Role of Marketing Segmentation on Organizational Performance in Manufacturing Industry in Delta State, Nigeria

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Abstract

The focus of this study was to examine the role of marketing segmentations on organisational productivity and performance and give organisation clues on how to approach segmentation and gain best results from it. The random sampling technique was adopted to determine the target population from the study population. A well-structured questionnaire was used to elicit responses from respondents on related areas. The simple percentage method was adopted to analyse data generated and the chi-square statistical technique employed to test hypotheses formulated. Major findings from the study revealed that segmentation tends to improve organisational productivity and performance but does not necessarily lead to customer loyalty. This lead to the conclusion that segmentation enhances organisational performance. In the light of the above, a major recommendation, among others, 'suggested by the researcher to organisations is that they should see segmentation as pathway to formulating and implementing quality policies capable of propelling them to achieving the highest level of customer satisfaction for their products and services.

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1. Introduction

It is usually impossible for a particular organisation to have a comprehensive knowledge about all the customers that made up a particular market, whether the market is industrial, consumer or service, (Cole, 1997). So rather than dissipate energy trying to serve all the customers that make up a market without having a comprehensive knowledge about any particular sets of these customers, an organization with vision is expected to study the various sets of customers with a view to identifying the particular sets that could be served most effectively and profitably. One basic tool required to get this done effectively is the market segmentation. Onayemi Shokan (in Sanyaolu, 2002) defines market segmentation as the process of dividing a market into distinct sub sets of customers, each of which can be considered as a target market with common needs and can be approached with a distinct marketing mix, action or programme.

Marketing segmentation involves dividing a broad target market into smaller, more manageable groups based on shared characteristics. This approach allows organizations to focus their marketing strategies effectively, ensuring that messages resonate with the intended audience. The significance of segmentation cannot be overstated; it directly influences customer satisfaction, brand loyalty, and ultimately, organizational performance (Kotler & Keller, 2016).Kotler, (1997) states that "customers are too numerous, and diverse in their buying requirements". The implication here is that segmentation helps to homogenize market heterogeneity and coincidentally allows for improved organizational performance by targeting specific segments of the market. Thus, customers who have been aggregated according to similar buying needs and behaviour will tend to demonstrate a more homogeneous response to marketing programmes. (Choffray and Lillien, 1978; Wind, 1978).Modem marketing literature identifies a range of benefits for businesses pursuing a segmentation approach. The underlying sense is that segmentation can enhance marketing effectiveness and improve an organization's ability to capitalize on marketing opportunities (Beane and Ennis, 1987; Weinstein, 1987). This is due to the fact that segmentation builds on an excellent understanding of customers and competitors which can lead to fewer direct confrontations with competitors and the design of more suitable marketing programmes.

Research has also shown that segmentation also helps businesses to allocate financial and other resources more effectively (McDonald and Dunbar, 1995). Segmentation encourages businesses to play to their strengths by focusing their resources on the most attractive areas of the market, and consequently earn better profits. Marketing practice as at today can only be at its best where marketers have sufficient marketing orientation in their areas of business. (Atijosan, 1987) emphasizes that "marketing orientation involves being consumer conscious and developing objectives, policies, strategies, plans and tactics that suggests in the long run that the organization adapts itself to moving along the path that ensures satisfaction of the consumer". Casino, (1987) also notes that "a business can only have the mind of customer satisfaction if the business is viewed as a continuously integrated effort in search of the needs and wants of consumers and the formation of policies and strategies to satisfy these needs and wants in such a way to guarantee a long term satisfaction of both parties to the exchange process.

