# Impact of Marketing Strategies on Nigerian Transport Operations

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***Authors' contributions***

*This work was carried out in collaboration between both authors. Both authors read and approved the final manuscript.*

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## ABSTRACT

Transportation is integral to socio-economic development, enabling movement and supporting urban productivity. But in developing nations like Nigeria, poor infrastructure, competition and low customer loyalty have made the transport sector a difficult task. To address these challenges, strong marketing strategies are needed which can engage public transport and increase both the economic and operational success of such transport. Thus, this study explores the impact of marketing strategies on customer acquisition, customer retention, revenue growth, enhanced brand awareness and image, competitive advantage, geographic expansion and market penetration in Nigeria. The study was conducted in a private transport company in Lagos, Nigeria. 181 respondents, who are staff of the selected transport company were chosen randomly. Data were sourced from only primary source using questionnaire survey. Descriptive statistics and multiple linear regression were used to analyzed the effects of marketing strategies on key operational outcomes. The regression analysis results indicate that transport marketing significantly affects

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transport operations, with R = 0.986, revealing that operational variables (customer acquisition, customer retention, revenue growth, enhanced brand awareness and image, competitive advantage, geographic expansion and market penetration) contributed to 98% variables in the strategic marketing of the company. In conclusion, effective marketing enhances transport company's customer engagement, brand image, and growth. Recommendations include expanding online channels and leveraging content marketing and influencer partnership, this will help the company in achieving strong branding and build trust and confidence in their customers.

## 1. INTRODUCTION

Transportation is an important part of economic and social development as it allows people and goods to be transported across geographical regions. An efficient transportation system plays an important role in society's transformation and integration as well as in improving lifestyle, leisure, and work dynamics (Singh, 2023). But transportation also requires significant resources - time, energy, infrastructure - that it is justified by using to serve society as well as it does. Public transportation provision in developing nations is often unable to satisfy high demand due to urbanization and economic activities, leaving many transportations needs unmet (Babaleye and Greblikaite, 2021). Public transport is more than the transportation of people; it is a collective system where the mass moves together to increase urban productivity and favour sustainable development (UITP, 2004).

Public transport has been established as an essential system; however, challenges are faced in areas with rapid urban growth, and the available transport infrastructure and services which in turn are not proportional to their growth (Charles et al., 2021). The resulting inadequate public transport systems make it difficult for third-world transit systems to function efficiently (Brata et al., 2017; Bruner, 2004). Therefore, transportation systems require strong marketing strategies to attract more passengers, keep operations afloat and ensure public benefits, such as decreasing road congestion and environmental impacts (Majid et al., 2022). Transportation managers can use marketing strategies to structure their approach to achieving long-term market positions and to increase customer engagement and brand loyalty in competitive environments where public transportation competes with private vehicles (Chlivickas, 2018). Marketing of a public transportation system thus consists of various types of activities that affect branding, and

advertising, the price of a ticket, the methods of targeting a group of customers. What operators can do is segment audiences by demographics and needs, and then create campaigns that are relevant to particular passenger needs, which makes public transit relevant (Coggin and Marius, 2015).

Therefore, this study focused on the importance of specific marketing strategies variables on transport operations. Sustaining a loyal customer base in a competitive market is the focus of increased customer acquisition and improved customer retention (Ayo, Oduguwa, & Okeya, 2020). Financial performance in the context of economic instability is highlighted in revenue growth (Panoutsou et al., 2021). Trust and public perception are affected by enhanced brand awareness and image but ineffectiveness may result if the service quality improvement is not aligned (Gontur, Gadi, & Bagobiri, 2022). Strategic market positioning and growth are emphasised in competitive advantage and geographic expansion but external influences such as regulation and infrastructure are ignored (Onokala & Olajide, 2020).

### 1.1 Objective of the Study

- To examine the impact of transport marketing strategies on transport operations

### 1.2 Hypothesis of the Study

$H_{01}$: Marketing strategies have no significant impact on transport's operations.

### 1.3 Scope of the Study

This study investigated a public transport company in Nigeria, owned by a private entity. This company is called Associated Bus Company (ABC) Plc, located in Lagos State. This study chose ABC Transport Company because of its

position in the transport sector and its use of different marketing strategies to attract and retain customers (Romanus, Orji and Chris, 2024). The study was undertaken in Lagos State because it is Nigeria's major commercial hub where high population density, varied transit needs, and a comprehensive setting to assess the effectiveness of transport marketing strategies (Nwoko & Osiki, 2016).

