
Impact of Sport Activations and Musical Entertainment on Profit Optimisation: A Case Study of Etisalat, Nigeria (Now 9 Mobile)

¹Adeyemo, F. S. & Olukoya, O

Department of Business Administration

Caleb University

Imota, Lagos State, Nigeria

E-mail: ¹ felicia.adeyemo@calebuniversity.edu.ng

ABSTRACT

This study focused on the impact of sports and musical activities on profit optimizations for 9mobile Nigeria. It examined how sports and musical entertainment have optimized profit for 9mobile Nigeria over the years; identified the challenges affecting profit optimizations in telecom sector; and determined the strategies to optimize profits in sport activations and musical entertainment. Primary data was collected by interviewing the heads of sales, marketing and finance department at 9mobile Company in Lagos, Nigeria. These heads of departments were selected because they were responsible for strategic planning, strategy formulation, control, and implementation. An interview guide was used as it enabled oral conveying of questions in a face-to-face manner hence, allowing collection of in depth data. In order to collect primary data, interview guide was designed to get comprehensive information regarding impacts of sport activations and musical entertainment on profit optimizations for 9mobile Company in Nigeria. The researcher made appointments with the interviewees and paid them visits in order to collect the data required. The findings revealed that sports activations and musical entertainment had a positive influence on the optimization of profits. It found out that sports activations had a positive relationship with brand awareness. Participation of consumers in sports activations and music entertainment made significant differences on how the brands were rated and able to generate revenue. It was found that sport activations create awareness thus influencing the consumer's decision to buy certain brands. The findings revealed that the most important reasons of companies getting into sponsorship deals was either to build the organizations image, to maintain a good image and maximize their profits. The study revealed that challenges can be overcome according to the respondents, by making calculated risks and managing the consequences. The study concluded that innovation was the key strategy in the adoption of sports activations and musical entertainment as well as digitalization of sponsored program through interviews that were transcribed verbatim and analysed by NVivo 8.0 (Section 3.6.1). And also showed that sport activations and musical entertainment are better ways to reach consumers most especially the youths.

Keywords: Community, Corporate Social Responsibility, Customer Turnover

Journal Reference Format:

Adeyemo, F. S. & Olukoya i, O. (2022): Impact of Sport Activations and Musical Entertainment on Profit Optimisation: A Case Study of Etisalat, Nigeria (Now 9 Mobile). Social Informatics, Business, Politics, L:aw, Environmental Sciences & Technology Journal. Vol. 8, No.3 Pp 1-36. Article DOI No - dx.doi.org/10.22624/AIMS/SIJ/V8N3P1. www.isteamssocialinformaticsjournal

1. INTRODUCTION

Profit optimization is a natural desire that increases productivity of any organization. Due to high level of competition in the industry, various strategies are employed so as to increase profit and also to promote products (Wang and Webster,

2009). It is widely known that there exist inter and cross category effects when an organization is able to optimize profit. Sports activations refers to the beginning of steady increase, achievement and advancement of sport from low level to higher level with full knowledge and reflection of the indices that increase the awareness and actualization of sports activations (Yazid, 2006). Sports are vital and reliable weapon for any economy; it is a greater marketing instrument for the economy as well as anchorage for national and international unity (Irabor, 2000). Sports have become significant aspects of Nigerian culture in which the interest in and popularity of sports have supported the political, social, economic and educational fabrics of the nation; the review become imperative as the nation is gearing towards rebranding and reviewing its sports development policy. Amuchie (1999) stats that sport is a mirror of the society; games provide a touch stone for discovering how people live, work, think and play as well as serving as a barometer of a nation's progress and civilization. The impact of sport activation in the optimization of profit on the national growth cannot be overstated. It is highly important that the industry is proactive in exploiting every means necessary to develop the economy and optimize profit while strengthening the economy (Hanks & Eckland, 1976).

Sports activations are extraordinary opportunities for organizations to introduce their brands through advertising that seeks to establish a deeper association with and integration between the advertiser and sports organization. Through the advertisement, incomes are generated both to the sports organization as well as the national economy (Garcia, 2018). Nowadays we rarely see a sport event without sponsorship. In most local or international sports events, sponsors have an important role and position. For instance, at 2016 Rio Olympics, some mega companies like Samsung, Nissan, Coca-Cola, Visa, and Toyota were sponsors of the event and helped to contribute to the growth of the economy. The musical entertainment industry still requires efficient and well-informed intermediaries who can act as financiers, supporters, promoters and distributors of revenues in the end (Becker, 1976). Music has been around for thousands of years and arguably every culture that has ever existed on the planet has created music one way or another. However, the musical entertainment industry is much younger. Its foundations were first laid in the fourteenth century, when musicians became salaried professionals bound to noble courts, who would buy their services to produce spectacles exclusively reserved for a limited audience, setting the ground for what is today. According to Tschmuck (2012), the first publicly accessible opera house opened in Venice in 1637 and the first ever public concert was given by John Bannister in London in 1672.

Despite the prevalence of sports activities and musical entertainment in Nigeria, it is however pertinent to understand the impact of sports activations and musical entertainment on profit optimization of 9mobile Nigeria with a view to identifying and comparing strategies adopted by 9mobile in order to optimize profits in Nigeria. Therefore, this study examined the advantages and disadvantages of the conventional approaches to business profit optimisation, how sports and musical entertainment has optimized profit for 9mobile Nigeria over the years, strategies to optimize profits in sports and musical entertainment and the barriers affecting profit optimizations of sports activations and musical entertainment.

1.2 Statement of the Research Problem

Traditionally, the musical entertainment industry has been ownership based, which needs sales of music products through retail distribution. The access based music business model has experienced speedy worldwide growth because of advances in wireless telecommunications, smartphone technology, and mobile payment technology (Aguar & Martens, 2016; Hiller, 2016; Trefzger, Rose, Baccarella, & Voigt, 2015). With the exclusion of record labels, the rise in the popularity of music streaming, however, has not produced sustainable revenues for either the music industry or for the music streaming industry (Butz, 2017). Without sustainable revenues, the music streaming industry creates

more difficulties than solutions for the global music industry (Wlomert & Papies, 2015). As a result, music streaming leaders need new strategies to generate sustainable revenues.

Though, the speedy growth of the musical entertainment industry has risen to high level of global music consumption, producers in the musical entertainment industry have not developed a financially sustainable business model for the music industry as well as the profit optimizations (Aguiar & Waldfogel, 2017; Butz, 2017). Revenues generated from the musical entertainment industry increased 578% from \$0.5 billion in 2010 to \$2.89 billion in 2015 (Aguiar & Waldfogel, 2017). The specific business problem is that some global musical entertainment industry producers lack strategies to generate sustainable profits and to maximize the profit as well through their business models. A distinguishing factor of the developing countries is the combination of poor economic conditions and supply of uniquely raw opportunity that can be commercially exploited in the richer nations. In the case of the musical entertainment industry they are a basin of creativity which has influenced international commercial activities for years.

With new communication technologies, both physical and virtual, allowing for cultures and cultural expressions to interact (Wallis & Malm 1984), it is likely that this creative and commercial potential will grow even stronger. Different strategies are adopted by telecom sectors in order to achieve more favourable results. The current high level of competition amongst businesses necessitates organizations to implement sound strategies to remain competitive and be able to generate profit. To adopt effective strategies in order to optimize profit, managers in an organization need to be aware of realities in the business environment (Porter, 1985). Analysis of the external environment and competitors helps to recognize the possible threats and opportunities while analysis of internal environment helps to identify strengths, weaknesses and the key people required within the organization to meet its objectives (Kanter, 2002).

Africa's communications marketplace has now progressed in the tipping point from high potential to high growth. Unburdened by a legacy of installed telecom infrastructure, Africa has leapfrogged the fixed-line phase of development to go straight to mass-market mobile networks and services. Besides being one of the world's most dynamic telecom markets, Africa is also among the most innovative, a global testing lab, and a leader in digital and mobile-enabled applications in areas like payments, commerce, health, and education (PriceWaterhouseCoopers, 2014). 9mobile took on operations in Africa with the hope of replicating the highly successful high-volume, low-cost telecom model that they had pioneered for the United Arab Emirates.

However, when they began to integrate the companies, 9mobile executives discovered there has been low profit, poorer infrastructure than they had expected with higher than the projected costs, strong competitors, and a market that needed more persuasion from the company (9mobile Annual Report, 2017). Research has been done in the area of strategy and enhancing organizational performance. Olson and Bokor (1995) study the strategy process content interaction and its effects on growth performance in small start-up firms, and found that the performance of an enterprise is determined by the business strategy it adopts. Ketchen and Palmer (1999) look into the strategic responses to poor organizational performance: a test of competing perspectives, in Australia. Their study associated business strategies with performance, distinguishing between strategies associated with high and low performance. Locally, Wanjiru (2010) studied strategic alliances and competitive advantage: a case study of Safaricom Limited, where she recommended further studies should be done on consumers of Telecommunication Industry in Kenya.