A critical look at the need for marketers to have sufficient "marketing orientation" and the need for businesses to have "the mind of customer satisfaction" as entrenched in the works of (Atijosan, 1987), “marketing orientation” and (Casino, 1987), “... the mind of customer satisfaction” reveal that marketing segmentations remains a fundamental principle of marketing that marketers need to understand and apply effectively to get to the very top. Little wonder, marketing theory has suggested that businesses adopting a market segmentation approach can enhance their organizational performance, (Kotler, 1997).It is therefore imperative that organizations/practitioners see market segmentation as a pathway to formulating and implementing quality policies capable of catapulting them to achieving the highest level of customers’ satisfaction possible, and make better profits consequently.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

Evidence from a number of studies suggests that in any marketing situation it is practically impossible for a single organization to have sufficient knowledge about all the customers in a market. Cole (1997) argues that, “the phenomena of market segmentation has come to recognize the need and importance of dividing markets into customer groups or needs so that marketers may succeed through developing products for specific market groups or segments whose needs are not currently being satisfied by other competitors”. With such divisions, it becomes relatively possible for marketers to interact regularly with customers within such market groups or segments identified with in the marketing process. The overall objective behind this is to have reasonable knowledge about these customers in order to actually discover how best they can be served.

It is however regrettable to still observe cases in our contemporary marketing system where there are little or no orientation among marketing practitioners, on segmentation. Marketing practice as at today can only be at its best where marketers have sufficient marketing orientation in their areas of business. A critical look at the need for marketers to have sufficient “marketing orientation” and the need for businesses to have “the mind of customer satisfaction” as entrenched in the works of (Atijosan, 1987), “marketing orientation” and (Casino, 1987), “... the mind of customer satisfaction” reveal that marketing segmentations remains a fundamental principle of marketing that marketers need to understand and apply effectively to get to the very top. It is therefore imperative that organizations/practitioners see market segmentation as a pathway to formulating and implementing quality policies capable of propelling them to achieving the highest level of customers’ satisfaction possible, and make better profits consequently.

1.3 Objectives of the Study

The objectives of the study are as follows:

i. To understand what respondents believe to be the rationale for undertaking segmentation.
ii. To establish whether or not that business adopting a market segmentation approach performs better than those that give little or no attention to it.
iii. To access the role of segmentation towards improving organizational productivity and performance.

1.4 Research Questions

Research Questions are:

i. Does Segmentation lead to a greater understanding of the customer?
ii. To what extent does segmentation lead to a better match between the organization and it customers?
iii. Does segmentation enable an organization to have a better knowledge of relevant markets?

1.5 Hypotheses

Hi: Segmentation does not improve organizational performance.

Ho: Segmentation does not build customer loyalty.

2. Review of Related Literature

Conceptual Framework

This section explains the context of the research by describing the concept upon which the research is based, that segmentation does not have a direct link with improved performance, but a moderator which can positively influence performance, depending on how its perceived variables that are seen as having a direct effect on performance are operationalized. Two critical issues have been recognized in applying the resource-based view to the systematic empirical study of organizational performance. The first problem lies in the issue of measurement and definition of superior resources (Barney, 2001). The second is that, while it clearly views firm heterogeneity in terms of assets, it places no equivalent emphasis on customer heterogeneity, (Hunt and Morgan, 1995; Hunt, 2000). This is of course central to any notion of the value of market segmentation. Hunt (2000) has also argued that a more comprehensive theoretical approach, which he labels “Resource Advantage (RA)” is required. He implies that the question of heterogeneity of both firms and customers must be treated in a simultaneous manner. He indeed, describes the “RA” theory as inter-alia an “evolutionary” approach.

Marketing activities, which can be sub-divided into marketing tools e.g. segmentation, targeting, and marketing processes such as customer profile review, brand management, the process of positioning or customer service management are also deemed likely moderator variables in this model. The contribution of this research is to model the role of a particular marketing approach on performance. Thus, even a key approach as market segmentation is reviewed as a moderator rather than a direct effect. This may help to explain why the link between the application of market segmentation and improved organizational performance remains difficult to prove, despite the recognition and accolades it (segmentation) receives. Esslemont (1996) for example argues that measurement difficulties make it impossible to identify a direct link between segmentation and business success.

