency in performance.

KEYWORDS

Aligning Initiatives, Communication, Developing Country, Ghana, Mobile Network, Performance Target, Productivity Growth, Telecommunication Industry

INTRODUCTION

The telecommunication industry contributes significantly to economic growth and development across the globe. The performance of the telecommunication industry in national development has contributed to the economic growth of many nations (Boateng & Owusu, 2013; Ni, 2018; Omayio, 2017). For example, the industry has introduced several services such as international roaming, mobile money, internet facilities, IoT, and teleconferencing facilities in addition to making and receiving

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calls (Mahmoud & Hinson, 2012). Notwithstanding this, mobile telecommunication networks in developing countries face interconnectivity and other problems that result in poor performance by some firms in the industry (Ampomah, 2012).

The telecommunication industry has a lot of firms that compete with each other for survival (Alosani et al., 2019). Globally, the firms in the industry strategically seek opportunities and constantly innovate for performance improvements (Ombasa & Nzulwa, 2018). Considering the competitive nature of the firms in the telecommunication industry that moves the firms to devise various strategies to survive, this study assesses the effect of strategic planning and innovation on firms' performance in mobile telecommunication. To overcome the problems and challenges faced by the MTNs the industry players must realign their business strategies, train and empower staff, and monitor and implement actions to overcome cybersecurity, infrastructure, and network challenges (Aivo Conversation AI (2020).

Thus, the purpose of this study is to assess the extent to which strategic planning and innovation influence the performance of the mobile telecommunication network (MTN) aspect of the telecommunication industry. The study also assesses the effect of innovation on the performance of the firms in the mobile telecommunication industry. The study is therefore guided by the question: What are the effects of strategic planning and innovation on firms' performance in the mobile telecommunication industry? There is a lot of literature on the effect of strategic planning and innovation on the performance of the telecommunication industry from the advanced world, but there is a lack of literature about West Africa. The research makes a contribution to the literature in filling the research gap that exists between the advanced economies and the developing world, especially from Ghana in West Africa. This study is to serve as a reference to guide other researchers who will undertake similar studies in the mobile telecommunication industry in the developing world.

Literature Review

Strategic planning is the process of formulating an organization's long-term goals and objectives and determining how to fulfill them within a specified time frame (Alosani et al., 2019; & Mulyaningsih et al., 2023 & Plance, 2015). According to Bryson (2011), strategic planning is concerned with articulating the business' main goals and objectives, seeking the means of fulfilling stakeholder interests, the collective efforts of four essential features: reasonable articulation of the main business goals, recognizable proof of the organization's stakeholder interests, description of the organization's strategic objectives, and advancement of techniques to accomplish the achievement of the goals. Oyedijo (2004) admitted that strategic planning aims at identifying the mission, vision, and goals of an organization, as well as determining actions and resources to accomplish them.

Donkor et al. (2018) argued that an essential aspect of high-performing organizations or organizational adequacy is the practicality of strategic planning, which has been widely acknowledged worldwide. Strategic planning plays a significant role in strategic management implementation (Julian, 2013). According to Arasa and K'Obonyo (2012), strategic planning contains inherent principles that tend to improve organizational performance. Donkor et al. (2018) confirmed this by stating that strategic planning is a vehicle that inspires high organizational performance. It helps organizational members to know the progress of the organization and activities to prioritize (Bryson, 2011). Thus, a key function of strategic planning is to communicate effectively to members of an organization and articulate its vision and the mechanisms and actions needed to attain the vision (Arasa & K'Obonyo, 2012). Strategic planning gives the system of control and helps to coordinate the business of the organization. It empowers goal formulation and ensures performance assessment (Alqershi, 2021; Alzghol et al. (2023).