## 1.4 The Concept of Marketing Strategy

The phrase "marketing strategy" (MS) was first defined using various terminology by various writers. Some early studies, such as Smith (1956) described it as the expression of various marketing tactics, "market segmentation" and "product differentiation." Dean (1951) used the concepts of "skimming" and "penetration" to suggest different pricing, etc. Wind and Lilien (1993) introduced the "6C model," which includes the broad six-factor MS of "customers," "channels of distribution," "competitors," "Company," "Culture," and "candidates for cooperation." The earlier 2C models (Company-Customers) and 3C models were replaced with this six-factor model (Company-Customers-Competitors). Later research by Shaoming, Zou and Cavusgil (2019) identified several vital standardizations of global marketing strategy, including those related to the product, promotion, channel structure, price, the concentration of marketing activities, coordination of marketing activities, participation in international markets, and integration of competitive moves.

## 1.5 Empirical Review

Chlivickas (2008) and Ramanauskienė (2016) both discuss the importance of marketing strategy, but in different scopes and approach. According to Chlivickas (2008), a marketing strategy is a broad function that helps a business to achieve its business goals and respond to the changing market dynamics. A flexible, adaptive strategy can keep relevance and drive performance across a wide range of conditions, he suggests. Ramanauskienė (2016), however, adopts a more segmented view, arguing that strategic impact can be maximised through targeted market segmentation. Ramanauskienė (2016) suggests that organizations can improve profitability and competitive advantage in each segment by concentrating on certain customer segments and designing strategies for each of them. Chlivickas (2008) sees strategy as an all-encompassing, adaptive framework of competitiveness, while Ramanauskienė (2016)

promotes a segmented, resource-based approach. Chlivickas (2008) and Ramanauskienė (2008) both emphasize customer orientation, but the former leans toward adaptability and broad application, while the latter highlights maximizing segment-specific returns, a more specialized view of strategy's role in competitiveness.

Furthermore, Virvilaitė and Šeinauskienė (2016) and Porter (1998) stress that marketing strategy plays a vital role in attaining overall goals of the company, just with a different focus on functionality and competitiveness. Marketing strategy is one of the components of a broader corporate strategy, according to Virvilaitė and Šeinauskienė (2016), and effective strategy is consistent with and supports the company's key objectives. The study asserts that marketing as a functional strategy should support the overall business strategy and aim at customer satisfaction and market reach. Yet, Porter (1998) argues that marketing strategy should be competitive, focusing on building and maintaining a competitive advantage that he believes is necessary for long-term success. It focuses on offensive or defensive actions to gain a strong market position. In contrast, Virvilaitė and Šeinauskienė (2016) values the alignment of values strategy with corporate objectives, while Porter stresses that values strategy is mainly used as a means to sustain and improve market competitiveness, which reflects a difference in focus between competitive positioning and functional integration.

Nevertheless, Baumeister et al., (2022) and Nguyen and Mogaji, (2022) offer some insights into marketing strategies in public transportation with different focal points. According to Baumeister et al., (2022), public transportation has environmental benefits and that promoting its eco-friendliness can attract potential users. This approach regards marketing as a tool to align transport use with other societal goals, such as sustainability. However, Nguyen and Mogaji (2022) focus on practical, community-based promotional events aimed at increasing public transport awareness and usage, such as free ride offers and public transport priority days. Both studies focus on non-traditional marketing approaches to public transportation, with Baumeister et al., (2022) being more theoretical, highlighting intrinsic benefits such as lower environmental impact, and Nguyen and Mogaji, (2022) focusing on tangible, localized promotional activities to directly influence public behavior.

Additionally, Muchen, Hamdan & Ab-Rahim (2022) and Mavlutova et al. (2023) study the role of technology in transport, but in different ways. In their paper, Muchen, Hamdan, and AbRahim (2022) suggest using a Hicks-Moorsteen index to measure technological change and environmental performance in the road transport sector through a data-driven approach. As a key to improving environmental and technological aspects in transportation, their model supports data analytics. In contrast, Mavlutova et al., (2023) discuss smart technology deployment in urban transport, highlighting practical prerequisites, including ICT infrastructure and consumer acceptance. In contrast, Liu et al. (2023) focus on performance improvement metrics, while Mavlutova et al. (2023) highlight the conditions for successful technology adoption in urban transport, including user engagement and the availability of infrastructure for smart technologies integration.