However, other researchers point to what they claim is powerful qualitative evidence that companies with segmentation skills perform better (Sharp, 1995). It is nonetheless clear that despite the extensive research and practitioner literature, quantifiable evidence of the direct impact of segmentation upon organizational performance remains elusive. Most research output can instead be categorized as either focusing on identifying segments, per se or as a method of measurement and analysis which helps to allocate resources more effectively (Beane and Ennis, 1987; Cheron and Kleinschmidt, 1985; Dibb and Stem, 1995). It is therefore possible that the difficulty in establishing the link between segmentation and organizational performance is partly caused by some conceptual and empirical problems associated with the technique.

2.2 Definition of Marketing Segmentation

Marketing Segmentation has been defined by several authors in their different ways; with all pointing at the same thing. Cole (1997) defines the concept as the process of subdividing a market into distinct and meaningful subsets of customers who might merit separate marketing programmes and effort. Onayemi Shokan (in Sanyaolu, 2002), in his view, believes segmentation is the process of dividing a market into distinct subsets of customers, each of which can be considered as a target market with common needs and can be approached with a distinct marketing mix, action or programme. The concept of market segmentation is rooted in the understanding that markets are heterogeneous, comprising diverse groups of customers with varying needs, preferences, and characteristics (Smith, 1956). Kotler (2007) defines market segmentation as the process of dividing a market into distinct groups of buyers who have different needs, characteristics, or behaviors and who might require separate products or marketing programs. The fundamental principle underlying market segmentation is that organizations can more effectively and efficiently cater to the needs of specific customer groups, leading to a stronger competitive advantage and superior performance (Day, 1984).Market segmentation is closely linked to the marketing concept, which emphasizes understanding and meeting customer needs as the key to achieving organizational goals (Kohli & Jaworski, 1990). By identifying and targeting specific segments, organizations can tailor their marketing mix that is product, price, place, and promotion to resonate with the unique requirements of those segments, thereby enhancing customer satisfaction and loyalty (Dibb & Simkin, 2008).

Sanyaolu (2002), in his opinion, points out that segmentation deals with the division of heterogeneous units whose needs and wants can be easily catered for. Kotler and Armstrong (2008), identifies the concept as dividing a market into smaller groups with distinct needs, characteristics, or behaviours who might require separate products or marketing mix. The critical issue implied in each of these definitions is the division of market into smaller units with distinct behaviour and needs to make for effective coverage and efficient servicing.

Since market consist of buyers and buyers differ in one way or the other, they cannot all be served well if served together. They may differ in their wants, resources, location, buying attitudes, and buying practices. Through market segmentation, companies divide large heterogeneous markets into smaller segments that can be reached more efficiently and effectively, with products and services that match their unique needs.

2.3 Targeting

Market segmentation reveals the company's market opportunities enables it evaluate the various segments so it could decide which particular segment(s) it can serve best. In evaluation of different segments of the market, the company looks at three factors: segment size and growth, segment structural attractiveness and company objective and resources. The company collects and analyses data on current segment sales, growth rate and expected profitability for the various segments, to enable it settle for a segment with the right size and growth characteristics in relation to skills and other resources. The company also examines major structural factors that affect long run segment attractiveness. In this direction it tries not to settle for segments that already have very strong and aggressive competitors whose products and prices may limit the company's opportunity to grow as expected. The relative power of buyers also affects segment attractiveness; as buyers with strong bargaining powers relative to sellers try to force down prices, demand more services and set competitors against one another. A segment could also become less attractive if it has powerful suppliers who can control prices or reduce quality/quantity of ordered goods/services.

Apart from checking segment size and growth; and segment structural attractiveness, a company must also consider its own skills, objectives, and resources. Some attractive segments could be dismissed if they do not blend with the company's long run objectives or probably the company's skills/resources could not favour such. A company should only consider a segment in which it can "offer superior value and gain advantage over companies", as implied by (Kotler, 1980) in his definition of marketing concept.