The OECD defines innovation as "the implementation of a new or significantly improved product (goods or service), or process, a new marketing method, or a new organizational method in business, workplace organization or external relations" (2005, p. 46). Phan (2019) suggested that, for firms to survive the external environment, it is not enough to formulate strategies for implementation but to continually innovate their strategies to be at par with the changes in the environment. Thus, thinking and acting in old ways easily lead to the path of failure. Jahantigh et al. (2018) argued that successful managers aim to achieve success by identifying and prioritizing strategic objectives to distinguish the weaknesses and strengths of each strategic plan to enhance performance. Strategy greatly impacts organizational performance. Therefore, studies on the strategic planning of organizations place much emphasis on performance. Porter (1991) argued that the business strategy of an organization, such as functional policy, leads to its sustainability and superior performance, thereby earning a positive advantage in the market. Fletcher and Harris (2002) showed that high organizational performance in the area of strengths and fast-track niche-filling capabilities is being created by strategic flexibility. These capabilities include price reduction, an increase in sales growth, and effort of volume mix, quality market, market attraction, and market shares (Acquaah, 2011).

Nmadu (2007) showed a positive relationship between strategic planning and organizational performance, revealing that the corporate financial performance of small business enterprises (SBEs) happens to increase when the level of practice of strategic planning and management increases. For all the financial performance indicators used in the study, performance increased significantly as the level of strategic management increased. Therefore, the higher the overall level of strategic management practice in an organization, the higher the performance of the organization (Plance, 2015).

According to Adeleke et al. (2008), employing the strategic planning approach in an organization greatly impacts an organization's performance. However, strategic planning will be beneficial when an organization matches the appropriate strategic planning and innovative approaches to its performance. Nmadu (2007) and Akingbade (2007), among other researchers, have identified the benefits of relating strategic planning and innovative approaches to performance. Some of the benefits identified include how the approaches bring out a clear definition of the mission and vision of an organization and provide better guidance and direction for achieving objectives. Planning toward making managers and organizational members more aware of both internal and external opportunities and threats helps in identifying and dealing with risks and uncertainties, which contribute to organizational success. Furthermore, Akingbade (2007) disclosed that strategic planning helps bring order and discipline to the activities of an organization in its internal processes and external activities.

With all these benefits, Nmadu (2007) maintained that the general purpose of the use of a strategic approach is for financial benefits associated with successful implementation. They include continuing growth rates in earnings per share, increase in relative market share, continuing addition of new products and product lines, and absence of excessive seasonal fluctuation, as well as continuing expansions of the firm's customer population. Managers are more concerned with strategic management in recent years as it assists them in giving their organization a sense of purpose. Moreover, organizations that get involved in strategic planning are better able to predict the future than others that do not have strategic plans (Plance, 2015). Although there are many advantages to strategic planning, there are also disadvantages, and researchers have equally identified these disadvantages of strategic planning. Strategic planning involves continuous assessments of critical components such as the external and internal environment, short-term and long-term objectives, organizational structure, and strategic control. These components are interrelated; therefore, a change in one component may affect other areas. For instance, in an economic downturn, a company may need to reduce its workforce. Therefore, the external factor, the poor economy, affects its internal environment, which is the number of people employed (Mietzner, 2005).

The company may also need to review its objectives and make necessary adjustments, and all of these factors ultimately influence a company's management and structural systems, which to a large extent affects its organizational performance. Also, although strategic plans help reduce uncertainties in meeting long-term objectives, the planning process itself provides opportunities for missteps. Therefore, strategic planning requires skillful strategic management professionals. An organization needs to anticipate the future, which involves various degrees of change as well as risks. To avoid pitfalls, managers need to have the right skills to plan the strategy and mitigate risk factors.

Managers also need to monitor as well as develop business contingency plans to address possible future challenges in the external environment, such as market conditions, competitive forces, and economic factors that may affect the business negatively (Giezen, 2012).

Again, strategic plans are difficult to implement as well as time-consuming. The implementation process requires a communicated plan, executed in a way that requires full attention, active participation, and accountability of not only company managers but also all members across the organization. Ansoff (1965), on the other hand, outlined the following reasons as responsible for the failure of strategic plans: inadequate or incorrect marketing research, over-estimation of resource competence, and inability to predict reactions from both the external and internal environment. Inability to handle new strategies, price wars, failure to develop new employee and management skills, and failure to understand the customer are other disadvantages. Akinyele and Fasogbon (2007) revealed that dynamic operations and innovations have increased both internal and external uncertainties in the telecommunication industry. Many telecommunication firms spend much time and resources reacting to these unexpected changes. Most of the firms in the industry use their resources to cope with immediate challenges, and this has contributed to high competition among organizations in the telecommunication industry.