Studies carried out indicate that different organizations employ different strategies in order to enhance their performance and to optimize profits. The various studies discussed have explored the relationship between strategy and organization performance in many fields and sectors including telecommunication but not in the context of this particular study. The little studies carried out within Africa focused mostly on strategies and organization performance of telecom sectors. In order to fill this knowledge gap, it is therefore expedient to carry out an explicit study that comprises the impact of sports activations and musical entertainment on profit optimization of 9mobile Nigeria with a view to identifying and comparing strategies adopted by 9mobile in order to optimize profits in Nigeria.

1.3 Research Questions

The quest to fill this knowledge gap brings about the following research questions:

- i. How has sports and musical entertainment optimized profit for 9mobile Nigeria over the years?
- ii. What are the challenges affecting profit optimizations in telecom sector?
- iii. What are the strategies to optimize profits in sport activations and musical entertainment?

1.4 Aim and Objectives of the Study

The main aim of the study was to investigate the impact of sports activations and musical entertainment on profit optimization of 9mobile Nigeria with a view to identifying and comparing strategies adopted by 9mobile in order to optimize profits in Nigeria. The specific objectives are to:

- a) examine how sports and musical entertainment have optimized profit for 9mobile Nigeria over the years in the study area;
- b) identify the challenges affecting profit optimizations in telecom sector in the study area;
- c) determine the strategies to optimize profits in sport activations and musical entertainment in the study area.

1.5 Significance of the Study

The significance of this study cannot be over-emphasized due to its relevance to the consumers, mobile phone users, mobile network operators, communications commissions of the respective countries where 9mobile Company has its presence and its impact on the economy. For instance, the mobile phone users will benefit from this study as they will appreciate the reason behind the strategies employed by Mobile network operators and in particular 9mobile Company. 9mobile Company is envisioned as the main beneficiary of this study as the study will provide information on its strategic strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats, in the region's mobile network industry. An understanding of influence of sport activations on consumer attitudes towards brands will assist firms to effectively and competently integrate commercial sponsorships in the firms' promotional programmes. The study will also assist firms understand the impact of sports activations and their influence on consumer attitudes towards their brands and as a result improve on superior delivery to customers.

Also, the study will help organisations come to the awareness of how sports and entertainment can help promote their businesses and ultimately optimize their profit. This study will reveal a more viable option for corporate bodies to simultaneously render social services and equally promote their own businesses. The study will also provide useful information to prospective new entrants in the mobile network industry on how to optimize profits. Finally, researchers will also benefit from the study as it adds on to the growing body of knowledge in the telecommunication industry. The study will serve as reference materials to other researchers who may want to carry out similar research in other sector within Nigeria or elsewhere in the world.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1. Preamble

This chapter entails the literature review of previous related studies on impact of sports and musical activities on profit optimizations in order to capture the perceptions of recognized researchers on the topic under study. It presents an enriching and comprehensive discussion on Nigerian music industry, overview of sport activations and development, challenges affecting profit optimizations in telecom sector and strategies to optimize profit in sports and musical entertainment.

2.2 Theoretical Framework

This segment looks at the various theories that was utilized to advice the study on the impact of sports activations and musical entertainment in profit optimizations of 9mobile Nigeria. The study is guided by the following theories; theory of exchange relation and the AIDA model.

2.2.1 Theory of Exchange Relation

Bagozzi (2004) formulated the theory of exchange relation which states that market exchanges happen when both customer and company expect to gain value by sharing in the exchange. The conceptual work of this theory concentrated on how such win-win trades can be explored, arranged and realized. Social exchange hypothesis was interested in customer relationships which formed the social context in research. Researchers like Arndt (1979) & MacNeil (1978) understood customer connections as a yielding ground for the development of financial trades providing value for the customer and the organization. As a result, research on relationship marketing grew and the theory became interested in the investigation of relationships as the motivation for creating value and generating revenue. Hunt and Morgan (1996) established one approach, stating that relationships provide a massive catalyst for exchange of resource and value. Thus, investing in these relationships shows good faith hence leads to positive exchanges hence maximizing value for both customer and company. The common factor of these different types of research is that they view social and economic networks as relevant catalysts for value exchange and creation. From this perspective it is hence crucial for companies to invest in these relationships in order to improve their image and establish favourable market exchange and finally optimize value. The theory of exchange relation is used to explain the impact of sports activations and musical entertainment in profit optimizations of 9mobile Nigeria as a strategy between consumer and the company.

2.2.2 AIDA Model

According to Ambler (2000), Attention, Interest, Desire, Action which is mostly referred to as AIDA model is widely known model. This model operates on the assumption that individual before being interested in a product, awareness and attention must be created. The awareness should have the ability to attract attention, hold interest, arouse desire and get action. Traditional marketing communications model like AIDA model, focused on individual purchasing power. For years, the AIDA model was viewed as effective for a successful sale process. But in recent years, there is general agreement that the sales model is no longer suitable to reflect modern sales processes as today companies' focus on creating mutually beneficial relationships as well as generating revenues.

2.3. Conceptual Framework

Conceptually, this study looks at sales promotion using sports activations and musical entertainment in the telecom sector. With the dawn of time and technology, marketing practices of optimizing profits are also changing. The new and modern marketing is based on acquiring knowledge regarding customers and knowing what the customers wants (McKenna, 1991, Payne et. al., 2005). Customer relationship management (CRM) is a two-way process which can be referred to as interactive process that uses the information of customers got by management to maintain relationships with their customers. Ryals and Knox (2001) are of the view that the fundamental aspects of CRM are strong relationships, customer retention, and delivering superior and high quality services to customers with the help of process management which can help the company's profitability. With the introduction of the internet and new technology advancement, the idea of CRM has been converted into electronic CRM (e-CRM). E-CRM is a combined process of hardware, software technology process, its useful applications in improving technology for customer services and organization committed to improving deficiency in customer service-customer retention (Norton, 2007). While on the other hand, customer retention as the marketing goal of preventing customers from going to the competitor. Organizations such as 9mobile make existing customers their focal point in order to put efforts to retain them and to carry on their business relationship with them through customer retention. (Mostert et al.2009).

However, the number of customers who continue their relationship with the service provider in the specific time duration such as a year is also referred to as customer retention (Dawes, 2009). Fluss (2010) observed that competitors are always looking for ways to capture customers by offering them better deals. Retention is the process of having a close and long relationship of customers with a service provider. Many studies report that it is more expensive for the organization to attract new customers as compared to adopting a strategy to retain existing customers (Gilbert and Mannicom, 2003). Applying the resource of the organization in order to satisfy customers, ensuring that all their requirements are met within an appropriate time and cost and maintaining a good relationship with the customers, are the key steps for reducing the loss rate and ensuring profit maximization for the company (Kotler, 2009).

2.4. History of 9mobile Nigeria

Emerging Markets Telecommunication Services (EMTS), trading as Etisalat, is a Nigerian company duly incorporated under the laws of Nigeria in partnership with Mubadala Development Company and Etisalat of the United Arab Emirates. Incorporated in Nigeria as a private company, it acquired the Unified Access License from the Federal Government in January 2007. The license includes a mobile license and spectrum in the GSM 1800 and 900 MHz bands. 9mobile acquired a 40% stake in EMTS and is now the operator of the Unified Access License. 9mobile has been a telecommunications service provider in the United Arab Emirates since 1976 and has footprints in 18 countries traversing the Middle East, Asia and Africa. In its many years of operations, it has built up state-of-the-art telecom infrastructure and taken a leadership position of innovation and reliability among regional and international operators. In Nigeria, 9mobile made the first official call on its network on the 13th of March 2008 in the presence of officials from the Nigerian Communications Commission (NCC) and the Senate of the Federal Republic of Nigeria. Full commercial operations began in October 2008. 9mobile consistently demonstrates its core values of optimism, simplicity and caring – for which it has become known in other markets to the Nigerian people as it offers them world-class telecommunications services. 9mobile Nigeria launched one of the first major broadband services in the country called EasyBlaze.

The company is known for its innovative products and services such as the Eco Sim and the first network to offer special numbers to Nigerians as their mobile numbers via the 0809 campaign. From 2012 to 2015, 9mobile Nigeria hosted the 9mobile Prize for Innovation, established to promote African Internet expansion. In April 2013, 9mobile Nigeria announced it would invest \$500 million to expand its network, enabling further potential market growth of 17%. In June 2013, it launched the 9mobile Prize for Literature the first pan African prize for debut published writers. In October 2016, 9mobile Nigeria announced 4G LTE with a frequency band 3 (1800 MHz). This LTE network currently covers some part of Lagos and Abuja. 9mobile Company achieved positive performance in 2017 despite the rapid developments in the telecom sector as a result of the transition to the digital era and the unprecedented changes in the macroeconomic and geopolitical arenas in 9mobile's footprint. In 2017, 9mobile Company continued to achieve strong positive results with consolidated net profit after Federal Royalty amounted to AED 8.4 billion resulting in a net profit margin of 16% and aggregate subscriber base reached 142 million (9mobile Annual Report, 2017). This was achievable due to sport entertainment been incorporated in the marketing strategies and has helped to maintain its high credit rating.

