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CORPORATE REPUTATION AND BUSINESS PERFORMANCE: EVIDENCE FROM SERVICE FIRM IN NIGERIA

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ABSTRACT

Corporate reputation has evolved to become a strategic and intangible corporate asset. Its relativity is keenly important to business and politics, and it is essentially related to a business competitive strategy that interpreted an organization's ethos, goals, and values that create a sense of belonging among the company's stakeholders. Meanwhile, many service providers such as telecom companies fail to build a strong image and supportive relationship with all of their constituent's corporate reputation. This has incorporated a negative effect on the performance of telecom companies in Nigeria. As a result of these challenges, improving corporate reputation had become of utmost importance for the service firms. This study investigates the effect of corporate reputation determinants such as corporate image and corporate identity on the business performance in the telecommunication

Introduction:

Company reputation is a strategic intangible asset that could enhance customer stimulation towards particular goods and services; it is a signal about how an organization is run to achieve customer loyalty. In a contemporary business competitive environment, corporate reputation is acknowledged as an important factor that influences customer loyalty towards firm products and services (Patricia & Ignacio, 2016). Corporate reputation is considered as an asset that provides an organization with an opportunity to differentiate itself in the market, aiming

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industry in Nigeria. A sample size of 390 respondents was surveyed out of 15,000 population of students from Kwara State University. The study questionnaire was administered to sampled respondents and multiple regression was explored to analyze the data. Descriptive analysis indicates that all determinants of corporate reputation measured were evenly distributed. Therefore, the findings of the study show that corporate reputation has a positive significant effect on business performance. The findings of the study show that one out of two hypotheses tested have a significant effect while the other has no significant effect on business performance. Further results indicate that corporate reputation plays a vital role in business performance in service firms in Nigeria. The study concluded that corporate reputation has a positive significant effect on the business performance of service firms such as telecommunication. It was recommended that service firms should map out some strategies towards quality service and products to create a positive image around their brands and corporate reputation should be given much priority to be able to explore its benefit.

Keyword: *Corporate reputation, corporate image, corporate identity, business performance, customer loyalty, service firm.*

to maximize the organization's profits, market share, attracting new customers, neutralizing stiff competition, customer retention, and above all firm’s sustainability in the industry (Eman & Ayman, 2013). Corporate reputation is considered an important factor in the general evaluation of every organization, because of its significant effect on the customer's perception. Thus, customers respond to stimulation created by corporate reputation when hearing the name of an organization; Luminita, Ana, Rodica, Gina, and Gabriel (2020), concluded that corporate reputation is a must for organizations that are driven by differentiation or positioning in the market. Corporate reputation is decisive specifically for stakeholders' to support or repelling customer behavior and therefore one of the important valuable intangible resources for the firms, a major source

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of competitive advantage and a significant tool for firm's future sustainability (Raithel & Schwaiger, 2015; Kim, Carolin, & Thomas, 2020). Service firm is one of the lucrative business sectors in Nigeria. It is a business firm that makes its facilities available to other firms for a fee to achieve an economy of scale; it is known as a business that serves other businesses. Many firms such as telecommunication companies especially their managers are aware that corporate reputation is one of the most important corporate strategies that can provide their firm a competitive advantage and also future sustainability in the highly competitive business environment. The telecommunications industry in Nigeria is one that can describe as self-aware and steadily adapting to the stark realities of business changing trends, regulatory uncertainties, intense rivalry, etc. It is a general understanding that for a firm to remain sustainable in the current atmosphere of the telecommunication industry, there is a need to recreate its reputation and image (Deloitte, 2019).

Statement of the Problem

In Africa, Nigeria has one of the biggest telecommunication markets that is supported by the second-largest economy on the continent after South Africa. Recently, the outbreak of the Covid-19 in 2020 impacting the telecommunication industry greatly. And during the coming year, the telecommunication industry to certain levels is likely to experience a downturn in customer patronage, while it may also be difficult for network operators to manage workflows when maintaining and upgrading existing infrastructures. The scandalous image that is attached to the 5G network has a greater significant effect on the reputation of the telecommunication service provider since it is rumored that the 5G network is responsible for the rapid spread of novel coronavirus (Xinhua, 2020). The previous research studies pointed out several factors of corporate reputation that are contributing to business performance such as corporate image, corporate identity, goodwill, etc. (Eman & Ayman, 2013; Patricia & Ignacio, 2016). Therefore, it seems there is no or little research study were done in the context of corporate reputation on business performance especially in

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the service industry such as the telecommunication sector where this study is focus.