The success or failure of an organization can be determined by how well the organization formulates, implements, and evaluates its strategies and policies to overcome anticipated or unexpected challenges. Managers of the firms in the telecommunication network are gradually becoming aware of the critical ways of overcoming the challenges. The success of strategic planning and innovation can be measured in terms of the extent to which the factors influence organizational performance and survival.

Relationship Between Strategic Planning/Innovation and Performance

Over the years, there have been many studies by researchers about the telecommunication industry in many developed countries. The findings and conclusions of most of the studies show there is a positive relationship between strategic planning and performance in most developed nations. For instance, studies by Alosani et al. (2019) on the effect of innovation and strategic planning on enhancing the organizational performance of the telecommunication system of the Dubai Police Force concluded that there is a positive relationship between strategic planning and organizational performance. The study found that high-quality performance is the most important factor that organizations are looking for and striving to achieve. Studies by Alsalim et al. (2022) also affirm the outcome of Alosani et al. (2019). However, to achieve the best organizational performance, firms in the telecommunication industry need to practice innovative strategies.

A study conducted by Muhoho and Oloko (2016) on the influence of strategic planning on the performance of manufacturing firms revealed that the adoption of strategic planning and management enabled manufacturing firms to match their output with the market. These findings aligned their objectives and performance targets with their mission and vision to achieve clarity in organizational direction as well as achieve coherence in organizational decision-making.

In East Africa, studies conducted by Omayio (2017) in Kenya and Nyathi and Kekwaletiswa (2023) showed that strategic planning increased the ability of the firms in the telecommunication industry to effectively deal with business challenges, achieve better coordination of organizational activities, create effective communication, and attain better operational cost management. It enabled the firms to gain a competitive advantage in the marketplace. This outcome reveals that organizations that formulate and implement strategic plans improve organizational performance, operational efficiency, customer satisfaction, and the retention of personnel.

A study in Ghana by Donkor et al. (2018) to examine strategic planning and performance of small and medium enterprises (SMEs) in Ghana established that a consistent application of strategic planning methodologies contributes to the advancement of SMEs' performance in Ghana. The findings of the study were consistent with prior empirical studies on the effect of strategic planning on organizational performance. Arasa and K'Obonyo (2012) and Rummler and Brache (2012) proposed that organizations enhance performance once they incorporate strategic planning. However, in West Africa, especially Ghana, limited studies have been conducted on the effect of strategic planning and innovation on performance in the mobile telecommunication industry. It is therefore imperative to embark on this research to determine the relationship from the perspective of West Africa, where there is a lack of literature on the phenomenon.

RESEARCH HYPOTHESES

Based on the discussion from the literature review, the author postulates the following hypotheses:

Hypothesis 1: There is a positive and significant effect of strategic planning on performance in the mobile telecommunication industry in Ghana
Hypothesis 2: There is a positive and significant effect of constant innovation on performance in the mobile telecommunication industry in Ghana

Research Method

The researcher employed the quantitative method and cross-sectional design for the study. A quantitative method and cross-sectional survey design were appropriate for this study because the approach helped the researcher to describe the state of affairs as they existed in quantitative terms without much subjective manipulation of variables used for this study. The target population for this study consisted of the senior management employees of the various MTN offices in Accra. This is because senior management employees are mostly responsible for the strategic planning and performance of firms. The study targeted all the 24 MTN offices operating in Accra as the sample frame and selected two senior managers from each office; the branch manager and the assistant branch manager, using the purposive sampling technique. However, 38 managers from 20 offices, out of the targeted sample unit of 48 from 24 offices responded satisfactorily to the questionnaire. The sample size represents over 80 percent of the sample frame (all the branch and assistant branch managers of MTN offices in Accra), which is justified (Cooper & Schindler, 2001; Sharma, 2017). According to Delice (2010), for relational research, the sample size should not be less than 30. Geographically, the Accra Metropolis was targeted as the research area because a cross-section of all the employees of MTNs in Ghana can be located in that area.