2.4 Impact on Organizational Performance

Several studies have demonstrated the positive impact of effective market segmentation on organizational performance. Research by (Dibb et al. 2002) found that companies implementing sophisticated segmentation strategies experienced higher profitability and return on investment compared to those using less refined approaches. Similarly, (Hassan and Craft, 2012) reported that firms adopting international market segmentation strategies achieved superior financial performance in global markets. A study by (Yankelovich and Meer, 2006) revealed that well-executed segmentation strategies led to increased customer satisfaction and loyalty. This finding was corroborated by (Homburg et al.,2008), who demonstrated that companies aligning their organizational structure with customer segments experienced higher levels of customer satisfaction and retention. Also, (Foedermayr and Diamantopoulos, 2008) found that effective segmentation strategies contributed to increased market share and sustainable competitive advantage. Their research indicated that companies utilizing advanced segmentation techniques were better positioned to identify and exploit market opportunities. A study by Desarbo et al. (2001) showed that market segmentation played a crucial role in successful new product development. Companies that aligned their innovation efforts with specific customer segments were more likely to create products that met market needs and achieved commercial success.

3. Methodology

The research design adopted for this study is the survey research design, based on the population characteristics and a representative sample of the population. This is to enhance effective description of certain problems relevant to the study, state relevant research questions and formulate hypotheses for further investigation in the process. Primary data shall be generated from the study population through the use of a well-designed questionnaire. In analysing and interpreting primary data generated on the study, "Role of Segmentation on Organizational Performance", the simple percentage technique shall be used and the chi-square statistical technique will be used to test hypotheses.

3.2 Analysis of Responses to Research Questions and Discussion of Results

Research Question 1: Segmentation enables the organization to understand the market better.

Table 1

Scale	**Number**	**Percentage**
SA	20	50
A	10	25
D	5	12.5
SD	5	12.5
Total	**40**	**100**

Source: Survey Research, 2025

Data from the above table reveals that 20(50%) of the respondents strongly agree that segmentation enables the organization to understand the market better, 10(25%) agree while 5(12.5%) disagree and another 5(12.5%) strongly disagree.

Question 2: Segmentation enables the organization to get closer to its market.
Table 2

Scale	**Number**	**Percentage**
SA	15	37.5
A	15	37.5
D	5	12.5
SD	5	12.5
Total	**40**	**100**

Source: Survey Research, 2025

Data from the above table reveals that 15(37.5%) of the respondents strongly agree that segmentation enables the organization to get closer to its market, while another 15(37.5%) agree. Also, 5(12.5%) disagree and another 5(12.5%) strongly disagree.

Research Question 3: Segmentation enables the organization to understand the customer better.
Table 3

Scale	**Number**	**Percentage**
SA	15	37.5
A	15	37.5
D	8	20
SD	2	5
Total	**40**	**100**

Source: Survey Research, 2025

Data from the above table reveals that 15(3 7.5%) of the respondents strongly agree that segmentation enables the organization to understand the customer better, while 15(3 7.5%) agree. Meanwhile, 8(20%) disagree and another 2(5%) strongly disagree.

Research Question 4: Segmentation leads to a better match between the organization and the customers.
Table 4.3 (7)

Scale	**Number**	**Percentage**
SA	28	70
A	5	12.5
D	5	12.5
SD	2	5
Total	**40**	**100**

Source: Survey Research, 2025

Data from the above table reveals that 28(70%) bf the respondents strongly agree that segmentation leads to a better match between the organization and its customers, while 5(12.5%) agree. Meanwhile, 5(12.5%) disagree and another 2(5%) strongly disagree.

Testing of Hypotheses

Test of Hypothesis 1 (Ho_1) using Q_9 and Q_{10}

Ho_1: Segmentation does not lead to improved organizational productivity and performance.

(a) Tables 1 & 3 Presentation of responses on extent of agreement to Ho1 using actual number of respondents.

	SA	**A**	**D**	**SD**	**TOTAL**
Q_9	20	10	5	5	40
Q_{10}	15	15	8	2	40
TOTAL	**35**	**25**	**13**	**7**	**80**

Source: Survey Research, 2025

(b) Tables 1 & 3 Presentation of responses (observed frequencies, O_1) on extent of agreement to Ho_1 using graded points allocated to responses.