In 2017, 9mobile Company's drive to invest in the undeniably digital future of telecommunications gained momentum. The Company and its operating companies attached the potential of developing technology through the establishment of a digital unit, a strong corporate strategy based on new core values, accelerated investment in network infrastructure, and spectrum licenses to empower customers, shareholders, and society in general. To further enhance its market position and go on exceeding customer expectations, 9mobile fast-tracked its investments in network coverage and partnerships in 2017. As part of this, the Company expanded its 4G+ network coverage in Morocco to 93% of population, deployed a 4G network in Egypt, acquired additional spectrum and was awarded universal license in Saudi Arabia, and invested in network licenses and expansion in the sub-Saharan region (www.9mobile.com, 2017). The Company also successfully launched the first 5G Ultra-Mobile broadband experience in the United Arab Emirates. Since its inception, 9mobile has maintained a high level of capital expenses to support wider coverage, higher speeds, and greater capacity in its networks.

9mobile's main focus at present is on securing a leadership position in the more lucrative data segment and optimizing profit for the future. In order to achieve this, 9mobile recently invested in spectrum licenses in Egypt, Morocco, Mauritania, Pakistan, Afghanistan, Benin, Niger, Togo and Cote D'Ivoire to support its push into mobile data services and to support future growth. The current Managing Director and Chief Executive Officer of 9mobile is Mr. Bode Olusanya.

2.5. Nigerian Music Industry

Nigeria has an exciting popular music scene that has come to show her richness in culture and over the years this has transformed into international recognition. With her massive population of over 140 million, Nigeria presents domestic market large enough to withstand and ensure the commercial success of most artistic endeavours. This is shown in the use of language where emphasis is laid on the use of indigenous language, styles of music as well as music production and performance technology (Kargbo, 2006). The music industry mainly takes care of all aspects of music business and has different organizations and outfits working together for a common goal which include the artists, composers, the media, live music promoters and distributors among others (Alonge, 2012). The music industry can be located within this model as the apparatus coming together for the responsibility and facilitation of music production, commercialization and intake in various formats either physical, digital, live or in any other multimedia forms.

According to Wikstrom (2009), the musical industry consists of those companies concerned with developing musical content, promoting brands and personalities which can be communicated across multiple multimedia while the industry strongly depends on the models of creativity, reproduction and distribution in order to function. Khaleque and Abdul (2003) believe the music industry is a relatively new modern concept denoting the non-physical aspect of music sophisticated communication technology of the modern age is now being used for restructuring and preserving all kinds of music. The Nigerian music industry offers a great potential and can yield millions of Naira in terms of revenue for the government and its players if given the right boost and steered in the right direction (Adedeji, 2016). It should be acknowledged that great activism has been going on of late by industry stakeholders to try and build a proper structure where people can be adequately remunerated and also attract investors both locally and internationally. According to the Nigerian Recorded Music Industry Report (2015-2020), the revenue generated from recorded music in Nigeria has been projected to hit \$50 million amounting to 18 billion naira by 2020, a 34% increase from the \$33 million revenue in 2015.

The Telecommunications industry is one of the fastest growing industries in the world in terms of generating revenues and optimizing profits. There is no doubt that the Telecommunications industry in Nigeria has contributed so much in terms of the growth of Nigeria's Economy. In the United States, the telecommunications sector drives more than \$1 trillion in annual revenue. Worldwide, the industry accounts for about \$3.5 trillion. As of mid-2007 there were over 2.3 billion cellular phone service subscribers worldwide. The number was projected to grow to nearly 4 billion by end of 2011 (Normile, 2008).

2.6. Overview of Sport Activations and Development

Sports activations and development have been around for a long time but in recent years there has been significant development. Gamble (2011) characterizes activation as the obtaining of rights to partner or directly associate with a product or event with the aim of getting rewards identified with that relationship or association. Telecom industry in Nigeria has come up with different tactics in developing marketing strategies with all having a common strategy in anticipating a likable image in the minds of the consumers and to optimize their profits. These strategies can be considered and created in different ways from object qualities, competition, flexibility, reliability and dependability (ICT MTEF Sector report, 2008). Mullin, Hardy and Sutton (2003) view activation as the obtaining of rights to associate or connect directly with a brand or event for the end goal is getting benefits from that relationship. These privileges can be utilized in communication activities such as advertising, public relations and publicity, the exclusive affiliation with a product or service and the right of association to an event or facility.

Profit making is usually the definitive objective of most firms because of the fact that their products and or services need to be dominant and better than that of their rivals in the same industry. This is important because most products and services are quite identical and such organizations need to differentiate their services from other services. Organizations use different marketing strategies to reach out to potential and existing customers in order to attract them. Utilizing promotion as a marketing tool is viable, as organizations need to reach out to consumers and also need to communicate about their brands get their brands and name (Klayman, 2008). It is an undisputed fact that sport is very important to social economic sector. This is even more important for most developing countries as it contributes to about 10-13% of their GDP (Njoroge, 2015).

For Nigeria, sport has been an important event which led to strategic development of the company (Akama, 1997). Its role is also acknowledged in achieving 9mobile's ambitious plan of expanding their business and maximizing profits as well. 9mobile Company's investments in its own infrastructure and assets are ultimately investments in the regions in which it operates. This further strengthens 9mobile's capacity to do business in these countries. In particular, 9mobile has helped the UAE to sustain its position as the region's business, trade and foreign investment hub by providing reliable, high quality services for over 40 years.

9mobile's sponsorship as Official Telecommunications Partner of Manchester City Football Club endeavors to reach and engage fans across its markets and fulfill 9mobile's vision through sport. Football, being the most watched and played sport in the world, serves as a common thread that can link 9mobile's footprint countries. Its international impact is visible through the success of professional football leagues in Europe including the popular and widely followed English Premier League.

2.7. Influence of Sports and Musical Entertainment on Profit Optimization for 9mobile Nigeria over the Years

One of the influences of sports activations and musical entertainment is brand awareness. When evaluating awareness created by sponsorship, researchers have recommended that firms marketing should make customers aware of benefits in acquiring their products. According to Grohs (2004) customers who have knowledge of how firms such as 9mobile promote their brands and to heighten awareness after the event. In addition, for better recall to be achieved a fit between the sport event that is sponsored by 9mobile and the sponsor is vital. As such, when the agreement between the event such as sports and music and 9mobile as the sponsor is executed well, there is a high chance that the customer will recall the name and products of the sponsor (Walliser, 2003).

According to Johar (2006), sponsorship awareness is not guaranteed because in most instances customers often get confused in identifying the official sponsor. Wakefield & Bennett (2010) argue that customers tend to use brand reputation as a way to patronize the firm organizing the event. Success of an effective sponsorship rallies upon the level and awareness of the sponsor and customers linkage and how the sponsorship is carried out (Wakefield, 2007). In addition firms who participate in sports activation have an additional marketing tool which provides a higher level of awareness for brand and company as well as an avenue to maximize profits (Wakefield, 2007). Gwinner (1997) states that brand awareness are successfully accomplished when a brand is exposed to as many customers as possible by making use of entertainment to reach out to the customers. Brand awareness is made up of two unique aspects which are brand recognition and brand recall. Brand recognition basically is the ability for customers to affirm previous experience with the brand while brand recall is the ability for customers to identify a brand when given a few insights such as product class or needs that the brand satisfies (Tuominen 1999). Gwinner (1997) states that sports activations exercises present numerous chances for accomplishing awareness objectives, and many researchers in recent times have focused on the awareness aspect of sponsorships.

Another influence of sports and music entertainment is that it aids communication between companies and customers. Companies utilize various avenues to reach out to customers to purchase their products. Advertising is an ancient form of marketing communication and it is a well-established promotional tool but in recent times due to media fragmentation and over saturation of ads on television and print media has led to marketers to look for alternative ways to reach consumers. In addition, majority of customers can barely remember commercials they come across while watching. For this reason, marketers in recent years have developed new promotional tools to reach out to current and potential consumers. These tools include: public relations, publicity, sales promotion, direct marketing, entertainment and product placement (Buhler & Nufer 2010; Zafer Erdogan and Kitchen (1998), Tripodi (2001)).

2.8. Challenges Affecting Profit Optimizations in Telecom Sector

Telecommunications have to decentralize the purchasing and decision power, both internally and externally because of the essential agile reconfiguration the cloud. With the availability of new technologies, the variety and quality services from telecom companies and internet service providers (ISP) are increasing, profit margins are decreasing, and the lines between telecom companies and technology vendors are blurring. Hence, telecom companies have to take fresh look at the level of ICT innovation and adapt their organization to digital transformation as well as conventional approaches towards maximizing profits by creating strong cross-functional interfaces and by seeking tools for maintaining organizational flexibility. Telecommunication providers need to upgrade their Information and Technology (IT) and connectivity infrastructure and focus on providing data and voice services that are high quality, reliable and affordable. Security of the networks has become a major priority for the telecom sector and they are facing challenges with the emergence of new technologies and competitors.

These challenges are managed by the respective operating companies' regulatory departments, with support from the Company's regulatory teams. Despite the global economic challenges, such performance and accomplishments has helped 9mobile to stand out as the most valuable brand in the Middle East with a brand value of 7.7 billion USD, which was the outcome of many qualities and core competencies that underpin 9mobile's success, and the ultimate translation of all the achievements and the lasting associations that is left behind in people's minds and hearts (9mobile Annual Report, 2017).