Research Aims, Objectives

This study aims to investigate the effect of corporate reputation on business performance in the telecommunication industry in Nigeria.

Objectives of the Problem

1. To examine the effect of corporate image on business performance in service firm in Nigeria;
2. To investigate the effect of corporate identity on business performance in a service firm in Nigeria.

Hypotheses

$H_0$1: Corporate image does not have a significant effect on business performance in service firms in Nigeria.

$H_0$2: Corporate identity does not have a significant effect on the business performance of service firms in Nigeria.

Literature Review

Luis, Jesus, and Belen, (2020) defined corporate reputation as a collective representation of a firm's past actions and results which portray the ability of the firm to deliver valuable outcomes to multiple stakeholders. According to The Oxford Handbook of Corporate Reputation (2012), the concept of 'corporate reputation first appeared in 1983, and there has been major exponential growth in the scientific literature in the context of reputation. Reputation is an assessment made by an individual or entity affected by the firm action; reputation is equally referred to as a perception or judgment made by the stakeholders or public or groups that is affecting or affected by the pursuit of the company's objectives (Heinberg, Ozkaya, & Taube, 2018). Corporate reputations are very important because they enhance economic transactions by providing incentives for the company or firm to behave in acceptable manners. Thus, a good reputation acts as an indication of probity and a performance bond in the sense that an episode of poor behavior would put a good reputation at risk in situations where there is ample opportunity for a firm/company to be opportunistic in its dealing with other parties.

Researchers in the past had characterized reputations as the public's overall evaluation of a firm, or a perceptual symbol of a firm's activities and prospects; as well as an attitudinal construct that consists of cognitive (knowledge-based) and affective (emotional-based) components. Luis, Jesus, and Belen, (2020) stated that a positive or favorable reputation indicates that the firm/company has behaved perfectly well over time, leading to higher expectations from the consumers, stakeholders, and public in general. Corporate reputations have attracted attention from an academic perspective due to the thought that it operates in the markets for employees (Auger, Devinney, Dowling, Ecker, & Lin, 2013; Grahame, 2016), customers (Gatti, Caruana, & Snehota, 2012), and investors (Grahame, 2016). Therefore, a good reputation in the markets is believed to help the firm to attain and retain its so-called stakeholders.

Kim, Robert, and Cha, (2013), in their contribution to the concept of corporate reputation, opined that measurement of a company's reputation can be simplified into three basic which are company identity, company strategy, and company communication. Thus, the company's reputation dimension was highlighted by Amigo, Carrillo-de-Albornoz, Chugur, Corujo, Gonzalo, Meij and Spina, (2014), these dimensions were categorized such as; product and services, innovation, workplace, citizenship, government, leadership, and performance. Meanwhile, this principle shares some similarities with the previous review conducted by Kim, Robert, and Cha, (2013). Scholars highlighted some important dimensions such as corporate image (Lee, Chang, & Lee, 2017; Ling & Sirion, 2014), and corporate identity (Veronika & Darina, 2020; Balmer, 2017); these are reviewed for this study.

Corporate Image

Corporate image is defined as the response of consumers to the total offering by a firm/company and it is described as the beliefs, ideas, and impressions that individual/public has of a particular company (Tang, 2007 as cited by Lee, Chang & Lee, 2017). Corporate image can be described as the prestige and reputation that is built by the company through communication process and it is explored to create and deploy particular message for the strategic form purpose of mission, vision, and identity that mirrors the core values the company cherishes (Ling & Sirion, 2014). Lee, Chang, and Lee, (2017), stated that image can be seen as a notion that people hold in connection to a corporate brand, product, and service, group, or organization. In other words, image is an impression that individuals expect to create or strike upon a company concerning their product and service.