	SA	**A**	**D**	**SD**	**TOTAL**
Q_9	80	30	10	5	125
Q_{10}	60	45	16	2	123
TOTAL	**140**	**75**	**26**	**7**	**248**

Source: Survey Research, 2025

(c) Computation of expected frequencies (E_1)

$$E_{11} = \frac{140 \times 125}{248} = 70.56$$

$$E_{12} = \frac{75 \times 125}{248} = 37.80$$

$$E_{13} = \frac{26 \times 125}{248} = 13.10$$

$$E_{14} = \frac{7 \times 125}{248} = 3.53$$

$$E_{21} = \frac{140 \times 123}{248} = 69.43$$

$$E_{22} = \frac{75 \times 123}{248} = 37.19$$

$$E_{23} = \underline{26 \times 123}$$

$$\frac{}{248} = 12.89$$

$$E_{24} = \frac{7 \times 123}{248} = 3.47 = 247.97$$

= 248

(d) Table: 4.4(3): Computation X^2

S/N	O	E_1	$O_1 - E_1$	$(0_1 - E_1)^2$	$(O_1 - E_1)^2/E_1$
1.	80	70.56	9.44	89.1136	1.2629
2.	30	37.80	-7.8	60.84	1.6095
3.	10	13.10	-3.1	9.61	0.7335
4.	5	3.53	1.47	2.1609	0.6121
5.	60	69.43	- 9.43	88.9249	1.2807
6.	45	37.19	7.1	50.41	1.3554
7.	16	12.89	3.11	9.6721	0.7503
8.	2	3.47	- 1.47	2.1609	0.6227
					8.227 1

Source: Survey Research, 2025

X^2 Cal 8.2271

X 10%= 0.10

For degree of freedom (df)

r =4, c= 2

Where df = (r — 1) (c — 1)

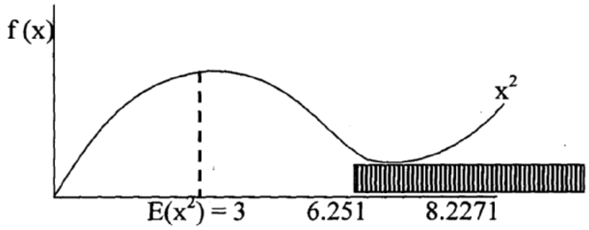
=(4—1)(2—1)

=(3)(1)=3

Therefore X^2 tab = X^2 (0.10, 3 6.25 1)

Decision Rule

Fig. 4.4(4)



Since the calculated value of X^2 (8.2271) is greater than the table value of X^2 (6.251); and the difference between the observed frequencies and the expected frequencies are significant, the null hypothesis (Ho_1) is rejected. We therefore conclude that segmentation leads to improved organizational productivity and performance.

Test of Hypothesis II (Ho_{11}) Using Q_7 and Q_8

Ho_{11}: Segmentation does not build customer loyalty

(a) Table 4.4(5): Presentation of responses on extent of agreement to Ho_1, using actual number of respondents

	SA	**A**	**D**	**SD**	**TOTAL**
Q_7	20	15	4	1	**40**
Q_8	15	15	6	4	**40**
TOTAL	**35**	**30**	**10**	**5**	**80**

Source: Survey Research, 2025

(b) Table 4.4(6): Presentation of response (observed frequencies-O_1) an extent of agreement to Ho_1 (using graded points- points allocated to responses

	SA	**A**	**D**	**SD**	**TOTAL**
Q_7	80	45	8	1	**134**
Q_8	60	45	12	4	**121**
TOTAL	**140**	**90**	**20**	**5**	**255**

Source: Survey Research, 2025

(c) Computation of expected frequencies (E_1)