Measures

Dependent Variable

Organizational performance is the dependent (indigenous) variable used for this study. The items used to measure this variable were adapted from Kaplan and Norton (1992). Four items based on the previous three years' performance of MTNs were used. The participants rated the planned performance of MTNs as against the company's actual performance during the period. These items were measured using a 5-point Likert scale. The scale ranges from 1 to 5, indicating: (1) *much less*, (2) *less*, (3) *normal*, (4) *more*, and (5) *much more*. The items used were *sales volume*, *profitability ratio*, *productivity growth*, and *market share*. A reliability test was performed to measure the internal consistency of the items, which demonstrated very strong reliability ($\alpha = .83$).

Independent Variables

This study used two independent (exogenous) variables to assess the effect of the independent variables on the dependent variable. The first relationship was between strategic planning and organizational performance, and the second one was the relationship that exists between innovation and organizational performance. The items used to measure the relationship between strategic planning and organizational performance were adapted from Samson and Terziovski (1999). Six items were used, with a 5-point Likert scale ranging from 1 to 5. The respondents rated the items: (1) *total disagreement*, (2) *disagreement*, (3) *neutral*, (4) *agreement*, or (5) *total agreement*. The ratings were based on the assessment of the relationship between strategic planning and the performance of MTNs during the previous three years of the telecommunication network. The items used included, "MTN always aligns its strategy with its performance," "MTN budgets are prepared based on departmental performance," "MTN staff are fully engaged in strategic planning and performance of the mobile telecommunication firm," and "The company's strategy is monitored and adapted in relationship with performance where necessary." A reliability test on all six items indicated an acceptable internal consistency ($\alpha = .70$).

The study used three items, adapted from Covin and Slevin (1989), for the assessment of the relationship between innovation and organizational performance at MTNs. The items were "Management usually uses innovation for better performance," "Staff are fully engaged in innovations for effective performance," and "Management looks for new ways to sell their products." These items were also measured using a 5-point Likert scale: (1) *total disagreement*, (2) *disagreement*, (3) *neutral*, (4) *agreement*, and (5) *total agreement*. The reliability test performed indicated high internal consistency with a Cronbach's alpha of .83 ($\alpha = .83$).

RESULTS

The main purpose of this study is to assess and describe the effect of strategic planning and innovation on the performance of MTNs in Ghana. In analyzing the quantitative data, the study used descriptive statistics, correlation, and regression with the aid of Statistical Package for Social Sciences V. 20. Measures of central tendency (mean), dispersion (standard deviation), frequencies, and percentages were applied for the quantitative variables (Descombe, 2008). Out of the 40 questionnaires issued, 38 (95%) were returned fully completed, while 2 (5%) were not returned. It can be inferred, therefore, that the response rate was very good.

Demographic Characteristics of Respondents

Table 1 presents the demographic factors of the respondents. Age distributions of the respondents showed that 71% of the 38 sampled respondents were aged between 25 and 35 years, and 29% were aged between 36 and 45 years. The data also showed that 50% of the respondents were managers, and 50% were assistant managers. The respondents' years of experience showed that 15.8% of the respondents had worked with the company for periods below a year, 55.3% had worked 1–5 years, 15.8% had worked 6–10 years, 10.5% had worked between 11–15 years, and 2.6% had worked for periods exceeding 15 years. A descriptive analysis was performed on key variables of the study to examine the level of strategic planning and business performance among the sampled branches.

Strategic Planning Practices

Table 2 shows the strategic planning practices used by the telecommunication network. The respondents indicated that strategic planning was used by aligning initiatives with strategy ($M = 4.105$), structuring the offices to be effective strategic planning ($M = 4.079$), engaging staff fully in strategic planning ($M = 4.053$), and monitoring strategic planning strategy and implementation where necessary to meet the challenges and realities of times ($M = 4.237$). The study, however, showed that a number of the respondents believed that the offices fairly aligned their budgets with performance ($M = 3.711$).