Corporate image is connected to the firm attribute such as name, structure, architecture, the kind, value, and quality of products and service (Patricia & James, 2016; Goyal & Chanda, 2017). Jonida and Hassan, (2017) opined that a good corporate image have effects on the growth of customer loyalty and it continuously influencing customer retention to buy products; meanwhile it stimulate customer loyalty and encourage the customer to recommend certain product or service to their family and friends. Therefore, Johnson, Scholes, and Whittington (2016) stated that corporate image is a function of the accumulation of purchasing and consumption experience over time by an individual; and two principal components such as functional and emotional are attributed to it. Thus, the functional component of the corporate image is associated with tangible attributes of products/services that can be measured easily, while the emotional component is linked with the psychological aspect that is manifested by human feelings and attitudes towards the company (Kotler & Keller, 2015). Ashton, (2014) concluded that corporate image is a very important and significant part of corporate strategy in attaining and retaining competitive advantage. Meanwhile, firms all over the industry specifically those in the aggressive market battles explored corporate image to augment their products and services, to increase their customer base, and also to achieve firm profitability (Chuah, Marimuthu, & Ramayah, 2016). Furthermore, Cheng, Shaheen, and Cham, (2014) argued that a company does not project a unique image; instead, it rather possesses series of images that is different based on a specific group i.e. employees, clients, and shareholders to which individual whom has different types of experiences and contacts with the firm. Therefore, harmonization of the marketing activities is consequently vital to create customer loyalty since incongruent perceptions can counteract the favorable impressions that are related to a firm's image.

Corporate Identity

Veronika and Darina, (2020) described corporate identity as a company/firm's effort for external distinctiveness, individuality, and uniqueness that reflect in components such as corporate behavior, design, culture, communication, and product. Corporate identity is a collective personification that a company gaining from its history, philosophy, culture, strategy, management style, and reputation, and employee behavior (Cees & John, 1997). However, the concept of corporate identity is purposefully created to embraces the intrinsic functioning, structure, and presentation of a certain company in the market environment, that expressing firm originality, unmistakability, and specificity compared to other businesses. The importance of corporate identities has been highlighted in prominence by several researchers; thus, corporate identity elements such as value and purpose play a significant role in an organization (Luke, Melewar, Keith, & Thomas, 2020).

Although corporate identity was initially described in terms of the visual representation of a company, authors later employed broader terms that highlight the significance of corporate identity on customer loyalty (Balmer, 2017). Luke, Melewar, Keith, and Thomas, (2020) argued that corporate identity is very important for companies in terms of stimulating customer loyalty. At present, almost all business entities offer the same product at the price and under the similarity of technological conditions. Meanwhile, corporate identity could enhance business sustainability. Corporate identity has become an integral part of the organization's management and it is an important source of competitiveness in the industry (Eun-Mi & Hyun-Shin, 2017). Therefore, all dimensions of corporate identity such as corporate behavior, corporate communication, corporate design, corporate personality, corporate culture, and corporate strategy have a significant influence on the company's image (Luke, Melewar, Keith, & Thomas, 2020). Eun-Mi and Hyun-Shin, (2017) concluded that corporate image has a significant influence on customer loyalty to the company in a business competitive environment because the level of customer loyalty is higher when the percentage of corporate reputation and the corporate image is favorable (Veronika & Darina, 2020).

Customer Loyalty

Customer loyalty is defined as a composite of numerous qualities that is driven by the company’s goal to attaining customer satisfaction in which customers would show commitment to different products offered by the company, and thus it is referred to as a strategic marketing tool (Patricia & Ignacio, 2016). Yakup, Sinan, and Ozlem (2018) described customer loyalty as a commitment that is deeply held by customer to buy, re-buy or re-patronize a preferred product/service consistently in the future; thereby causing purchase retention for the same brand or product of the same company, in respective of the situational influences as well as marketing efforts that have a significant effect on switching behaviors. Ashraf, Ilyas, Imtiaz, and Ahmad, (2018) opined that loyalty is a philosophy of leadership that seeks mutually beneficial management of the relationship between the company and its stakeholders.