2.9. Strategies to Optimize Profits in Sport Activations and Musical Entertainment

The performance of any company is determined by the business strategy it adopts (Pearce and Robinson, 2005). Strategies produce high performance and are identified with activities that generally lead to success in the industry; that is key success factors (Hambrick, 2008). These activities are associated with creativities in industry. Firms, which perform below average, tend to follow others in the industry and to react to events in their environment. Such firms are characterized by strategies, which emphasize risk avoidance and involve little innovation (Karagozoglu and Brown, 2008). The activities that comprise these strategies are often not well integrated and are mismatched with the demands of the environment. They are often referred to as reactive strategies because they are characterized by reactions to events rather than by initiative taking (Steiner, Miner, and Edmund, 2006).

Focusing on business strategy items and performance, studies have identified that there are some relationships between strategy activities and performance. The strategies of improving existing products to meet changing customer needs, developing new products and emphasizing product quality are associated with market share increases by attracting new customers and retaining existing ones (Pearce and Robinson, 2005). Some of the strategies employed by telecommunication companies to enhance their performance and maximize profits include; outsourcing strategy, mergers and acquisition strategy, 3G strategy as well as sale and lease back of towers.

2.9.1. Innovation

Innovation is the successful utilization of new ideas. A basic understanding of the subject is essential for all business leaders whatever their current or intended product or service. Innovation should not be confused with technology. Innovation is the only way to stay ahead of the competition (Christensen, 1997). Utilized properly it will improve business survivability and lead to increased profits. Quite often, the innovation turns out to be a mix of all three categories, as with the case of the introduction of a new product that require new productive competences and changes in the organization.

Furthermore, what is a product innovation for a supplier can be a process innovation for a user, as with the case of a new machine which revolutionizes the process of manufacturing and may deliver better quality at a lower cost. In this case, investment is the means to spread innovation across the economy. Besides technology, marketing, finance, organization all can be sources and multipliers of innovation. Market dynamics allow a firm to innovate new ideas to attract customers in order to maximize profit and be competitive in the market.

2.9.2 Brand Image

Senior executives increasingly recognize the importance of their company's brands in driving customer loyalty, price premiums, revenue growth and, consequently, enhanced shareholder value. Executives are pushing for not only stronger brands but are also demanding that they be built and maintained better, faster and cheaper. This demand presents a real challenge. In this competitive world consumers are displaying crossover buying behaviour and producers are facing cross category competition. In the product and service space commoditization and convergence are dominant and choices are exploding resulting in decreased level of customer loyalty. Brands are exposed to increasing number of touch points, consumers are more aware, positive and negative experiences with the brand are quickly getting converted into word of mouth referrals. Customers are impressed with ways how new brand are introduced to them such as using music entertainment. Consumer-based brand equity goes far beyond just the trigger communication. It comprises the long-term market benefits for the company from customer satisfaction and brand loyalty perspectives and offers opportunity to earn higher profit by unlocking the value of the brand.

2.9.3 Mass Customization

No company can ignore the present day mantra of customer satisfaction 'I want what I want'. For firms it is not sufficient to pursue single point focus. Successful firms have to harmonize focus on multiple issues as customers are more demanding and are reasonably sure that some supplier will be able to match their expectations. Mass Customization is defined by Bain and Company as the large-scale production of personalized goods and services. To succeed at it, companies must harness technologies that revamp their speed, flexibility and effectiveness at minimum expense. Combined with organizational changes to focus firms on the unique needs of very small customer segments, these technologies help companies affordably deliver custom versions of their offerings to profitable niche markets.

According to a survey of product and service companies in North America and Europe conducted by Booz Allen Hamilton (Leslie Moeller, Matthew Egol, and Karla Martin, 2003), firms that can more efficiently balance the values that customization brings to their customers with the complexity costs it can impose, generate organic sales growth and profit margins significantly higher than their industry average. The study, which benchmarked business units with sales from \$1 billion to more than \$20 billion at 50 companies, found striking differences between companies that adapted and aligned their customer strategies and fulfillment operations, and those that constructed more ad hoc responses to customer demands. The research comprised such industries as consumer goods, chemicals, telecommunications, media, and financial

services.

2.9.4 Customer collaboration

To deliver mass customized products the salesperson either exercises full control on the delivery process or shares the control with customers. Consider Asian Paints, customer needs to visit one of the showrooms with a sample shade of the paint that she wishes to buy. The vendor trained person will mix the pastel colour base paint and the correct amount of tint of colour to produce the desired shade. Customer has no role to play except approve the shade if she finds acceptable.

In contrast to this and passes through the payment the sales representative to deliver a good service.

2.9.5 Operational excellence

Operational excellence results in world-class quality, productivity and delivery of goods and services to customers, at prices that are competitive. In today's marketplace where forces such as technological innovation, outsourcing, e-business and global competition are prevalent, it is becoming increasingly important for companies pursue operational excellence. Operational excellence is demonstrated by results that reflect sustained improvement over time, improvement in all areas of importance, and performance at a level that is superior to other organizations. It can be achieved by benchmarking processes of the firm with the best in the class processes in companies across all industries. Xerox regained the lost market share in photocopying business by achieving operational excellence through extensive benchmarking of 241 different processes. Success could not be achieved because the processes were not world class and were inflexible. Firms have to demonstrate operational excellence in Operational excellence in supply chain management is to turn it into a value chain. It is more than simply boosting efficiency. The cornerstone of a value chain transformation is establishing a differentiated customer offering. By serving customers or customer segments based on their unique requirements and aligning the value chain accordingly, companies are able to increase efficiency and, ultimately, take the enterprise to another level of performance and profitability. Business strategies that will defeat the competition must be supported by excellence in execution at every opportunity.

2.9.6 Outsourcing

Outsourcing has been defined as the contracting out of a business process, which an organization may have previously performed internally or has anew need for an independent organization from which the process is purchased back as a service (Hayes, 2012). Outsourcing comprises both foreign and domestic contracting which include off shoring which is described as a company taking a function out of their business and relocating it to another country. According to Baiye (2012) outsourcing also involves transferring of the employees and assets involved to the outsourcing business partner. The reasons as to why firms outsource are essentially related to costs, core competencies, necessity, or risks. Deavers (2001), argues that firms tend to outsource because it lowers the transaction costs in general, and the costs associated with finding information in particular. According to Deavers (2001), it enables globalization of production and consumption markets. The core competence perspective on outsourcing is mostly adopted by researchers applying a theory on the firm based on a set of competencies, both individual competencies but most important competencies embedded in the company's image and product.

According to Dana (2012), the root system that provides nourishment to core products and products is the core competence. The advocates of the core competence perspective tend to suggest that firms outsource in order to focus on core competencies and to access external competencies such as external innovations. Walker (2008) introduces risk as an important factor in the outsourcing decision. Qualification of the internal and external sources entails their capabilities to meet specific operational and strategic performance criteria.

2.10. Empirical Studies

Cheptoo (2016) carries out a research on the factors that influence the adoption of sports sponsorship as a marketing tool by Kenyan firms in the telecommunication industry. The study employs a case study as its research design. The target population is the marketing managers in the two major players in the Telecommunications industry in Kenya which are Safaricom Limited and Orange Kenya. The study finds out that sport sponsorship increases ones memory about brands and creates awareness thus influencing one's decision to buy certain brands. Mukungu (2014) conducts a research on the effects of sports sponsorship on performance of Kenyan firms involved in sports.

The study adopted a descriptive survey design. Structured questionnaires were used to collect data. The study uncovers the link that company brand through sponsorship, builds a connection in the minds of the consumer that the company is responsible. The study finds that sponsorship creates awareness and increases knowledge of an organization's products or services.

Chelimo (2012) studies positioning strategies used by firms in the telecommunications industry in Kenya. The data for the study was collected using semi-structured questionnaires and the study reveals that most telecommunication companies are favoured by customers as a result of their competitive prices, product characteristics, technological advancement and superior product characteristics as these influence positioning. Kiraguri (2007) carries out a study on a survey of the influence of sponsorship in the development of sports in Kenya. With the use of primary data using semi structured interviews. Findings reveal that a number of federations received both cash and values in kind sponsorships. Most of cash sponsorship received was likely to be used in training and team administration while a larger percentage of value in kind received was attributed to provision of equipment.

Thiong'o (2007) conducts a study on the influence of commercial sponsorships on consumer attitudes towards brands: a case study of Nairobi residents. Data was collected through an interview. The findings establish that sponsorships increase awareness of sponsoring brands in that there is high level of awareness of commercial sponsorships as well as event sponsors among all the social classes. Nteere (2014) also conducts a research which focuses on how sports sponsorship affects the performance of firms. The findings reveal that sponsorships have the ability to influence likeability and brands selection as well as brand switching after consumers participates in the sponsored events. Ng'anga (2012) carries out a research on involvement and support of corporate Kenya on sports. The findings show that companies use sports to gain advantage over their competitors. Mattias & Daniel (2004) conduct a research on sports sponsorship using a case study of Audi. Data was collected using interviews. The findings indicate that companies engaging in sports sponsorship should measure the results of their sponsorship activities as it is an important factor. The research further recommends that consistency of measurement methods is very crucial for organizations. This will enable organizations compare results of their sponsorship activities and from this identify the most successful and the unsuccessful depending on the marketing and organizational goals.