Innovation Practices

Table 3 presents the findings of the extent to which management of the branches of MTNs embarked on innovation practices. The respondents agreed with the claim that MTN management constantly

Table 1. Demographic Characteristics of Respondents

Variable	Frequency	Percentages
Age Group		
25-30 years	14	36.8%
31-35 years	13	34.2%
36-40 years	8	21.1%
41-45 years	3	7.9%
Respondent's Position		
Manager	19	50.0%
Asst. Manager	19	50.0%
Years of Work		
Below 1 year	6	15.8%
1-5 years	21	55.3%
6-10 years	6	15.8%
11-15 years	4	10.5%
Over 15 years	1	2.6%

Table 2. Strategic Planning Practices

Management Practices	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Aligning initiatives with strategy	38	1.00	5.00	4.105	.981
Aligns budget with departmental performance	38	1.00	5.00	3.711	1.250
The structure of the organization allows for strategy planning	38	1.00	5.00	4.079	1.217
Staff are fully informed about the strategy	38	1.00	5.00	3.737	1.155
Staff are fully engaged in strategy planning	38	1.00	5.00	4.053	1.229
strategy is monitored and adapted where necessary	38	1.00	5.00	4.237	1.076

innovates their strategies to survive the dynamics in the industry (M = 4.00, SD = 1.186), and management constantly searches for new ways to sell their products (M = 4.237, SD = 1.077). The study revealed that the degree of staff engagement in innovation was moderate (M = 3.342, SD = 1.300). The statistics indicate that strategic managers do not involve staff in innovative strategies. This explains why investigations of this kind are vital to organizations.

Table 3. Innovation Strategies

Innovation Practices	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Management constantly innovates their strategies	38	1.00	5.00	4.000	1.186
Staff are fully engaged in innovative strategies	38	1.00	5.00	3.342	1.300
Management looks for new ways to sell products	38	1.00	5.00	4.237	1.077

Performance Levels

Table 4 shows the performance levels of the sampled branches. There was an indication that generally, the performance was good. The network had good sales growth rates ($M = 4.342$), good profit growth rates ($M = 4.079$), good productivity growth rates ($M = 4.290$), and an impressive market share rate with the highest mean of 4.447. This showed that in terms of market share, the sampled units were doing very well.

Pearson bivariate correlation coefficient was used to determine the kind of relationship and the degree of association among the strategic planning practices as well as the innovation practices. The assumption was that there existed a linear relationship between the practices, ranging from -1.0 (perfect negative relationship) to +1.0 (perfect positive relationship). The analysis was conducted with a confidence interval of 95% using a 2-tailed test of significance.

Strategic Planning Practices

Pearson bivariate correlation coefficient was used to determine the kind of relationship and the degree of association amongst the strategic planning practices as well as the innovative strategy practices. In effect, the study sought to know if the adoption of the various practices influenced the adoption of another practice. It is assumed that there is a linear relationship between the practices, ranging from -1.0 (perfect negative relationship) to +1.0 (perfect positive relationship). The analysis was conducted with a confidence interval of 95% using a 2-tailed test of significance.

The correlation results in Table 5 show that the practice of a strategy being adapted perfectly correlated with aligning the budget with performance ($\alpha = .000$), the structure of the organization for strategic planning ($\alpha = .000$), staff being fully informed about a strategy (sig. = .000), and staff being fully engaged in strategic planning ($\alpha = .000$). However, the practice of aligning initiatives with strategies was found to have no significant correlation with strategy adapted ($\alpha = .285$), fully engaged staff in strategic planning ($\alpha = .268$), informing staff about strategy ($\alpha = .320$), and structuring organization in line with strategic planning ($\alpha = .859$), as well as aligning the budget with departmental performance ($\alpha = .366$). The results, however, showed that the practice of staff being fully informed about strategic planning had a significant positive relationship with the performance of MTNs ($\alpha = .028$).

Innovation Practices

The study also sought to find out if constant innovation practices had any degree of association among themselves as well as the performance of the firms in the industry. To achieve this, a Pearson correlation analysis was conducted with a confidence interval of 95% using a 2-tailed test of significance. Table 6 presents the findings of this analysis.