The concept of customer loyalty including factors such as customer attitudes and behavior. From the customers' attitude perspective, it involves customer intention to buy more products or to patronize services from the same company such as a telecommunication firm, thus a demonstration of commitment to the particular company by exhibiting resistance to switch from a certain company to another (Heri & Jalaluddin, 2017). The customer would also demonstrate a willingness to recommend the products or services of a certain company to other consumers, as well as willingness to pay a premium price for certain services rendered by the

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same company (Yakup, Sinan, & Ozlem, 2018). Meanwhile, on the aspect of behavior, customer loyalty symbolize the actual repurchasing or re-patronizing of services rendered by the company; which include more patronizing services from the same company which reflects the probability of long-term option for brands and recommend the company to others people (Heri & Jalaluddin, 2017). In this perspective, many researchers concurred that loyalty comprises both attitude and behavior of customers toward particular products or services render by a certain company (Yakup, Sinan, & Ozlem, 2018; Ashraf, Ilyas, Imtiaz, & Ahmad, 2018; John & Shiang-Lih, 2015; James & Annie, 2012).

It is agreed upon by researchers that customer loyalty can be developed through a progressive process. Meanwhile, researchers have contributed to the development of customer loyalty by highlighted different phases of loyalty (Lin & Lee, 2012; Kiyani, Niazi, Rizvi, & Khan, 2012; Ling & Sirion, 2014). Patricia and Ignacio, (2016) opined that the process of developing loyalty by customer follows a cognitive-affective-conation pattern. Therefore, four phases of loyalty were listed in which consumers can be committed to the company at each attitudinal stage. The first step is the cognitive loyalty phase, on this stage consumers prefer a certain product/service to alternatives due to the information provided, awareness, or belief created by the company.

The second phase is effective loyalty, on this step consumers develop like or dislike the product/service and positive or negative attitudes were developed towards the product/service depend on continuous satisfaction or dissatisfaction that customer experiences. At this stage, consumers' show no strong commitment to producing the intention to repurchase or recommend the product or brand to anyone because there is hypothetical evidence that sometimes satisfied customers do not return (Kiyani, Niazi, Rizvi, & Khan, 2012; Sabir, Irfan, Akhtar, Pervez, & Rehman, 2014).

The next step is conative loyalty, it is where consumers formed the intention to return due to the commitment which would have generated towards a brand from the same company. Lastly, the action loyalty stage follows when the consumer's intention to return is transformed into a readiness to act (Tweneboah-Koduah & Farley, 2016). Meanwhile, at this stage of loyalty consumers would have developed a deep level of commitment and possess resistance to change to other products or brands from competitors and switching behaviors could be minimized. According to Lin and Lee, (2012) true loyal consumers are the customers who hold firm to the product or service provider and equally provide repeat purchase behavior.

Theoretical Review

Reputation Risk Management Theory

This theory justifies the fact that there is a strong relationship between corporate reputation, customer loyalty, customer base, and business performance. The concept of corporate reputation is a collective phenomenon as it revolves around a given group's (stakeholders) ability to recognize and correctly interpret 'what a firm stands for' (Rose & Thomsen, 2004). Reputation is formed on perceptions, that it is an aggregate perception of all stakeholders, and that it combines a firm's past actions, current state, and prospects (Walker, 2010; Dowling & Morgan, 2012).

This study is adopting reputation risk management theory because it is customer-based corporate reputation, the construct of a customer-based reputation as 'the customer's overall evaluation of a firm based on his or her reactions to the firm's goods, services, communication activities, interactions with the firm and/ or its representatives or constituencies (such as employees, management, or other customers) and/or known corporate activities'. Reputation risk management theory questions the explanatory power of previous theories such as institutional/legitimacy theory of impression management theory because they are perceived as excessively broad (Unerman, 2008).

Scholars have suggested taking into account the complexity of external and internal corporate factors that might lead companies to report on their corporate reputation. Bebbington, Larrinaga & Moneva, (2008) consider that corporate reputation reporting could be conceived as both an outcome of and part of reputation risk management processes. Friedman & Miles (2001) suggest that a company's reputation lens "would make companies more aware of the need to manage a wide range of environmental, social and ethical risks and to show externally that they are doing so; this would increase the quantity and quality of corporate reputation.