3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1. Preamble

This chapter focuses on the research methodology that the study adopted. It contains the research design, methods of data collection and concludes with data analysis and presentation methods that were used. The techniques adopted for data analysis are also in this chapter.

3.2. Research Design

Research design is explained as the plan for translating from the research question to the conclusion and it explains the procedures to be followed before arriving at the understanding of an incidence (Adeniyi, 2012). According to Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill (2009) research design is the arrangement of conditions for collection and analysis of data in a manner that aims to combine importance to the research purpose with economy in procedure. Allison (2000) concluded that the planning of the research procedure as well as the procedure for data collection and analysis. This study adopted an in-depth interview aimed at getting comprehensive information regarding impacts of sport activations and musical entertainment on profit optimizations for 9mobile Company in Nigeria.

3.3. Target Population

Population refers to the entire Company of people, events or things that are of interest to the researcher and which form the subject of the research (Sekaran, 2005). A target population can also be defined as the whole collection of cases or items from which the researcher wishes to draw inferences. The target population for this research comprised of the head of sales, head of marketing and head of finance staffs of 9mobile Company in Lagos, Nigeria.

3.4. Sampling Technique

Sampling technique is the statistical procedure for choosing and selecting a sample from population of target for purposes of observations statistical inferences about that population since it is not always feasible to make use of the whole population (Mbeche, 2004). The purposive method of sampling was used for this research. The heads of sales, marketing and finance department at 9mobile Company in Lagos, Nigeria were respondents for this study.

3.5. Method of Data Collection

Primary data was collected by interviewing the heads of sales, marketing and finance department of 9mobile Company in Lagos, Nigeria. These heads of departments were selected because they are responsible for strategic planning, strategy formulation, control, and implementation. An interview guide was used as it enabled oral conveying of questions in a face-to-face manner hence allowing collection of in depth data. In order to collect primary data, interview guide was designed to get comprehensive information regarding impacts of sport activations and musical entertainment on profit optimizations for 9mobile Company in Nigeria. The researcher made appointments with the interviewees and paid them a visit in order to collect the data required.

Interview method was used since it had the ability to yield highest cooperation with low refusal rates, and this was taken advantage of interviewer availability. The interview guide was semistructured, with closed and open ended questions. This involved in-depth discussion through individual meetings with the marketing managers. Eight questions (Appendix I) were designed to achieve objectives one to three. These questions evolved from a review of the sports activations and music entertainment in Nigeria. The interview questions included two sections. The first section requested general background information from interviewees which included their gender, position held and years of working experience. The second section involved eight main questions and each question served a different purpose.

3.6. Data Analysis

Data gathered was analyzed using systematic analysis method. According to Kothari (2004) content analysis uses a systematic grouping of information in order to make valid and replicable inferences from data to their context. The responses from different respondents were compared and summarized according to the objectives of the study. Content analysis is the best method of analyzing the open-ended questions because of its flexibility and allows for qualitative description of content in an objective and systematic manner. Cooper and Schindler (2006) defined qualitative data analysis as working with data, arranging it, breaking it into reasonable units, synthesizing it, looking for patterns, finding what is vital and choosing what to tell others. Qualitative data requires some inventiveness, for the test is to place raw data into sensible significant categories, to analyze them in a comprehensive manner and find ways of conveying this interpretation to others.

3.6.1. Using Nvivo to Analyse Interview Data

All interview data were transcribed verbatim by the researcher and analysed with NVivo version 8.0. Each transcript was read through several times to identify meaningful statements and then categorised by the answers to eight questions.

At the beginning of the analysis process, three approaches were used for coding data, these being descriptive coding, topic coding and analytical coding. Descriptive coding is more like quantitative coding which involves storing information about the cases being studied (Richards, 2005). Topic coding is labelling text according to its subject and analytical coding is central to qualitative enquiry. This is the coding that leads to theory emergence and theory affirmation (Richards, 2005). Coding in NVivo is stored in nodes which are the containers for categories in the project, ideas or topics that the researcher is interested in. To effectively develop a coding system, the present study followed the instruction provided by Richards (2005) to make sure the process of data coding was conducted in an effective and appropriate manner. In the first stage, each transcript was read between the lines, and each word and phrase was explored for meaning and concepts; each concept's possible meaning was further explored as a way of 'breaking open' text, to be recorded in both codes, nodes and memos. In doing this, many free nodes were created to catch ideas, thoughts or topics when they occurred.

In this stage, free nodes do not presume any relationship or connections, because they serve simply as dropping-off points for data. Later, new nodes were added when new concepts or ideas were generated during the process of data coding. After a number of free nodes were built up, the nodes representing similar kinds of things were then organised and moved into a hierarchical structure tree system. In the second stage, the tree system nodes were rearranged and moved into a higher level of tree system based on the categories and subcategories until the main themes emerged.

3.7. Validity and Reliability of Data Collected

In qualitative analysis, the reliability of data can be assessed by considering four types of criteria: credibility, transferability, trustworthiness and confirmability (Guba and Lincoln, 1989). Credibility simply means establishing that the results of qualitative research are believable from the perspective of the participant in the study (Law, Baum and Dunn, 2005); transferability refers to the degree to which the results of qualitative analysis can be transferred to other contexts or settings (Guba and Lincoln, 1989); trustworthiness means whether we would obtain the same results if we could observe the same thing twice; and confirmability means the degree to which the results could be confirmed or corroborated by others (Law et al., 2005).

In this study, credibility was enhanced by engaging adequately with participants to obtain meaningful data and further heightened by the researcher's knowledge in the field of profit optimizations. External checks were carried out by presenting the final themes to participants via electronic mail; the replies received did not lessen from or add to these. Transferability was assessed by providing enough description and information of the current study's context and detailed methodology to make sure readers would be able to determine how closely their situation matched that being reported here, and whether current research finding could be transferred to his or her present situation. Trustworthiness and confirmability were assessed by using multiple methods of data collection for obtaining consistent and dependable data as well as data that were most congruent with reality as understood by the participants.

4. DATA ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION OF RESULTS

4.1. Preamble

This chapter presents data analysis and discussions. The objective of the study was to determine the impact of sport activations and musical entertainment on profit optimizations for 9mobile Company in the telecommunication industry. Primary data was collected through in-depth interviews administered to sales, marketing and finance staffs of 9mobile Company in Lagos, Nigeria. The data was later analyzed depending on the objectives of the study and the findings presented under different categories as discussed below. The recorded interviews were transcribed verbatim and analysed by NVivo 8.0 to reveal codes, categories and themes (see section 3.6.1).

4.2. Interview Guide for the Respondents

As indicated in Table 4.1, the interview guide showing the background information of the respondents. The aim of the study was to investigate the impact of sports activations and musical entertainment on profit optimization of 9mobile Nigeria with a view to identifying and comparing strategies adopted by 9mobile in order to optimize profits in Nigeria. A qualitative method was used, adopting an in-depth interview. This method allowed the respondents to express their minds and how well sports and music had generated revenue for the brand. The respondents formed the people that responded to the mail sent to get their consent on an interview and indicated the willingness to participate in the interview were 6 respondents (4 males and 2 females) with different positions held in 9mobile Company, Nigeria and the interview lasted for a week.

Table 4.1: Interview Guide (Background Information of the Respondents)

Position Held	Gender		Years of working experience				
	Male	Female	0-5	6-10	11-15	16-20	21 and above
Head of Finance (HF)							
Head of Marketing (HM 001)	✓					✓	
Head of Marketing (HM 002)		✓		✓			
Head of Sales (HS)							
Account Director (AD 001)		✓				✓	
Account Director (AD 002)	✓			✓			
Head of Activations (HA)	✓					✓	
Head of Youth Segment (HYS)	✓					✓	

Field Interview, 2020

4.2.1 Impacts of Sports and Musical Entertainment in Profit Optimization for 9mobile Nigeria over the Years

The interviewees were asked on how sports and musical entertainment had optimized profit for 9mobile Nigeria over the years. They indicated sports and music had really gained ground and were used as leverage to attract consumers. They asserted that sport and music were two major platforms that helped to create awareness and promote brand image (See Table 4.2).

They also stated that sports and music were good way to reach out to the targeted audience and get them to buy the products. The respondents demonstrated that the company sponsoring tended to use sport activations and musical entertainment as ways in which the consumer can recognize the sponsor. The interviewees indicated that sport events and music concerts provided great opportunities for new product to be launched. In order to make a brand stand out companies use sport activation to create differentiation in the consumer's mind (See Table 4.2).

As indicated in Table 4.2, sport activity was a productive and effective 360 degree campaign that involved the consumer engaging them in their passion point and also giving them opportunity to win back something from 9mobile. From the interview, the respondents emphasized that 9mobile made enquiries about the artists that the targeted audience would like to see for the musical concert which was a key factor to engaging the audience. The interviewees also identified that the sponsored programs brought about sales of the company's product such as selling of sim cards, recharge cards among others. The interviewees also revealed that the utilization of these platforms to gain audience attention empowered brands and organizations to communicate better with consumers and achieve brand awareness quickly (Table 4.2).