$$E_{11} = \frac{140 \times 134}{225} = 73.57$$

$$E_{12} = \frac{90 \times 134}{255} = 47.30$$

$$E_{13} = \frac{20 \times 134}{255} = 10.51$$

$$E_{14} = \frac{5 \times 134}{255} = 2.62$$

$$E_{21} = \frac{140 \times 121}{255} = 66.43$$

$$E_{22} = \frac{90 \times 121}{255} = 42.70$$

$$E_{23} = \frac{20 \times 121}{255} = 9.490$$

$$E_{24} = \frac{5 \times 121}{255} = 2.372 \qquad = 255.002$$

(f) Table 4.4(7): Computation X_2

S/N	**0_1**	**E_1**	**$0_1 - E_1$**	**$(0_1 - E_1)^2$**	**$(0_1 - E_1)^2/E_1$**
1.	80	73.57	6.43	41.3449	0.5620
2.	45	47.30	-2.3	5.29	0.1118
3.	8	10.51	-2.51	6.3001	0.5994
4.	1	2.63	- 1.63	2.6569	1.0102
5.	60	66.43	-6.43	41.3449	0.6224
6.	45	42.70	2.3	5.29	0.1239

7.	12	9.490	2.51	6.3001	0.6639
8.	4	2.372	1.63	2.6569	1.1201
					4.8 137

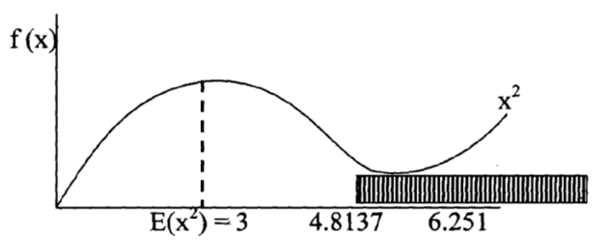
Source: Survey Research, 2025

X^2 Cal =4.8137
X 10% = 0.10
For degree of freedom (df)
r = 4, c = 2
Where df (r — 1)(c — 1)
= (4—1)(2—1)
= (3)(1)
= 3

Therefore X^2 tab — X^2 (0.10, 3 = 6.251)

(g) **Decision Rule**

Fig. 4.4(8)



Since the calculated value of X^2(4.8137) is less than the table value of X^2(6.251); and the difference between the observed frequencies and the expected frequencies are significant, the null hypothesis (Ho_{11}) is accepted. We therefore conclude that segmentation though may lead to better match, between the organization and the customers and as well lead to better relationship between the two parties. It may not necessarily lead to customer loyalty. Customer loyalty may result from customer preference for special brands based on certain basic factors like product quality taste, life style, occupation, status, perception etc which may not be directly linked to segmentation.

4. Conclusion

The major findings from this study conform with the conclusion of Kotler (1997), "... that businesses adopting a market segmentation approach can enhance their organizational performance".

A critical review of the concept upon which this study is based; that segmentation does not have a direct link with improved performance but a moderator which can positively influence performance, depending on how its perceived variables are seen as having a direct effect on performance are operationalized, geared the researcher to examine the relationship between antecedents and moderator variables in the relationship between superior resources and superior performance, (please find model in 2.1).. The researcher was able to take a position that segmentation variables, whether viewed as antecedents or moderators, the fact that these variables become superior resources to the firm where operated strategically to bring about improved performance, validate the conclusion that segmentation enhances organizational performance.

Difficulties in establishing the link between segmentation and organizational performance is partly caused by some of the conceptual and empirical problems associated with the technique, according to Dibb, Stem and Wensley (2002), which prior research grouped into product market definition, market stability and attitudinal reliability. Though these issues would apply in a direct and moderating effects, it is however assumed that segmentation can only be expected to have a positive moderating effect on the underlying relationship between superior resources and superior performance, than additional measurement problem that may arise. A particular concern is the way in which the independent variables which are seen as having a direct effect on performance are operationalized, as earlier discussed.

4.1 Recommendations

With respect to the findings in this research, the researcher suggests the following recommendations to organizations/practitioners:

1. They should see market segmentation as a pathway to formulating and implementing quality policies capable of catapulting them to achieving the highest level of customer satisfaction for their product and services, and making better profits consequently; and therefore integrate it appropriately into their plan and budgets.
2. They should build upon the orientation that segmentation can only be expected to have a positive (moderating) effect on performance and strategically operate its variables in a focused manner, towards achieving improved productivity and performance.
3. They should also be able to do a comprehensive market survey, determining the most appropriate technique for their product/services to achieve best results from the application of 1 and 2 above.

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