This research shows that the practice of management constantly innovating their strategies correlates perfectly with management looking for new ways to sell their products ($\alpha = 0.00$). However, the results showed that the practice of management constantly innovating their strategies had no significant influence on the practice of staff being fully engaged in innovation strategies ($\alpha = .111$). In addition, the results showed that the practice of management looking for new ways to sell their

Table 4. Performance Indicators

Performance Indicator	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Sales volume for the past three years	38	3.00	5.00	4.342	.627
Net profit for the past three years	38	2.00	5.00	4.079	.749
Productivity growth for the past three years	38	3.00	5.00	4.290	.694
Market share for the past three years	38	3.00	5.00	4.447	.686

Table 5. Correlation Analysis of Strategic Planning Practices

Strategic Planning Practices	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
1. Aligning initiatives with strategy	1						
2. Align budget with departmental performance	-.151	1					
3. The structure of the organization allows for strategy planning	-.030	.513**	1				
4. Staff are fully informed about the strategy	-.166	.601**	.458**	1			
5. Staff are fully engaged in strategy planning	-.184	.450**	.395*	.448**	1		
6. strategy is monitored and adapted where necessary	-.178	.554**	.625**	.573**	.603**	1	
7. Performance of MTN	.089	.218	-.076	.357*	.100	-.001	1

Note: *significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed). **significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed)

products had no significant bearing on staff being fully engaged in innovation strategies. Finally, the study showed that all the practices of innovation strategies had no significant relationship with performance.

The regression analysis performed revealed an adjusted R^2 value of 0.069. This indicates that only 6.9% of the performance of MTNs is explained by the strategic planning practices and the innovation practices adopted by MTNs. The remaining 93.1% can be described by other relevant variables not covered in the study. The study used ANOVA to validate the results of the regression model. The results showed an F-value of 1.305, which was not significant (p-value = .278). Also, the regression results show that strategic planning practices of staff being fully informed about strategic decisions had a significant positive relationship with the performance of MTNs (B = .332, p = .024 < 0.05). However, none of the innovation practices was found to have any significant influence on the performance of the company.

RESULT OF ANOVA

As shown in Table 7, this research used ANOVA to validate the results of the regression model. The findings show an F-value of (1.305), which was not significant (p = .278). The model, therefore, indicates, with a confidence level of 95%, that there is no likelihood of presenting a false prediction.

REGRESSION ANALYSIS

The regression results presented in Table 8 show that there was a favorable and significant positive relationship between the practice of staff being fully informed about strategy and the performance of MTNs (B = .332, p = .024 < 0.05). Specifically, an investment in staff being fully informed about strategy by 1% increases the performance of MTNs by 33.2%. The results also showed that there is no significant positive connection between strategic planning practices of aligning initiatives with strategy

Table 6. Correlation Analysis of Innovative Strategy Practices

Innovative Practices	1	2	3	4
Management constantly innovates their strategies	1			
Staff are fully engaged in innovative strategies	.263	1		
Management looks for new ways to sell their products	.593**	.288	1	
Performance of MTN	-.033	-.085	.109	1

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

Table 7. Results of ANOVA

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	5.141	9	.571	1.305	.278[b]
	Residual	12.254	28	.438		
	Total	17.395	37			

and performance of MTNs (B = .068, p = .587 > 0.05); aligning the budget with performance and that of the company (B = .115, p = .366 > 0.05); and staff being fully engaged in strategic planning and performance of MTNs (B = 097, p = .459 > 0.05). The findings again showed that the remaining practices of strategic planning had no significant negative relationship with the performance of MTNs: the structure of the organization allows for strategic planning (B = -.125, p = .319 > 0.05) and strategy being monitored and adapted where necessary (B = -.082, p = .659 > 0.05).

Finally, the study indicates that there was no significant negative relationship between all the innovation practices and the performance of MTN management constantly innovating their strategies (B = -.179, p = .291 > 0.05); staff fully engaged in innovation strategies (B = -.012, p = .895 > 0.05); and management look for new ways to sell products (B = -.031, p = .863 > 0.05). This implies that the adoption of innovation practices by MTNs will not impact negatively the performance of MTNs.

