

STAKEHOLDER ANALYSIS AND COMPETITIVENESS OF PETROLEUM RETAIL OUTLETS IN PORT HARCOURT, RIVERS STATE, NIGERIA

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ABSTRACT

This research examined the relationship between stakeholder analysis and competitiveness of petroleum retail outlets in Port Harcourt, Rivers State, Nigeria. The study adopted a correlational research design. The population of the study comprised of fifty (50) petroleum retail outlets in Port Harcourt, Rivers State, Nigeria that are registered with Petroleum Products Retail Outlets Owners Association of Nigeria, Rivers State branch. Primary data were collected through self-administered structured questionnaire. The instrument was validated through the supervisors' scrutiny and approval. The internal reliability of the instrument was achieved through the Cronbach's Alpha Coefficient with all items being above 0.70. However, after data coding, responses were used for data analysis. Spearman's Rank Order Correlation was used for data analysis and hypothesis testing. The results showed that stakeholder analysis has a very strong positive and significant influence on market share of the petroleum retail outlets in Port Harcourt, Rivers State, Nigeria. We concluded that stakeholder analysis helps in the development of relationships and structures that facilitate competitiveness of the petroleum retail outlets in Port Harcourt, Rivers State, Nigeria. We affirmed that stakeholder analysis has a significant influence on market share of the petroleum retail outlets in Port Harcourt, Rivers State, Nigeria. We therefore recommended that management of petroleum retail outlets in Port Harcourt, Rivers State, Nigeria should endeavor to incorporate every aspect of stakeholder analysis in their daily operations as a means of gaining social legitimacy which greatly facilitates their continuous financial brand visibility activities.

Keywords: Stakeholder analysis, competitiveness, market share, brand visibility, stakeholder management

INTRODUCTION

In today's business environment where competition is so fierce and change is fast, where customers demand more quality products and services at lower price, the survival, growth and competitiveness of organizations have become major causes of concern and tasks which management of organizations are striving hard to achieve. The long term growth of firms

depends on the value the firm is able to create for its buyers that exceeds the firm's cost of creating it (Barney, 2002). Thus, firm competitiveness is fundamentally dependent on the capability of strategists that explore and exploit new opportunities through the changing business environment in the companies. Porter (1990) defines firm competitiveness as the ability of a given firm to successfully outsmart its competitors in a given business environment in terms of cost and price reduction, quality products.

Stakeholder analysis which is a key dimension of stakeholder management practices is seen as an approach, a tool or set of tools for generating knowledge about individuals and organizations so as to understand their behaviour, intentions, interrelations and interests; and for assessing the influence and resources they bring to bear on decision-making or implementation processes. This study will use quantitative approach to establish the statistical relationship between stakeholder analysis and competitiveness. Furthermore, it would be relevant to note that if the research findings from western contexts are to become more valuable and relevant in Nigerian organizations, it is necessary for researchers to use Nigerian organizations. This research therefore sought to fill this gap by establishing the relationship between stakeholder analysis and competitiveness of petroleum retail outlets in Port Harcourt, Rivers State, Nigeria.

Specifically, the study sought:

1. To determine the relationship between stakeholder analysis and market share of petroleum retail outlets in Port Harcourt, Rivers State, Nigeria.
2. To examine the relationship between stakeholder analysis and brand visibility of petroleum retail outlets in Port Harcourt, Rivers State, Nigeria.

Conceptual Framework

The criterion variable has its measures as competitiveness construct as indicated in the figure below. The two key variables (predictor variable and criterion variable) and how they relate, gave rise to the dissertation. Stakeholder analysis as the predictor variable while the measures of competitiveness which is the criterion variable are market share and brand visibility.