Empirical Review

A research study carried out by Ferry, Adebimpe, George, and Lenu (2017), on the impact of corporate reputation on firms' performance in the Nigerian Stock Market. The study examines the nature of the relationship between corporate reputation and earnings quality of listed firms in Nigeria. The expo facto design was adopted for the study on 21 listed firms selected from the consumer sector, manufacturing sector, and the financial sector on the Nigeria Stock Exchange. The primary estimation method for the regression equation is pooled-OLS. The findings show that corporate reputation has no significant positive association with the earnings quality of listed firms in Nigeria. The result has implications on the capital market, firm reputation, and earnings quality. Thus, it is recommended that companies should consider the option of hiring the non-big four auditors as the use of the big four does not have a positive significant influence on the quality of earnings.
Another study was conducted by Agu, Maduagwu, and Ugwu, (2017) on the effect of corporate reputation on the performance of the selected Commercial Bank in Enugu State, Nigeria. The study aimed to investigate the effect of corporate reputation on the performance of the selected commercial banks in Enugu State, Nigeria. The study used a population size of 355, out of which a sample size of 188 was realized using Taro Yamane's formula at 5% error to tolerance and 95% level of confidence. Instruments used for data collection were primary questionnaires and interviews. The total numbers of 188 copies of the questionnaire were distributed while 177 copies were returned and 11 copies were not returned. A survey research design was adopted for the study. Three hypotheses were tested using the Pearson product-moment correlation coefficient and a simple

linear regression tool. The findings indicated that quality product significantly affects productivity in selected Commercial Bank. The study concluded that a corporate reputation is a tool used by firms to attract the best employees, raise capital effectively, gain and retain loyal customers. The study recommends that organizations should ensure that their products are of good quality that will serve as a competitive tool to win the market, retain the new customer and that will enhance productivity and increase profitability.

Abdullahi, Aminu, and Mustapha, (2014) carried out a study on the corporate reputation on performance of Banking Industries in Nigeria. This study examined the influence of corporate reputation on the performance of banking industries in Kano state. A survey with 384 qualified observations from financial institutions' customers in Kano was conducted. Partial Least Squares (PLS-SEM) was used as an alternative to covariance-based SEM, which provides the researcher with some flexibility in terms of model complexity and relationship specification. The model shows the corporate reputation that is a reflective construct that has a significant direct effect on performance. Findings are useful for policymakers, management of banking industries, and practitioners to enhance corporate reputation, Implications for research and practice and future recommendations are discussed.

Lee and James, (2012) in another study titled revisiting corporate reputation and firm performance link. The study indicates a significant positive linkage between corporate reputation and performance, the results of this study have established the significant effect of corporate reputation on the performance firm. The study recommended that further interpretation of the findings for other countries should be made with caution. While, Blajer-Golebiewska (2014), examined a similar study titled corporate reputation and economic performance; the Evidence from Poland stated that relations between indicators of corporate reputation and economic performance in Poland are weak. There were just a few statistically significant correlations and most of them were weak. The reason for this is that despite a low level of interest in promoting corporate reputation (through engaging companies in CSR events) companies of better performance have more funds, and they are more conscious of the importance of this issue.

Li, Chen, and Ma (2016) examined corporate reputation and performance: A legitimacy perspective. Information was gathered from 191 enterprises in 16 provinces in China. In total, 300 enterprises were selected to participate in this study. Which the results suggest that corporate reputation has a significant positive relationship with enterprise growth. This means that brand image, social responsibility, innovation capability, and staff quality are all important to enterprise growth. Similar effects were found for innovation legitimacy on enterprise growth, indicating that legitimacy is an important theoretical perspective in understanding how businesses could develop in various important aspects.

Methodology

Research Design

To test the formulated hypothesis for the study, a cross-sectional survey was used because it has the advantage of predicting human behavior, thus identifying attributes of a population from a small group of an individual. A total population of 15000 students from Kwara State University was surveyed. Meanwhile, a well-structured and close-ended questionnaire was used to collect data through simple random sampling techniques. A total of 390 questionnaires were distributed to the respondents, while 374 were considered usable. All survey items attributed to corporate reputation, corporate image, corporate identity, and customer loyalty were measured using a five-point Likert scale. Data analysis involved the use of descriptive statistical tools such as frequency, percentage, and inferential statistical. Therefore, standard multiple regression were explored to test the study hypotheses.

Data Analysis based on Hypotheses

Standard multiple regression was used to examined corporate reputation (measured by corporate image and corporate identity) and business performance (measured by customer loyalty). Preliminary analyses were carried out to ensure the assumption of regression (i.e. normality, linearity, homoscedasticity, and multicollinearity) were not violated.