PITFALLS OF STRATEGIC PLANNING

The research also sought to find out the pitfalls of MTN strategic planning, and the results are indicated in Table 9. To achieve this, respondents were asked about the extent to which they agree with the pitfalls of strategic planning as identified by Plance (2015). The study shows that overconfidence based on existing success is the most challenging problem of strategic planning facing MTNs (M = 3.500; SD = 1.502). This was followed by an inability to foster belief in the strategy (M = 2.684; SD = 1.210) and an inability to translate the strategy into a corporate purpose (M = 2.474; SD = 1.224). The rest are failure to create accountability for results (M = 2.395; SD = 1.264), failure to focus (M = 2.263; SD = 1.178), short-term planning (M = 2.105; SD = 1.203), and failure to respond to structural changes in the market (M = 2.000, SD = .930).

Table 8. Regression Results of Strategic Planning and Innovation Practices on Performance

Model	B	Std. Error	Beta	t	Sig.
1. (Constant)	3.854	.822		4.689	.000
Aligning initiatives with strategy	.068	.125	.098	.550	.587
Aligns budget with departmental performance	.115	.125	.210	.918	.366
The structure of the organization allows for strategy planning	-.125	.124	-.223	-1.016	.319
Staff are fully informed about the strategy	.332	.140	.559	2.378	.024
Staff are fully engaged in strategy planning	.097	.129	.173	.750	.459
strategy is monitored and adapted where necessary	-.082	.183	-.128	-.446	.659
Management constantly innovates their strategies	-.179	.166	-.309	-1.076	.291
Staff are fully engaged in innovative strategies	-.012	.093	-.023	-.133	.895
Management looks for new ways to sell products	-.031	.181	-.049	-.174	.863

Table 9. Pitfalls of Strategic Planning

Pitfalls of Strategic Planning	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Dev.
Short term planning	38	1.00	5.00	2.105	1.203
Ignoring external trends	38	1.00	5.00	1.895	1.034
Overconfidence based on existing success	38	1.00	5.00	3.500	1.502
Failure to respond to structural changes in the market	38	1.00	5.00	2.000	.930
Failure to employ the best possible team	38	1.00	5.00	1.974	1.150
Failure to Focus	38	1.00	5.00	2.263	1.178
Inability to foster belief in the strategy	38	1.00	5.00	2.684	1.210
Inability to translate the strategy into a corporate purpose	38	1.00	5.00	2.474	1.224
Failure to create accountability for results	38	1.00	5.00	2.395	1.264

DISCUSSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Discussion

The purpose of this study is to examine the effect of strategic planning and constant innovation strategies on the performance of the MTN industry. The findings of this study indicate that planning should be based on consideration of resources and assessment of the internal and external environments in which the organization competes.

Kazmi (2008) indicates that a successful strategy is defined by formulating, implementing, and evaluating functional decisions that enable an organization to achieve its goals and objectives. The management of telecommunication firms, as revealed by this study, also adapts to strategic planning, when necessary, apart from aligning initiatives with strategy. The offices of MTNs had organizational structures that ensured the effective implementation of planned strategies. Hunger and Wheelen (2003) specified that workers at all levels of management of telecommunication companies should be involved in the strategic planning process rather than only top management. This outcome explains the reason why managers of telecommunication firms should fully engage their staff in strategic planning. In this study, there was a disclosure that the sampled offices of MTNs do not actually align their budgets with team or departmental performance or fully inform staff about the strategy.

Rummler and Brache (2012) admit that a company's resources are spent better when outlined for productive and successful activities through the collective efforts of the staff. The results of this study indicate that good strategic planning practices positively influence the performance of firms in the telecommunication industry. This outcome supports the assertions of Alosani et al. (2019) that formulating and coordinating strategic planning practices and initiatives can influence corporate performance positively. The study also showed that despite the numerous benefits of strategic planning, there might be some factors that could render management efforts useless if not well considered. It is incumbent on management, therefore, to pay particular attention to these factors in their quest to adopt strategic planning in their operations. The findings agree with Ujunwa's and Modebe's (2011) assertion that short-term planning and the inability to foster belief are crucial stumbling blocks to effective strategic planning.