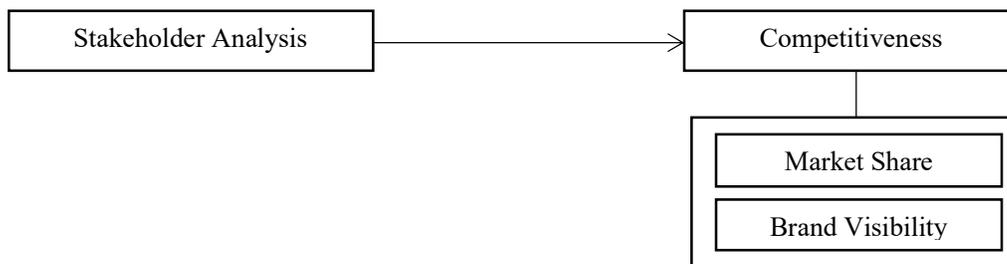


Figure 1: Relationship between stakeholder analysis and competitiveness

Source: Desk Research, 2025 – The dimensions of stakeholder management practices were adopted from the work of Freeman (1984); Eskerod & Huemann (2013) while measures of competitiveness were adopted from the work of Kotler & Keller (2015); Porter (1985)

Research Questions

In order to adequately appraise and evaluate the research study, the following questions are worth giving attention:

1. To what extent does stakeholder analysis affect market share of petroleum retail outlets in Port Harcourt, Rivers State, Nigeria?
2. To what extent does stakeholder analysis affect brand visibility of petroleum retail outlets in Port Harcourt, Rivers State, Nigeria?

Statement of Hypotheses

The following null hypotheses are formulated by the researcher as guide to this study:

Ho₁: There is no significant relationship between stakeholder analysis and market share of petroleum retail outlets in Port Harcourt, Rivers State, Nigeria.

Ho₂: There is no significant relationship between stakeholder analysis and brand visibility of petroleum retail outlets in Port Harcourt, Rivers State, Nigeria.

LITERATURE REVIEW**Theoretical Foundation(s)**

This section discusses relevant theories underpinning this study; Stakeholder theory as fronted by Freeman (1984) and Resource Based View theory as described by Wernerfelt (1984) were reviewed in line with the study. Therefore, this study is anchored on stakeholder theory and resource based view theory, which are regarded as some of the social base line theories to guide the study of stakeholder analysis and competitiveness.

Stakeholder Theory

Stakeholder theory was first posited by Freeman (1984) who described groups and individuals who are affected by or who affect the organization's activities as that organization's stakeholders. Donaldson and Preston (1995) stressed the financial benefit that is obtained by the firms that embrace stakeholder theory through building stronger relationships with stakeholders. According to Rodriguez (2002) a competitive advantage can be achieved by strengthened stakeholder relationships emanating from trust, reputation and innovation which translate to better performance of the organization. Stakeholders consist of individuals who are making decisions on behalf of an organization (Branco & Rodrigues, 2007). These stakeholders can include creditors, employees, customers, suppliers and the communities at large (Branco & Rodrigues, 2007).

Stakeholder theory posits that an organization is a social construction made up of interaction of various stakeholders. The theory further argues that an organization's value is created when it meets the needs of the firm's important stakeholders in a win-win fashion (Harrison 2007). The stakeholder's theory states that in order for organizations to succeed and be sustainable over time, executives must keep the interests of stakeholders aligned and going in the same direction (Freeman, 2004).

Resource Based View Theory

Wernerfelt (1984) fronted the resource based view theory where he linked it to the internal resources of the organization. These resources that are grouped into tangible and non-tangible assets assist the organization to exploit the unique interplay of human, organizational and physical resources that are manipulated to produce a competitive advantage above the competitors of the firm. According to Barney (1991), resources means visible or invisible property of firms such as all assets, capabilities, organizational processes, firm attributes/characteristics, information, and knowledge which are controlled by the firm and could also help to make and perform strategies which enhance effectiveness and efficiency of firms. In addition, Wernerfelt (1984) and Ray et al., (2004) explained that resources are tangible property and intangible property which are possessed by firms. Resources include any tangible or intangible assets like brand names, employee knowledge, skills and abilities, machinery and technology, capital, contracts, and efficient procedures and processes. An organization's resources are seen as strengths that help the organisation to better compete and to accomplish its vision, mission, strategies, and goals. However, within the resource based