The respondents were able to identify the impacts of sports activation and musical entertainment on profit optimizations unlike study on a survey of the influence of sponsorship in the development of sports in Kenya and the findings revealed that a number of federations received both cash and values in kind sponsorships(Kaiguri, 2007). In which, most of cash sponsorship received were be used in training and team administration while a larger percentage of value in kind received were attributed to provision of equipment. Another respondent said sport, being a subject of high interest for majority of the youth and would continue to have a huge influence on profit optimizations. And also, 9mobile was able to discover that youth are the highest target audience and can be found on campus which was a very good idea to promote brands on campuses as it gave strong target group in maximizing profits. Gwinner (1997), confirmed the findings that making awareness through sports and entertainment have great future as well as a profitable year due to increase in sales and high profits.

Table 4.2: Impacts of Sports and Musical Entertainment in Profit Optimization for 9mobile Nigeria over the Years

OBJECTIVE 1	INTERVIEW QUESTIONS	RESPONDENTS	RESPONSES
<p>To examine how sports and musical entertainment has optimized profit for 9mobile Nigeria over the years in the study area</p>	<p>1) How has sports and musical entertainment optimize profit for 9mobile Nigeria over the years?</p>	<p>HA</p>	<p>By generational observation, sports and music has gained very strong ground in Nigeria. 9mobile made used of the opportunity by carrying out a research to discover those who can be attracted to sports as well as music. 9mobile was able to discover that youth are the highest target audience and can be found on university campuses. It was a very good idea to promote our brand on campuses because it gave us two very strong target Company that we were able to utilize and engage to their own satisfaction</p>
		<p>AD 001</p>	<p>For music, 9mobile was the head sponsor for Nigerian Idol and it brought about lots of money as it was a good way to reach out to the market most especially the youth sector. Every stage of the program was well maximized, 9mobile leveraged on the opportunity right from auditioning to the final stage of the program. All activities carried out were tied around the brand promotion. Also for sports, we created a program for secondary school students tagged 'School corps', this was done to catch them young and to make them aware of the company's products</p>
		<p>AD 002</p>	<p>Sport, being a subject of high interest for majority of the youth and would continue to have a huge influence on profit optimizations. Organizations can choose to sponsor sport clubs that have great future and then have a share of their profit at the end of an economic year</p>

OBJECTIVE 1	INTERVIEW QUESTIONS	RESPONDENTS	RESPONSES
		HM 001	9mobile Nigeria used sports and music as leverage to attract young subscribers because if found out these are two platforms that people love very much and we can hold their interest for much longer. We engaged in sports tournament that will attract our subscribers most especially the male gender and also music concert to engage male and female.
		HM 002	Through sponsorship of some major soccer league on campuses, companies like 9mobile were asked to advertise their business and create awareness in order to increase profits
		HYS	9mobile had to devise strategies for the youth segment. One was to penetrate the youth segment to get enough revenue and the other was to create a positive association. We looked at the action point of the youth and what can be used to drive them in order to generate revenue. We devised sports and music for the youth most especially on campuses
	2) Can you give me an instance of where sports activities were used to influence sales for 9mobile Nigeria?	HA	Yes, we created a very small soccer activity, a 5-sided kind of match. So we allowed the dean of student affairs and student union to prepare the teams that will come and play. And there were basically four teams to allow for elimination matches until we have a winner. We also ensured that we made noise about, making awareness which was a key factor for us. Each campus we went to, we had a 10-day activation, and the first week entirely was for sales and awareness. The activities were divided into three; a motivational seminar, soccer match and music concert in that order. We now plugged in our own brand values and opportunities into those programs. The guys on campus

OBJECTIVE 1	INTERVIEW QUESTIONS	RESPONDENTS	RESPONSES
			<p>were responsible for selling the sim cards, selling recharge cards as well as convincing students to come for the seminar and that there will be giving away of gifts through raffle draw. For the soccer match also, it was announced and made noticed to the students and the grand price was a car, though there were other gifts such as phones, mini laptops, recharge cards, t-shirts and all. For me, it was a productive and effective 360 degree campaign that involved the consumer engaging them in their passion point and also give them opportunity to win back something for 9mobile.</p>
		<p>AD 001</p>	<p>Yes... For sports, we carried out a program which was solely sponsored by 9mobile for the junior secondary school pupils tagged 'The School Corp', for pupils aspiring to be football stars when they grow up. More like scouting the pupils, this created some sort of bond to the targeted audience and increased our market chance. Also we had a program for university students tagged 'Cliqfest', which was wrapped up by a football match and music concert</p>
		<p>AD 002</p>	<p>Organisations of free sport such as football viewing centers for students in higher institution which in turn led to a urge profit maximization in 9mobile</p>

OBJECTIVE 1	INTERVIEW QUESTIONS	RESPONDENTS	RESPONSES
		HM 001	<p>Yes... for 'Easycliq' which was a product I managed as well as the 'Cliqfest' which involved set of activities for 10 days on campus. Every time you bought a sim card, you get a raffle ticket. The raffle ticket entitles you to win different prizes. And a music concert on the last side. For the sports activities, we have the 5-aside football tournament. Though people did not win but because they like to watch, they would come and be entertained. And during the half-time break, an artist will come on board to entertain the people</p>
		HM 002	<p>Few years back, 9mobile company went round some campuses in Nigeria where they carried out so many activities such as raffle draw, and give a 5- aside match for 9mobile subscribers. These made students to get 9mobile product and there was massive turnout with increased revenues</p>
		HYS	<p>For sports, we worked with Pecksgrey limited to deliver the sports requirement. One of the things we did was that, we had partnership with Barcelona, we had under 17 competition tagged 'School Corp' for those in secondary school and then we came up with extension of Barcelona concept into the campus and that's where Pecksgrey came into play. Pecksgrey supplied us with synthetic pitches that was taken to the universities. We created awareness in the school and had our sales team followed us. The sales team were able to pick up sales and we drive the awareness. And we had about 40-50% of the student population attending the competition, this really helped us in making more sales and generating revenue. We were able to record a good number of sales and saw the youth segment sales jumped up to about 60-70%. And it was my best years which made me to be easily promoted to the director of brands</p>

OBJECTIVE 1	INTERVIEW QUESTIONS	RESPONDENTS	RESPONSES
	3) Can you give me an instance of where music entertainment was used to influence sales for 9mobile Nigeria?	HA	Yes, one of the things we also did was to enquire from students the reigning artist at that point or the artist they would like to see and then bring them to campus. For each campus, the formula was different as regards region the campus were located. The program was tagged 'Cliqfest' because it was targeted at sharing knowledge and awareness of 9mobile's youth-based product, basically on use of network data. So we decided on driving sales and generating more revenues through the means of selling recharge cards as low as ₦200 and get a raffle draw ticket. So for 9mobile, it was a proud moment and the target were met
		AD 001	Yes, for the Nigerian Idols in which 9mobile was the head sponsor, the company used the opportunity to promote their brand. For instance, if you are not a 9mobile subscriber, you cannot participate in the contest and for viewers coming to watch the life show, they needed to purchase recharge cards or sim cards before entry. This in turn later generated funds for 9mobile even before the show was concluded
		AD 002	9mobile recorded more profit when musical shows with renowned musical artist are organized where youth are the majority of the population and it generated lots of revenue
		HM 001	The same goes for the music concert, we were able to gather more audience as people were well entertained by the guest artist
		HM 002	This was also the same for music entertainment. 9mobile created a means for student to have fun but made sure it was balanced in such a way that, for entry, you must represent 9mobile and people turned out a lot.
OBJECTIVE 1	INTERVIEW QUESTIONS	RESPONDENTS	RESPONSES
		HYS	On the side of music, we did a lot with music. One we created content that we sold to customers in terms of ring back tunes. We had association with the likes of Olamide and other artists. We also worked on 'Cloud 9' for our music content space. As a young segment hsead, I was able to tap into those programs and create content. We engaged the students with the music concert held on each campuses went to. During the music concert, we normally gave out a car out for every school we went to, so in a total we were giving out 22 cars in a year and we did that for 8years. We started our youth segment with zero subscribers and as at the time I was promoted, we had about 9million subscribers and revenue of over 1billion daily

4.2.2. Challenges Affecting Profit Optimizations in Telecom Sector

As shown on Table 4.3, the respondents indicated that the challenges faced were the issues of customer's feedback, difference in tariff and network coverage. They also stated that it would be difficult for any company to organize a program involving people gathering in a place because of the coronavirus. In addition, when there are large targeted audience it may be difficult to get them at once in a place. According to the respondents, challenges can be overcome by making a calculated risks and managing the consequences. Another way is now to identify who the target audience are, what they do, their lifestyle, demography and meeting their needs. According to the respondents, the challenges can be overcome when the company manage spend and all involve making decisions and taking risks (Table 4.3). Despite the study, challenges of coordination efforts may be faced hence there is a need for 'centralised decentralization' as affirmed by Kimbu and Ngoasong (2013). Furthermore, there is a need to coordinate linkages, and working relationships between various stakeholders in tourism planning (Maguigad 2013). In sports tourism research, there are limited scholars exploring themes around devolution and sports tourism. Moreover there are limited studies on tourism and devolution in general.