This research revealed that MTNs in developing countries plan tactfully by employing strategic planning practices as identified in this study and by aligning initiatives with strategy, structuring the network to be effective in its strategic planning, and engaging staff fully. Strategically, this study's findings revealed that MTN meets the challenges and realities of time by aligning budgets with performance and informing staff about strategic decisions. On innovation strategies, it was realized that MTNs constantly innovate their strategies to meet the dynamics in the telecommunication industry. The network also looks for new ways to sell its products and means to inform staff fully about the innovation strategies. The outcome of this research also indicates that the MTNs were consistently using the previous three years' strategies to improve their performance. The networks used the following performance indicators: sales volume, net profit, productive growth, and market share rate. This finding confirms the industry information released by Ghana's National Communication Authority (NCA) in December 2019, stating that MTN owns the largest market share in the telecommunication industry.

The practice of staff being fully informed about strategic decisions was found to have a significant positive relationship with the performance of MTNs. This finding supports Hypothesis 1: Strategic planning has a significant positive relationship with the performance of MTNs. Thus, the adoption of strategic planning per this study will always influence the performance of MTNs positively. The findings in Table 6 above confirm the December 2019 industry information released by the Ghana National Communication Authority. This study outcome realized that the size of MTNs' sales growth showed the success of their marketing departments. According to Phan (2019), the overall performance of any firm is influenced by the degree of strategic planning and management practices as against the organizational structure and behavioral norms of its employees.

The outcome of the study also indicates that constant innovation practices identified by this study had no significant influence on the performance of MTNs. The implication is that the outcome does not support Hypothesis 2. This revelation may be due to the poor involvement of the staff in decisions on the formulation of policies on innovation.

Recommendations

After a careful examination of the research findings, the following recommendations are made:

1. All the existing strategic planning practices identified by this study should be maintained, except for the practice of aligning initiatives with strategy, which was found to have no degree of association among the remaining practices.
2. More effort should be exerted on strategic planning activities and staff involvement in innovation practices for the high performance of the network
3. Management should pay particular attention to the pitfalls of strategic planning, putting in place appropriate measures for the successful implementation of strategic planning practices.

Policy Recommendation

Policymakers should modify the existing aligning budgets with departmental performance practices as well as inform staff about strategic decisions to ensure effectiveness and efficiency in departmental performance. The competitive nature of telecommunication firms in Ghana requires strategic positioning for survival. The study reveals that strategic planning practices contribute positively to the performance of firms in the telecommunication industry. However, the adoption and implementation of strategic planning must be done carefully to avoid rendering management not performing.

Suggestions for Further Research

The study examined the extent to which strategic planning influences the performance of telecommunication firms. However, other firms within the telecommunication industry can be investigated as well. It is therefore recommended that further studies should be done taking into consideration other firms in the telecommunication industry than MTNs. The research established that only 6.9% of the performance of MTNs, is explained by the independent variables. Nonetheless, there are other variables such as specific locations, employee motivation, and the size of the company, which can also contribute to organizational performance. Hence it is recommended that future studies should be done to identify and examine the other variables that influence organizational performance.

CONCLUSION

The current study highlights some successful and achievable factors of strategic planning and innovation practices that could guide the firms in the telecommunication industry on the factors to pursue in utilizing strategic planning to enhance performance in the telecommunication industry. The findings of the study revealed that there is a significant positive relationship among the strategic planning practices of aligning the budget with departmental performance, structuring the organization for strategic planning, engaging, and informing staff fully about strategic decisions, and monitoring strategy for effective and efficient implementation. The findings of the regression analysis revealed that comprehensive practices of strategic planning practices the MTN organizations bring about improvement in performance. Aligning initiative with strategy was, however, found to have no significant impact on the remaining strategic practices. The study also indicates that the constant innovation practices identified by this study had no significant influence on the performance of the company.

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