view theory framework, competitiveness in terms of market share and brand visibility serves as the intangible resources that offer value to the firm to produce efficiently and/or effectively. Through resource based view theory (RBV), the company is able to effectively deploy its internal resources and hence develop a distinctive competence that the competitors may not easily replicate or imitate. This will enable the firm to perform highly and obtain higher rates of return (Barney, 1991).

Conceptual Review

The study examines the predictor variable (stakeholder analysis) and criterion variable (competitiveness) with regards to its measures. It is therefore pertinent to elaborately examine these variables as presented by related literatures.

Stakeholder Analysis

Stakeholder analysis is an approach, a tool or set of tools for generating knowledge about actors i.e. individuals and organizations so as to understand their behaviour, intentions, interrelations and interests; and for assessing the influence and resources they bring to bear on decision-making or implementation processes. Stakeholder analysis is vital for bringing ideas that are worth implementing as well as for social policy development striving for the organization's welfare. Stakeholder analysis can be executed by identification of them and defining them according to the attributes, interaction and interests in relationship with the dealt issue. According to Lozano (2005), stakeholders such as employees and customers determine the survival of the company because they understand the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats that the organization faces and they can convert weaknesses and threats to strengths and opportunities due to their firsthand knowledge of the organization.

Competitiveness

The term competitiveness was originated from the Latin word *competer* (Murths 1998), which means involvement in a business rivalry for markets. Competitiveness is a complex subject that covers a range of studies at various levels. It has been conceptualized and measured at the country, industry, cluster and firm levels with different dimensions and approaches. Its concept development cannot be separated from the (Porter 1990) research that focused on the 5Cs: competition, competitive strategy, competitive advantage, competitiveness, cluster, and creating shared value (Pfeffer and Salancik, 2003).

Porter (1990) defines competitiveness as the ability of a given firm to successfully compete in a given business environment. Similarly, Solvell (2015) defined firm competitiveness as a firm's long-run profit performance and its capability to compensate its stakeholders such as employees and owners.

The competitiveness is the source which strengthens the position of the organization, including achieving economic profits and through its concession over competitors in the areas of product, price, cost and therefore focus on production processes (Betlis, 2010).

Market Share

Kenneth (2017) defined market share as a fraction of a market that is being serviced by a particular organization, expressed as a percentage of the total market. In other words, it is a measure of the portion of the total market that a company is able to capture at any given time. Market share is the percentage of a market that can be seen in terms of either units or revenue accounted for by a specific entity. McMullan and Kenworthy (2015) said market share is an important component of an organization's performance. It is a part of understanding the competitive landscape and can provide insights into consumer preferences and buying trends.

Additionally, it can help organizations to identify new opportunities for growth and to benchmark their performance against their competitors. Market share is a key metric of organizational performance and should be monitored closely. It is also an important tool for evaluating the success of any product and marketing campaigns.

Brand Visibility

Brand visibility refers to the extent to which a brand is recognized and recalled by consumers in the marketplace. In an increasingly crowded market place, achieving high brand visibility is essential for capturing the attention of potential customers and differentiating one's self from competitors. It encompasses various factors such as brand awareness, recall and recognition across different channels and touch points. Brand visibility refers to the extent to which a brand is recognized and recalled by consumers, often influenced by factors such as advertising, sponsorship and social media presence.