Table 4.3: Challenges Affecting Profit Optimizations in Telecom Sector

OBJECTIVES 2	INTERVIEW QUESTIONS	RESPONDENTS	RESPONSES
To identify and assess the challenges affecting profit optimizations in telecom sector in the study area	4) What are the challenges affecting profit optimizations in telecom sector, using 9mobile as an example?	HA	It's basically an issue of taking feedbacks. The difference between one telecom and the other is their tariffs and network coverage. Also competition among different brands and what the customers really want which are not the same. And most times lack of patience by the organization
		AD 001	This era because of the coronavirus, there is limit to what we can do. We cannot have public gatherings, however, it is all about being proactive. Looking at music and sports, most especially sports, it is really difficult this time for any company to optimize profit using sports as it will involve people gathering
		AD 002	The challenges mainly are competitors and government policies. These two challenges prevent companies such as 9mobile from maximizing their profit
		HM 001	It could just be that sometimes the amount of money made selling the products without other approaches are more than money made when using approaches such as sports and music. But in the end it is very profitable to do this kind of program because it lingers on in the mind of the participants and subscribers
		HM 002	Competition from other telecommunication companies which was the key challenge as well as the inflation change in dollar rate
		HYS	The biggest challenge we have in profit optimizations in telecom is the high infrastructure cost. The cost of providing telecom facilities can be very high. We also have the issue of low purchasing power in Nigerian market. Competition is also a problem, Nigeria is a country in which all the four competitors are active. We also have the issue of dollar falling. And as at then 9mobile was the 4 th player in the market which made it so challenging

OBJECTIVES 2	INTERVIEW QUESTIONS	RESPONDENTS	RESPONSES
		AD 001	Well, it can be. It might just take a while. For music, they can be through virtual methods in which customers has to subscribe in order to watch live shows. They can go about partnering with wellknown artists who will turn use the platform to advertise the company's products
		AD 002	Yes, most of the challenges will be overcome through a very effective managerial strategy. With management skills at every department of the organization, most of the challenges will be overcome
		HM 001	Yes, I think they can be overcome by managing your spend. You don't spend more than you should, putting those platforms together as a company. Also making sure you get your products to as many audience as possible
		HM 002	Yes, through strategic planning. By bringing in new ideas, bonuses for customer and reducing tariffs.
		HYS	Yes, some of the challenges within our control can be overcome and that's where the SWOT analysis comes in. The four operators can come together to decide better ways of approaching the customers. Also, if our contracts can be done in naira and not in dollars

4.2.3. Strategies used in optimizing profits through sport activations and music entertainment

According to the interviewees, the main strategy to be used is leveraging opportunities as well as brand positioning amidst target audience. Also understanding the objectives that drives the audience as shown in Table 4.4. Under these questions, the respondents stated that innovations is a great way of optimizing profits as well as brand image and customer collaboration. According to the respondents, mass customization is like contradiction to optimizing profits and becomes expensive once the company tries to customize a product on a mass scale.

Under this question, the respondents stated that there is a lot that can be acquired using sports and music in reaching out to the audience (Table 4.4). Most of the respondents affirmed the identified strategies as approach in optimizing profits. The respondents stated to the innovation, customer collaboration, brand image, operational excellence as well as outsourcing to the brand's partners. The company brings up the idea and then outsource to highly rated partners to make the idea feasible. The outsourcing partner would be chosen such that the activity to be outsourced would be the partner's core competency and only such a combination holds the potential to reduce cost and maximize profit.

Table 4.4: Strategies used in optimizing profits through sport activations and music entertainment

OBJECTIVES 3	INTERVIEW QUESTIONS	RESPONDENTS	RESPONSES
To determine the strategies to optimize profits in sport activations and musical entertainment in the study area	6) What are the strategies to be used in optimizing profits through sports activations and musical entertainment?	HA	Leveraging opportunities. Soccer for instance, it has been done before but there is always a new way of doing things and that's were innovation comes in. There is a tool called 'Facebook audience insight' used to identify and understand a specific target. Making use of social media to get to know your target audience and reaching out to them. Take for instance in football, picking the most watched game (EPL) and using the medium to reach out to people. Also on music level, 9mobile was also part on Nigerian Idols which was a terrific property, leveraging the opportunities taking different approach. In terms of leveraging music, it is important that 9mobile create their own platform most especially during this Covid period in which people can just log into when they are bored. So to now create value and maximize profit from the existed platform, 9mobile can make use of the sports and most especially music because of this period we are. Bringing DJs online, allowing 9mobile users only to participate, lot of giveaways and all
		AD 001	The first thing is the brand positioning in the market or amidst target audience. Then when the company keep doing things in new way. Brand creativity and ability to adapt to situations instantly. As well as continuity
		AD 002	Organizations of sporting activities, organizations of musical concert for youths and leveraging on those opportunities

OBJECTIVES 3	INTERVIEW QUESTIONS	RESPONDENTS	RESPONSES
		HM 001	Music is very clear when you get talented artists. Audience are interested in seeing their artists on stage. For past programs in 9mobile, we find out from students the artists they will like to see, based on what we could afford, we try to get those artists on board. And right from the gate, you need to be a 9mobile family before you can be allowed to enter for the concert. You either get a sim card, buy recharge cards among others. For sports, it was more of the rewards we give to the players. We make it very competitive, all players want medals, trophies, mobile phones etc. Once you make what people stand to gain very high, perception is always very high
		HM 002	Create new ideas on these two platform, sport activities with different dimension and a concert that hasn't been done before. Making slight changes
		HYS	First, as a brand you need to understand the objectives first. The objectives driving the involvement of sports and music. One of the strategies also is to make the activities engaging. There must be on ground activation, a dedicated team that will be aware and as well sales team that will keep on selling even as the awareness is going on. You must also be able to monetize your content
To determine the strategies to optimize profits in sport activations and musical entertainment in the study area	7) Do you think the following strategies can also be used to influence adoption of sports and musical entertainment? a) Innovation	HA	Innovation is a great strategy, creating new ideas and doing things differently and better than it was done before
		AD 001	Innovation is all about being creative. Bringing inn new ideas. So for a company like 9mobile, innovation will definitely go a long way
		AD 002	Yes, of course

OBJECTIVES 3	INTERVIEW QUESTIONS	RESPONDENTS	RESPONSES
			music and are now been seen as a youthful ground
	c) Mass Customization	HA	Mass customization is like a contradiction for optimizing profit. It requires producing more for less consumers. Customization is good but it defines your target audience, limiting your reach to the consumers
		AD 001	This will depend on the product itself. If the product is targeted at the mass market, then yes it will help as it will comprise of large audience bringing in high revenues
		AD 002	Definitely, customizing for a large Companys such as a data plan for all the youths
		HM 001	I don't think so because it becomes expensive once you try to customize something on a mass scale. Some brands have done it, take for instance, the silent party. When you come to a party and everyone has a headphone and music is playing differently. That just increases the cost and not the smartest way to do things in my own opinion
		HM 002	Trying to satisfy a lot of people at the same time with the same desire on a particular product
		HYS	Yes, if we look at an audience and look at what ties them together. The approaches we used for each school was different
	d) Customer Collaboration	HA	Customer collaboration is very key for 9mobile. Making the consumer feel some sense of belonging
		AD 001	Definitely, collaborating with the customers. Knowing what they really want and meeting with their specific needs
		AD 002	Yes, making customers participate, collaborating with them to know what they want exactly

OBJECTIVES 3	INTERVIEW QUESTIONS	RESPONDENTS	RESPONSES
		HM 001	That is clear, getting people to participate is very key. The more you can do that, the more successful the activation will be
		HM 002	Very important, getting to know your customers more
		HYS	Oh yes! You cannot achieve anything without getting the customers involved. For 9mobile, a team goes ahead to make an enquiry and we worked on the feedback we got. That how we were able to achieve a lot
	e) Operational Excellence	HA	Operational excellence is very good for any telecom sector as it helps a lot in optimizing profit
		AD 001	This is very key for the company. A good strategy to generate and maximize profits
		AD 002	Yes...
		HM 001	Definitely, how well you execute the work. For campus programs, cooperation with the school and student body so as not to have any disruption
		HM 002	A company needs an operational excellence before it can develop and be able to generate more revenue
		HYS	You cannot succeed without been excellent in what you do as a brand. You need to be proactive as a brand
	f) Outsourcing	HA	Outsourcing is dangerous because it has potential of creating a split. Outsourcing can leak an organization's new ideas
		AD 001	If it is not your forte, then you outsource to agencies that can handle it well. Focusing on things you can fully handle as a company