Model Summary for Business Performance

Model Summary[b]

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	Durbin-Watson
1	.455[a]	.207	.201	.59818	2.058
a. Predictors: (Constant), Corporate identity, Corporate image					
b. Dependent Variable: Business performance					

Source: Researcher's Survey, (2020).

The table of the model summary above shows an R square value of 20.7 percent. This means that the model (that includes corporate image and corporate identity) explained about 20.7 percent of the variance in customer loyalty. The Durbin-Watson Statistic gives a 2.058 coefficient which is an indication that there is the absence of serial correlation in the error term of the model as such ruling out problems that are associated with spurious regressions.

ANOVA for Business Performance

ANOVA[a]

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	34.550	3	11.517	32.185	.000[b]
	Residual	132.392	370	.358		
	Total	166.942	373			
a. Dependent Variable: Business Performance						
b. Predictors: (Constant), Corporate identity, Corporate image						

Source: Researcher's Survey, (2020).

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The regression result as contained in Table of ANOVA analysis variation in the dependent variable with the value of regression sum of squares (34.550) in comparison to the residual sum of squares with a value of 132.392 (this value indicated that the model does not fail to explain a lot of the variation in the dependent variables. However, the estimated F-value (32.185) as given in the table with a significance value of 0.000, which is less than the p-value of 0.05 ($p<0.05$) means that the explanatory variable elements as a whole can jointly influence change in the dependent variable (business performance i.e. customer loyalty).

Coefficients[a]

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	T	Sig.	Collinearity Statistics	
		B	Std. Error	Beta			Tolerance	VIF
1	(Constant)	2.330	.176		13.218	.000		
	Corporateimage	.160	.058	.183	2.735	.007	.481	2.080
	Corporateidentity	.167	.051	.211	3.266	.001	.513	1.950
a. Dependent Variable: Business Performance								

Source: Researcher's Survey, (2020).

The table above presents the results of multiple linear regression used to assess the capacity of two control measures (corporate reputation predictors: corporate image and corporate identity) to predict (business performance: customer loyalty). The regression coefficients test the two hypotheses of this study. The results of multiple linear regression revealed that the corporate image has no significant influence on business performance. While corporate identity has a positive significant influence on business performance. However, the standardized regression coefficients indicate the degree of strength that corporate reputation variables such as corporate image and corporate identity have on business performance. Corporate identity has the highest impact with a β coefficient of .211 and a t-value of 3.266 follows by a corporate image with a β coefficient of .183and a t-value of 2.735.

Rule of the Hypotheses

The sign of (H*o*) and (Hα) in the bracket indicates alternative and null hypotheses. The decision of the hypotheses rule in this study is as follows: accept null hypothesis if *p* (probability) is greater than alpha (.005) which indicate that there is no significant effect on the scales, in this regard alternative hypothesis will be rejected. But if otherwise, the alternative will be accepted.

Hypothesis One: Corporate image does not have a significant effect on business performance in a service firm in Nigeria.

This hypothesis is focused on how corporate image could not influence business performance in service firms in Nigeria. The null and alternative hypotheses are as follow:

H_0: (Corporate image does not have a significant effect on business performance in a service firm in Nigeria).

Hα: (Corporate image has a significant effect on business performance in a service firm in Nigeria).

Based on the coefficient table above, multiple regression coefficients predicted that corporate image measured beta coefficient with β coefficients *=.183,* t-value = 2.735, while the p-value **sig** = 0.007 (higher than alpha .005). This supports the null hypothesis (H_0) as an alternative hypothesis is rejected. This is an indication that corporate image as a dimension for corporate reputation has no significant effect on the business performance of service firms in Nigeria, which means that corporate image cannot effectively predict business performance measured by customer loyalty. This result contradicts the findings of previous research carried out by Ferry, Adebimpe, George and Lenu, (2017) on the corporate reputation on the performance of firms in Nigeria Stock Market.

Hypothesis Two: Corporate identity does not have a significant effect on the business performance of service firms in Nigeria.

This hypothesis is focused on how corporate identity could not influence the business performance of a service firm in Nigeria. The null and alternative hypotheses are as follow:

H_0: (Corporate identity does not have a significant effect on the business performance of service firms in Nigeria).

$H\alpha$: (Corporate identity has a significant effect on the business performance of service firms in Nigeria).