Empirical Review

Stakeholder Analysis and Competitiveness

Aketch and Omwono (2015) studied stakeholder analysis and identification on change management at Kenya Power and Lighting Company Limited. The study adopted a descriptive research design. Interview schedules were the main instrument under the study. The stakeholders were involved in a feeder management programme whose approach entails assignment of the 638 feeders across the country to specific engineers and their teams. The study found that the stakeholders in KPLC were involved through giving their feedback to the management on the change process and developing of sound procedures necessary to ensure that the changes are effective. The stakeholders were also involved in the piloting phase before the change was rolled out and in giving their views and feedback through meetings. The study however established that there was no involvement of staff in the design phase of the change process. It was concluded that there was good involvement of stakeholders in the execution of the change process but poor involvement of stakeholders in the design process of change. For this reason, the study recommended KPLC should involve the stakeholders in all aspects of the change management process more so in the design of the change process and that the change process in KPLC should be documented for reference in future and to assist the organization use the information to improve future change processes.

Nangoli, Namiyingo, Kabagambe, Namono, Jaaza and Ngoma (2016) conducted a research on stakeholder analysis and identification: an empirical investigation. The study aimed at examining the level of stakeholder participation on health projects in Uganda. Methodologically, the study adopted quantitative research design. The results indicated that some key project stakeholders are neither involved in the consultative meeting for the projects nor in design of the project. The study's findings showed that the level of stakeholder participation in health projects among NGO's in Uganda is still low. The implication is that if stakeholders are not actively involved in the project by being consulted, taking up roles and making decisions concerning the health interventions which impact them; this is likely to negatively affect the sustainability of the project. It was thus recommended that stakeholders should be consulted as regards the project before it is implemented and that this participation should be encouraged throughout the project's life cycle. This may be in form of letting stakeholders air out their views in the consultative meetings for the project, consulting them on the needs, identification for the project and carrying out leadership roles for the project. Therefore, from the extant literature review, the following hypotheses are stated to guide the study.

METHODOLOGY

Research Design

This study adopted a correlational research design. The target population of the study comprised of fifty (50) petroleum retail outlets in Port Harcourt that are registered with Petroleum Products Retail Outlets Owners Association of Nigeria (PETROAN) Rivers State branch. The study unit was at the organizational level of analysis because the decision for stakeholder analysis and competitiveness is known as the call for those in senior management positions in the organization. Hence, the accessible population element of the study was (1) Outlet manager and (2) Operations managers in the petroleum retail outlets in Port Harcourt, Rivers State, Nigeria making it one hundred (100) respondents. The study adopted the census and the elements for the study were the two representatives from each of the petroleum retail outlets in Port Harcourt. The source of data collection was the structured close ended questionnaire which was a primary data source. The study adopted content and face validity to verify the research instruments. It was also validated through peer vetting assessment, by knowledgeable professionals on the subject matter. The Cronbach's Alpha method of reliability was used in the study and as shown in table 1, the variables exceeded the treshhold of 0.70.

Table 1 Reliability Results: Cronbach's Alpha of Study Variable

Variables	Dimensions and Measures	Indicators	Alpha Coeff.
Stakeholders Analysis	Stakeholders Analysis	3	0.973
Competitiveness	Market Share	3	0.979
	Brand Visibility	3	0.985
	Power Culture	3	0.979

Source: SPSS Survey Data output, 2025

The data collected from the respondents through the use of questionnaire was analyzed using Spearman's Rank Order Correlation Coefficient to test the research hypotheses in this study.

DATA ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

Stakeholder Analysis and the Measures of Competitiveness

Correlation Analysis on Stakeholder Analysis and the Measures of Competitiveness

			Correlations		
			Stakeholder Analysis	Market Share	Brand Visibility
Spearman's rho	Stakeholder Analysis	Correlation Coefficient	1.000	.992**	.984**
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.	.000	.000
		N	86	86	86
	Market Share	Correlation Coefficient	.992**	1.000	.987**
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.	.000
		N	86	86	86
	Brand Visibility	Correlation Coefficient	.984**	.987**	1.000
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.
		N	86	86	86

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

Source: SPSS Version 26.0 Result, 2025

The test for the relationship between stakeholder analysis and the measures of competitiveness was reflected in table two.