Oladeinde et al., (2023) and Adeosun and Shittu, (2021) both study innovation in the context of business strategy, but in slightly different ways. In small businesses, Oladeinde et al., (2023) examine the constraints to innovation, which include technical know-how and competitive thrusts that prevent innovation. Small businesses, they say, are unable to innovate because they lack enough capital and market positioning. On the other hand, Adeosun and Shittu (2021) discuss disruptive innovation, which is the effect of new technologies on the opening of new markets and the revolutionary effect of innovation on business environments. While Oladeinde et al., (2023) give a grounded understanding of the limitation of innovation especially among the small firms, Adeosun and Shittu, (2021) explore the disruptive potential of innovation and argue that innovation is not just about the availability of resources but also about the shift in the structure of the market itself.

## 2. METHODOLOGY

The study was done in a cross-sectional descriptive survey of the Associate Bus Company (ABC) in Lagos State, Nigeria. ABC is a well-known transport company with branches in all the states across the country although its headquarters is in Lagos State, South-western Nigeria. Their services are across both the Island and Mainland sub-regions of Lagos which makes it possible to get a diverse sample that is representative of the various services ABC offers (Olajide & Lawanson, 2022). ABC's Island services are made up of coach and shuttle services while mainland services include haulage and cargo services (Filani, 2012).

The study population included 322 employees of ABC (Field, Survey, 2023). The study was conducted in the company terminals in locations such as Jibowu Terminal, Amuwo Odofin, Ikeja Cargo Outlet, Lekki Ticketing Terminal, Ajah Terminal, Bolade Terminal, and Ikorodu Terminal, which are the major operational areas of the ABC in the state.

Cohran formula was used to extract a sample size of 181 from 322 population. The sample size comprises 181 participants from ABC staff (managers, IT staff, and operators) who were selected through simple random sampling. Data was collected through a questionnaire. The objective of the study was analysed using frequency distribution tables while the hypothesis was analysed using multiple linear regression. The model is as follows:

$$y = \alpha + \beta_1 x_1 + \beta_2 x_2 + \beta_3 x_3 + \beta_4 x_4 + \beta_5 x_5 + \beta_6 x_6 + \varepsilon$$

Where:

| | |
|---|---|
| Y | Transport Operational efficiency |
| $\alpha$ | Constant value |
| $\beta_{1-6}$ | are the coefficients of independent variable |
| $x_1$ | Increased Customer Acquisition (ICA) |
| $x_2$ | Improved Customer Retention (ICR) |
| $x_3$ | Revenue Growth (RG) |
| $x_4$ | Enhanced Brand Awareness and Image (EBA) |
| $x_5$ | Competitive Advantage (CA) |
| $x_6$ | Geographic Expansion and Market Penetration (GEM) |
| e | the error term. |

## 3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### 3.1 Objective: Impact of Transport Marketing Strategies on Transport's Operations

The research used descriptive statistics (see Table 1) to analyze the effect of transport marketing strategies on the operations of ABC. The study reveals that the respondents had differential impressions about the efficiency of these techniques. In more detail, 28.8% of the respondents were in the category that believed that the transport marketing strategies could

increase customer acquisition for ABC while 20.0% strongly agreed. On the other hand, 5.1% were still neutral as 18.1% disagreed that the strategy was effective in creating customer growth. On the question on customer satisfaction and customer loyalty, 34.4% strongly agreed that the marketing strategies that were in place to retain customers was effective in customer retention while 28.8% agreed. However, 6% were still in a state of confusion, 16.3% and 19.1% disagreed and strongly disagreed respectively. This shows that there is majority agreement that customer-focused marketing is about retention, although there is a segment that is still skeptical about this.

Furthermore, the result reveal that 44.7% of respondent strongly agreed while 20.0% agreed with the statement that transport marketing strategies enhance ticket sales and bookings, thus enhancing revenue. 7.4% were still in a state of confusion, while 18.1% and 9.8% disagreed and strongly disagreed with the statement. This suggests a high level of awareness of the contribution of marketing to revenue generation but some level of disagreement on the efficiency of such strategies. When it comes to brand recognition, out of all the participants 33.0% strongly agreed while 35.8% agreed that marketing strategies are crucial in the promotion of brand image of ABC. While 12.1% were neutral, 10.2% disagreed and 8.8% strongly disagreed. This means that everybody seems to agree on branding but with a little disagreement. Lastly, majority of the respondents agreed on competitive advantage as one of the factors.