Based on the coefficient table above, multiple regression coefficients predicted that corporate identity measured beta coefficient with β coefficients *=.211,* t-value= 3.266, while the p-value **sig** = 0.001 (less than alpha 0.005). This supports the alternative hypothesis ($H\alpha$) as the null hypothesis is rejected. This is an indication that corporate identity as a predictor of corporate reputation has a positive significant effect on the business performance of service firms in Nigeria, which means that corporate identity can effectively influence the business performance measured by customer loyalty. This result supports the findings of previous research carried out on the context of corporate reputation and performance of selected commercial banks in Enugu State, Nigeria (Agu, Maduagwu, & Ugwu, 2017).

Discussion of the findings

This study aims to investigate the effect of corporate reputation on business performance in the telecommunication industry in Nigeria. The result of quantitative that answers research questions depict the respondent's perception based on the administered questionnaire. According to the findings, the demographic information of the respondents helped shed more insight into how the decisions of respondents are differing. Hence, the results of this study show that all predictors of corporate reputation such as corporate image and corporate identity have a significant effect on the business performance of service firms in Nigeria (measured by customer loyalty).

The study examines the effect of corporate image on business performance in service firms in Nigeria. Meanwhile, the study found that corporate image has a negative significant effect on business performance in service firms in Nigeria. This also indicates that service firms such as telecommunication did not much in the aspect of corporate image includes fulfilling customer's needs, customer expectation, and taking care of customer's complaints which have influence customer loyalty. These results contradict the research findings of Abdullahi, Aminu & Mustapha, (2014) which states that organizations' corporate image influences the way the activities of service are rendered. However, good customer service delivery has a negative effect on customer loyalty, telecom firms need to improve their customer's service delivery. Therefore, Nigerian Telecomm firms need to put in more effort to improve their service delivery to their customers.

The study investigates the effect of corporate identity on business performance in a service firm in Nigeria. The study found that corporate identity has a significant influence on the customer loyalty of telecommunication services. This study also shows the effect of community support programme, customer's patronage, high standard, and customer's enlightenment influences on customer loyalty. This conforms to the findings of Bhatt (2018) which states that critical factors of business lead to the development of customer loyalty through corporate identity. However, Telecomm firms need to improve their company's integrity by maintaining honest and straightforward in their communications with their customers.

Conclusion and Recommendations

This study aims to investigate the effect of corporate reputation on business performance in the telecommunication industry in Nigeria. The study explored the quantitative method to determine the aggregate

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predictors that facilitate business performance in service firms. The quantitative method was explored to investigate the effect of corporate reputation determinants such as corporate image and corporate identity on business performance in service firms measured by customer loyalty. However, the study concluded that corporate reputation has a positive significant effect on the business performance of service firms such as telecommunication. Based on the findings that were highlighted in the formulated hypotheses in this study, it is concluded that corporate image and corporate identity influence the customer loyalty of telecommunication firms customers. Nigerian service firms i.e. Telecomm firms can receive feedback from customers and make the adjustment when necessary and should be known for quick response to customers' demands and complaints. Most of the Telecomm firms have attracted their customers through promotional services and by sending accurate information about their services. Though the majority of the Nigerian Telecomm firms have not been able to fulfill their promises to customers in terms of quality services but defend their interest by participating in the development of public policy.

Recommendations

The study found out that corporate reputation can significantly enhance the business performance of service firms through its predictors such as corporate image and corporate identity. The following recommendations were suggested based on the research findings:
It is recommended that service firms such as telecommunication should focus more on the determinant of the corporate reputation such as corporate image which has been single out as an important factor that could influence the business performance of service firms. The study emphasized the significant corporate image on customer loyalty. It is suggested that the service firm should map out some strategies towards quality service and products to create a positive image around their brands. Nigerian Telecomm firms need to involve customer engagements which will encourage customer patronage. Therefore, telecoms firms

should be known for good customer service delivery by meeting and exceeding the expectations of their customers.

It is also recommended that corporate identity as one of the viable factors of corporate reputation should be given much priority to be able to explore its benefit. The study shows that corporate identity plays an important role in customer loyalty. But a high standard must be maintained by telecommunication firms in the way it treats customers and must engage customers in more community support programmes. Service firms should also create a strong brand personality of Telecomm firms which will influence the purchasing decision.

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