H₀₂: there is no significant relationship between stakeholder analysis and corporate brand visibility of petroleum retail outlets in Port Harcourt, Rivers State, Nigeria.

Table 2, indicates the relationship between stakeholder analysis and market share of the petroleum retail outlets in Port Harcourt, Rivers State, Nigeria using Spearman' Order correlation coefficients. The result showed that stakeholder analysis has a very strong positive relationship with market share ($\rho = 0.992$). The result further showed that stakeholder analysis has a very strong positive relationship with corporate brand visibility ($\rho = 0.984$) of the petroleum retail outlets in Port Harcourt, Rivers State, Nigeria.

H₀₁: there is no significant relationship between stakeholder analysis and market share of the petroleum retail outlets in Port Harcourt, Rivers State, Nigeria.

Table 2 showed the result of relationship between stakeholder analysis and market share of the petroleum retail outlets in Port Harcourt, Rivers State, Nigeria ($P-v=0.000 < 0.01\%$) level of significance, hence from the decision rule, the null hypothesis is rejected indicating that there is a significant relationship between stakeholder analysis and market share of the petroleum retail outlets in Port Harcourt, Rivers State, Nigeria. This shows that as stakeholder analysis is practiced, it would highly improve the corporate brand visibility of the petroleum retail outlets in Port Harcourt, Rivers State, Nigeria.

H₀₂: there is no significant relationship between stakeholder analysis and corporate brand visibility of the petroleum retail outlets in Port Harcourt, Rivers State, Nigeria.

Table 2 showed the result of relationship between stakeholder analysis and corporate brand visibility of the petroleum retail outlets in Port Harcourt, Rivers State, Nigeria ($P-v=0.000 < 0.01\%$) level of significance, hence from the decision rule, the null hypothesis is rejected indicating that there is a significant relationship between stakeholder analysis and corporate brand visibility of the petroleum retail outlets in Port Harcourt, Rivers State, Nigeria. This shows that as stakeholder analysis is practiced, it would highly improve the market share of the petroleum retail outlets in Port Harcourt, Rivers State, Nigeria.

Discussion of Findings

The findings in this study confirmed that stakeholder analysis has a very strong positive and significant influence on market share of the petroleum retail outlets in Port Harcourt, Rivers State, Nigeria. Similarly, the findings confirmed that stakeholder analysis has a very strong positive and significant influence on brand visibility of the petroleum retail outlets in Port Harcourt, Rivers State, Nigeria. These findings agreed with Moon (2001) who also affirmed that such non-profit engagement by business offers an opportunity for business to demonstrate the substance of their sociability. This study also collaborates with the study of Nangoli, Namiyango, Kabagambe, Namono, Jaaza & Ngoma (2016) on stakeholder participation: an empirical investigation.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

In conclusion, the position of this study is that stakeholder analysis drives and substantially enhances outcomes of competitiveness of the petroleum retail outlets in Port Harcourt, Rivers State, Nigeria. In view of these assertions and the accompanying empirical evidence, the following conclusions are stated: that stakeholder analysis has a significant influence on market share of the petroleum retail outlets in Port Harcourt, Rivers State, Nigeria. That stakeholder analysis has a very strong positive and significant influence on brand visibility of the petroleum retail outlets in Port Harcourt, Rivers State, Nigeria.

Drawing from the observations of the study, the following recommendations are put forward:

1. Management of petroleum retail outlets in Port Harcourt, Rivers State, Nigeria should endeavor to incorporate stakeholder analysis in their daily operations for the purpose of gaining social legitimacy and continuous brand visibility.
2. Management of petroleum retail outlets in Port Harcourt, Rivers State, Nigeria should incorporate the suggestions and views of their critical stakeholders in strategic decisions so as to promote cohesiveness and cooperation needed.

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