These findings suggest that marketing initiatives are primarily considered crucial in increasing ABC's customer base, revenues, brand image, and competitiveness. Nevertheless, the high percentage of neutral and dissenting responses underlines the possible requirement for further enhancement and harmonization of ABC's marketing strategy to address the stakeholders' expectations. As stated by Olajide and Lawanson, (2022), essential marketing strategies are crucial for organizational development since they help to satisfy and retain customers and gain a competitive advantage. As Mavlutova et al., (2023) pointed out, such strategies help organizations to build up a unique brand image, which can improve customer loyalty and market position. In addition, as pointed out by Majid et al., (2023), strategic marketing achieves not only the current sales but also the creation of brand value and competitive advantage. In the same way, Brata, Husani, and Ali, (2017) underscore that well-targeted campaigns can change consumer behavior and promote the use of public transportation. The diverse results imply that ABC's marketing programmes are effective but additional targeting across the customer segments may enhance the effectiveness of the marketing initiatives and improve the strategic position of ABC.

## 3.2 Test of Hypothesis

$H_{01}$: Marketing Strategies has no Impact on Transport Operations

As shown in Table 2, the Model Summary shows a strong relationship between marketing strategies and transport operations. The R value (0.989) is very high, meaning marketing strategies very strongly predict transport operations. The $R^2$ value (0.979) indicate that 97.9% of the variation in transport operation can be explained by the predictors (Increased Customer Acquisition, Improved Customer Retention, Revenue Growth, Enhanced Brand Awareness and Image, Competitive Advantage, Geographic Expansion and Market penetration). The high explanatory power of these marketing strategies in the transport context is consistent with findings in transport management studies (Mogaji et al., 2022).

The overall significance of the model is shown by the ANOVA table (Table 3) with an F value of 1.6033 and p value of 0.000, which is significant at 0.05 level of significance. This means that the model is statistically significant and the hypothesis that marketing strategies have a significant impact on transport operations is also supported. This strong statistical relationship is consistent with previous research which highlights the importance of strategic marketing in operational success (Etuk et al., 2021).

Furthermore, insights into the contribution of individual predictors can be obtained from the coefficient results in Table 4. Customer Acquisition (B = -0.047, p = 0.007) have a significant on increased prices at the 0.05 level of significance, possibly indicating that there are inefficiencies or difficulties associated with the customer acquisition efforts. Additionally, Customer Retention (B = 0.011, p = 0.576), with improved Customer Retention at 0.05 level of significant, is not significant implying that it does not play an important role in transport operations

**Table 1. Impact of transport marketing strategies on transport operations**

| S/N | Variables | Strongly Agree (%) | Agree (%) | Undecided (%) | Disagree (%) | Strongly Disagree (%) |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| i. | Effective transport marketing strategies can lead to an increase in customer acquisition for ABC. | 60 (24.0) | 62 (28.8) | 11(5.1) | 39 (18.1) | 43 (20.0) |
| ii. | Marketing strategies focused on customer satisfaction and loyalty can contribute to improved customer retention for ABC. | 74 (34.4) | 52 (24.2) | 13 (6.0) | 35 (16.3) | 41 (19.1) |
| iii. | Successful transport marketing strategies can lead to increased ticket sales and bookings, resulting in revenue growth for ABC. | 96 (44.7) | 43 (20.0) | 16 (7.4) | 39 (18.1) | 21 (9.8) |
| iv. | Marketing strategies play a crucial role in building and enhancing ABC's brand awareness and image. | 71 (33.0) | 77 (35.8) | 26 (12.1) | 22 (10.2) | 19 (8.8) |
| v. | Well-executed marketing strategies can give ABC a competitive advantage in the transport industry. | 68 (31.6) | 75 (34.9) | 22 (10.2) | 26 (12.1) | 24 (11.2) |
| vi | Transport marketing strategies can support ABC's expansion into new geographical areas or target markets. | 78 (35.8) | 62 (28.8) | 19(8.8) | 24(11.2) | 32(14.9) |

*Source: Data Analysis using SPSS version 22, 2023*

**Table 2. Model summary**

| Model | R | R Square | Adjusted R Square | Std. Error of the Estimate |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | .989[a] | .979 | .978 | .16999 |