OBJECTIVES 3	INTERVIEW QUESTIONS	RESPONDENTS	RESPONSES
		AD 002	Yes... a company cannot handle all. A company can only bring the idea and then partner with people that will make the idea into reality
		HM 001	Outsourcing because a company cannot do everything. Once you can get the right professionals for awareness, sales and so on. That was what 9mobile did, 9mobile did not directly do all the program, we had an agency and the agency will attract the musical talents, recruit them for us and also help us get the pitch ready for the 5-aside match like Pecksgrey limited
		HM 002	Yes... Getting partners to help improve on the ideas been created
		HYS	We need partners to succeed. Pecksgrey was one of our partners. For everytime we are on the go, we go with about 5-6 of our solid partners. We partner with Mike Niyi Adesanya, a known motivational speaker, we partnered with Pecksgrey, we partnered with our event agency; Tequila, we partnered with the company supplying us lighting. We need partners so we outsource. Ours as a brand is to come up with an idea and we need good partners to outsource to
	8) Do you see a future in the adoption of sports activations and musical entertainment for profit optimization in years to come?	HA	Yes I do see a strong future for organization to tap into this, but it may not be a physical engagement anymore but a digital engagement. Brands across the world are stepping in that lane already, it may take Nigeria awhile to get there but we will surely get there
		AD 001	Yes...
		AD 002	Yes... As far as sports keeps thriving, there is a great future in the use of sports and musical entertainment for

OBJECTIVES 3	INTERVIEW QUESTIONS	RESPONDENTS	RESPONSES
			organization's profit optimization
		HM 001	Definitely, there is still a lot more people can do especially when trying to reach a high-value consumer, musical concert can be used for high value rewards
		HM 002	Yes... As football and other sports continue to gro, there is assurance that companies that direct that path on sports will be able to optimize their profits as well as making Music artist brand ambassador of the company
		HYS	Yes, but the challenge is that a lot of company spend more on the platform than required. You need to plan well to know where to plug in the revenue without necessarily offending the sensibility of the customer. The market is big and youth will always be youth, so music and sports will always provide revenue for the industry

4.3. Discussion of Findings

The study found that sports activations and musical entertainment had a positive influence on the optimization of profits. It found that sports activations had a positive relationship with brand awareness. The findings are in line with Wakefield (2007) that sponsorships by companies lead to higher levels of brand awareness and in addition sponsors who invest in sponsorship programmes receive great exposure. The study established that sports and musical entertainment influenced profit optimization. It stated that awareness allowed audiences to fully participate in the programs. Digitalization of the activities was also a special way of reaching out to the targeted audiences. Utilization of these two platforms in profit optimization enables brands to effectively convey messages to consumers and develop brand awareness quickly. The findings concur with Buhler & Nufer (2010) that marketers develop new promotional tools to communicate to consumer markets with the example of public relations, sales promotion, direct marketing, sponsorship and product placement.

The study showed that effect of profit optimization on company's goals. It revealed that sports activations affected company's performance positively since sport activations positively increased sales and company's value. The findings affirm the result of Dolphin (2003) that the effect of sponsorship on the sales performance of a company for an activity brings about growth to the company and helps to generate revenue. The study ascertained that musical entertainment had an influence on profit optimizations. Its findings showed that companies engage in musical entertainment deals due to threat from competitors and helps to overcome challenges of profit optimization. If companies failed to invest in sponsorship of musical artists and celebrities, their competitors might lose markets in major events.

Musical entertainment creates competitor differentiation. The findings are in line with Nteere (2014) who reveals that sponsorships have influenced likeability and selection of brands as well as brand switching after consumers participation in events that are sponsored. The findings showed the strategies used by 9mobile in order to maximize profit, the respondent said the first thing was the brand positioning in the market or amidst target audience which involved brand creativity and ability to adapt to situations instantly. Another respondent said the main strategy was to create new ideas by making slight changes to the method used. The findings were affirmed by Wakefield (2007) that the strategies used in sports sponsorship enhance income generation for the company. 9mobile believed in a profound level of co-operation and outsourcing to professional agencies and thus wants to be seen as having the capacity go into a fun position without losing focus. By sponsoring programs the company benefits through social, cultural and economic responsibility. The findings concur with Reichheld & Scheffer (2000) who recognizes the significance of customer collaboration, and recognizes that customer loyalty is an important characteristic of a stable customer base.

5. SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Summary of the Findings

The study investigated the impact of sports activations and musical entertainment on profit optimization of 9mobile Nigeria. The study examined how sports and musical entertainment has optimized profits for 9mobile Nigeria over the years. The study identified and assessed the challenges affecting profit optimizations in telecom sector and also determined the strategies to optimize profits in sports activations and musical entertainment. The study used a qualitative approach by interviewing the respondents. Primary data was collected using an interview guide which was administered to the heads of sales, marketing and finance department of 9mobile Company in Lagos, Nigeria. These heads of departments were selected because they are responsible for strategic planning, strategy formulation, control, and implementation. In order to collect primary data, interview guide was designed to get comprehensive information regarding impacts of sport activations and musical entertainment on profit optimizations for 9mobile Company in Nigeria. The researcher made appointments with the interviewees and paid them a visit in order to collect the data required. Data gathered was analyzed using content analysis method and the responses from different respondents were compared and summarized according to the objectives of the study

From the findings, sports activations and musical entertainment has a positive influence on the optimization of profits. It found that sports activations had a positive relationship with brand awareness using Nvivo 8.0 analysis for the responses gotten from the participants. Participation of consumers in sports activations and music entertainment makes significant differences on how the brands are rated and able to generate revenue. It was found that sport activations created awareness thus influencing the consumer's decision to buy certain brands. Consumers tended to use sponsor brand prominence as base in recognizing the sponsor. The findings revealed that the most important reasons as to why companies get into sponsorship deals is either to build the organizations image, to maintain a good image and maximize their profits. This findings confirmed that sports activations influences brand promotion as companies strive to shape and maintain their organization image thus they will be involved in sponsorship deals.

The study showed that challenges of competitors, included lack of feedback, government policies, others were high payment of tax, high tariffs and high infrastructural cost can be overcome by making a calculated risk and managing the consequences. In addition, the challenges can be overcome when the company manage spend and involve in making decisions and taking risks. Furthermore, the findings revealed that sports activations positively impacts an organization. It was revealed that sports activations and musical entertainment are platforms to be utilized by companies to sell their products.

The common reasons as to why companies invest in sports activations and musical entertainment stated by the respondents are the goals of creating brand awareness, enhancing the company's image and generating more revenues for the company.

5.3 Conclusion

The goal of this research was to investigate the impacts of sports activations and musical entertainment on profit optimizations for 9mobile Nigeria. From the findings, it showed that sport activations and musical entertainment are better ways to reach consumers most especially the youths. The study concluded that innovation was the key strategy in the adoption of sports activations and musical entertainment as well as digitalization of sponsored program through interviews that were transcribed verbatim and analysed by NVivo 8.0 (see section 3.6.1).

5.4 Recommendations

It is important to continue research on the impact of sports activations and musical entertainment on profit optimization so that organizations can be aware of better strategies to use in order to generate revenue and maximize the profits as well.

This research has identified some recommendations which require further investigation:

- This study was about the impact of sport activations and musical entertainment on profit optimization of 9mobile Company in Nigeria. The research focused on the sales, marketing and finance staffs of 9mobile Company in Lagos, Nigeria. In addition, Nvivo 8.0 was used in analyzing the responses from the interviewees, further research could utilize other predominant software, such as MAXDA, QDA Minor to assess the responses.
- The study on the impact of sports and musical entertainment in profit optimizations was based on a small convenient sample. A further study should enlarge the sample size to provide a richer understanding on the result. Besides, the study used a qualitative approach to identify and assess the challenges affecting profit optimizations in telecom sector. A quantitative approach to analyse the challenges faced with strategies adopted is needed. This would help to identify if the challenges are predictor to differentiate outstanding organizations from average performers.
- The current study was limited to heads of marketing, sales and finance from which sample was drawn and all participants came from 9mobile Company, Lagos State, Nigeria and they may have similar strategic plans for executing projects. Exploring the impacts of sports activations and musical entertainment in other telecoms sector may help to strengthen findings and provide interesting findings as compared to the results presented in this study.
- Sports activations and musical entertainment exist because of companies that are ready to promote their image and generate revenues. The study therefore recommends that sport activations and musical entertainment should be more critically analyzed and how these corporate platforms fit with the strategic mission of the entities and not only for the sponsoring organization. 9mobile should therefore harness this opportunity not only as a tool for creating awareness but to maximize these opportunities.

5.5 Limitations of the Study

The respondents of this study were heads of staffs at 9mobile Nigeria. Getting suitable time to interview them proved difficult mostly they were out of office to attend to official duties necessitating rescheduling of appointments for interviews. During the interview some of the conversations would be interrupted and left hanging because of a meeting to be attended to from the various other departments. Being a case study, research findings could not be generalized for other telecom companies. The study was carried out within limited time and resources. This constrained the scope as well as the depth of the research.

5.6 Suggestion for Further Research

The study has not been able to comprehensively explore all the variables that explain all the aspects that has to do with the impacts of sport activations and musical entertainment on profit optimization. The following areas are therefore recommended to be carried out for further study. A cross sectional survey could be carried out to make findings more generalizable. Further research should also be done on other companies apart from telecommunication industry and find out how the impact of sports activations and musical entertainment on profit optimizations.

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