*a. Predictors: (Constant), Increased Customer Acquisition, Improved Customer Retention, Revenue Growth, Enhanced Brand Awareness and Image, Competitive Advantage, Geographic Expansion and Market Penetration*

**Table 3. ANOVA[b]**

| Model | | Sum of Squares | df | Mean Square | F | Sig. |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | Regression | 277.971 | 6 | 46.328 | 1.6033 | .000[a] |
| | Residual | 6.010 | 208 | .029 | | |
| | Total | 283.981 | 214 | | | |

*a. Predictors: (Constant), Increased Customer Acquisition, Improved Customer Retention, Revenue Growth, Enhanced Brand Awareness and Image, Competitive Advantage, Geographic Expansion and Market Penetration. Dependent Variable: Transport Operation*

**Table 4. Coefficients[a]**

| Model | Unstandardized Coefficients | | Standardized Coefficients | t | Sig. |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | B | Std. Error | Beta | | |
| (Constant) | -.066 | .053 | | -1.262 | .208 |
| Increased Customer Acquisition (ICA) | -.047 | .017 | -.051 | -2.722 | .007 |
| Improved Customer Retention (ICR) | .011 | .020 | .011 | .561 | .576 |
| Revenue Growth (RA) | .850 | .032 | .811 | 26.881 | .000 |
| Enhanced Brand Awareness and Image (EBA) | -.617 | .069 | -.536 | -8.925 | .000 |
| Competitive Advantage (CA) | .207 | .035 | .207 | 5.908 | .000 |
| Geographic Expansion and Market Penetration (GEM) | .602 | .068 | .540 | 8.911 | .000 |

*a. Dependent Variable: Transport Operation*

as expressed in this case. Revenue Growth (B = 0.850, p = 0.000) is the most significant predictor at 0.05 level of significant, indicating how critical revenue momentum is to operational success. Further, Brand Awareness and Image (B = -0.617, p = 0.000) negatively affects transport operations at 0.05 of significance which may be indication of resource misallocation or other unaccounted problems. Operations are positively and significantly influenced by Competitive Advantage (B = 0.207, p = 0.000) and Geographic Expansion and Market Penetration (B = 0.602, p = 0.000), as supported by literature on competitive strategy (Dagnino, Picone & Ferrigno, 2021).

Thus, the hypothesis of the study that marketing strategies have no effect on transport operations was rejected. The implication of these findings is that transport companies in Nigeria must be very careful in prioritising and optimising their marketing strategies. Focal points should be revenue growth, geographic expansion, and competitive positioning, and brand image strategies should be reassessed to minimise inefficiencies. Strategic transport management research has been moving towards broader trends of effective marketing strategies that can significantly improve operational outcomes.

## 4. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The study shows that transport company's operational success is greatly influenced by effective transport marketing strategies, which help increase customer acquisition, enhance brand awareness, and improve revenue growth. The study shows that well-executed marketing not only helps to generate immediate sales but also facilitates long-term competitive advantages and potential expansion into new markets thereby showing the importance of marketing in the operational and strategic growth of transport services.

In light of these findings, the following recommendations are made:

- In light of these findings, the following recommendations are made:
- Transport companies should increase investment in online marketing Channels and expand them using online platforms to create its online presence and reach a wider customer base.

- The fact that content marketing has positive results means that transport companies should continue to create relevant and informative content that meets the needs and interests of the target audience to create loyalty and keep people engaged.
- Transport companies collaborating with influencers are effective ways to expand reach and credibility, as influenced endorsements that align with potential customers are authentic.
- Consistently transport companies should track current marketing trends, and adapt, and refine strategies, as needed, to stay responsive and competitive in the changing transport industry.

## 5. LIMITATION OF THE RESEARCH

Limitations of the study are acknowledged, in particular, with respect to generalizability. The findings therefore may not be generalisable to other transport firms or regions due to contextual difference in operations and market dynamics. Thus, this limit further emphasizes the need for broader study studies of multiple companies in more geographic areas to help widen the applicability of the conclusions, we will proceed with further study.

## DISCLAIMER (ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE)

Author(s) hereby declare that NO generative AI technologies such as Large Language Models (Chat GPT, COPILOT, etc.) and text-to-image generators have been used during the writing or editing of this manuscript.

## COMPETING INTERESTS

Authors have declared that no competing interests exist.

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