MARKET SEGMENTATION STRATEGY AND CUSTOMER SATISFACTION IN NIGERIAN DOMESTIC AIRLINE

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Abstract

The success or failure of any business organisation center on how best it can attract and retain sizeable number of customers, by ensuring the satisfaction of their needs and expectations, which puts enormous responsibility by way of marketing strategy on the organisation's decisions' makers. This calls for formulation and implementation of viable marketing strategy with primary focus on customers'satisfaction that would ensure the survival and sustainable growth of the firm. This paper investigates the effect of market segmentation strategy on customer satisfaction in selected domestic airline companies in Nigeria. Primary data were collected using questionnaire designed on a 5-point Likert scale, which was administered to 450 purposefully selected airlines' customers. This was used to capture and measure variables relating to market segmentation strategy dimensions and their relative influence on customer satisfaction. The data obtained were analysed and hypotheses tested using multiple regression and correlation analytical tools with the aid of SPSS. The results revealed that R^2=0.614; p-value <0.005 sig. value, which indicates that market segmentation strategy dimensions jointly accounted for 61.4% when determining customer satisfaction. The study concludes that market segmentation strategy as a whole contributed significantly to customer satisfaction and that customer satisfaction significantly influences customer repurchase decision in the Nigerian domestic airline. It was recommended that companies operating in the Nigerian domestic airline should embrace appropriate segmentation strategy that allow them to be more effective than competitors in creating, delivering, and communicating superior customer value to their chosen target markets.

Keywords: Customer satisfaction, Repurchase intention, Segmentation strategies, Domestic airlines

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Introduction

During tumultuous 1970s and early part of 1980s, marketing was a comparatively unimportant activity among airline companies around the world due to stringent industry regulation and the fact that the industry was operating in a sellers' market conditions around the globe. Specifically, protected by government ownership and regulation, airlines were protected and safe from serious competitive effects of the marketplace. Thus, in most cases, price competition was nonexistent, promotional efforts were limited, product service quality was uneven, and little had been done to develop efficient distribution systems through "hub and spoke" networks (Ruowei 2017; Essays UK, 2018). In a market which was dominated by airline companies themselves, the slogan was "if you offer airline services from one place or destination to another, passengers will definitely patronise them. There is sizeable subjective evidence that an airline with a dominant share of the traffic at an airport has a competitive advantage on routes that include that airport. In this approach, consumer's needs and wants, their expectations did not have any meaning.

However, in recent years, there have been a number of changes in global airlines industry which have had profound effects on the competition trend of this very volatile sector of the economy in most countries of the world. Given the rise in the effect of globalisation; technological advancements; increasing cost of operations as a result of increased tariff, maintenance costs, taxes and other regulatory charges; frequent demand for increase in minimum labour wages; reliance on poor and inadequate airport infrastructural facilities; coupled with high cost of exchange rate in relation to import (Partick, Michael, Okereke, & Momoh, 2016), airline companies operating in the Nigeria business environment have to compete in a unpredictable business environment. The industry in Nigeria actually experienced a landmark event in 1985 when entry into the domestic airline sector and air fares was formally deregulated (Daramola & Fagbemi, 2019).

These fundamental changes have further led the way to transformation of the airline industry and the manner in which companies carrying out business at both the domestic and international level conduct their business operations. In this brisk reorganisation process, airline companies had to adapt their marketing and business strategies. Invariably, the emergence of consumer-oriented marketing approach becomes evidenced factor for airline companies to be successful in the midst of competition. The essence of the marketing strategy basically incorporates customer satisfaction as the core concept of almost all marketing efforts. In this wise, continuous and positive relationship between airline companies and their customers has become the watchword and airline industry standard.

Moreover, as a service sector, the airline industry has been perceived as a sector which is open to frequent changes, and one which has a high flexibility of customers' demand, severe uncertainty in its business environment and intense competition (Taşgit, 2008). However, while demand for the airline services changes with population, consumers have continued to seek greater quality, variety, and service such that meet their expectations. Response to these changes requires companies operating in the industry to have appropriate marketing strategy, so as to ensure they stay afloat of competition. As consumers seek for greater quality of services, these demands must be strategically managed by companies offering them. Thus, it is imperative for the airline companies to seek a way to ensure that their services meet consumers' expectations and demands, in

order to ensure they retain their current customers and attract sizeable number of prospective ones.

It is therefore imperative for airline companies to understand that coping with competition in the current business environment require their marketing efforts to be driven towards meeting consumers' needs and to ensuring customer's patronage, coupled with strategising on how to ultimately satisfy those customers in order to ensure their continuous patronage. The implication of the foregoing is that companies operating in the airline industry have to contend with certain issues so as to remain relevance in the industry. Chief among those issues is ensuring that customers are well satisfied by meeting customer's expectations, so as to be assured of their continuous patronage. An unsatisfied customer is the main reason why many airlines lose passengers (Suleiman, 2012).

Furthermore, companies operating in the airline industry need to be ultimately concern with issues relating to appropriate identification of customer needs and market potential in the various sectors of the industry; the formulation of marketing policies and programs objectives that could guide the choice of operational marketing methods to be used to gain considerable market share; how to divide the market in line with interpretation of consumer demands, so as to make decisions on the range and type of services to be provided and prices to be charged; how to gain control of customer demands and requirements; and, evaluating and monitoring of consumer satisfaction to continually check on the extent to which marketing operations are meeting customer's needs and thereby ensuring customers' continuous patronage. This call for appropriate marketing strategy that could help capture the essence of the company's marketing effort, which is to secure market advantage in the industry. Thus, given the foregoing discourse, this study examined the effectiveness of market segmentation strategy in enhancing customers' satisfaction in selected airline companies in Nigeria.

Literature Review

Concept of Market Segmentation

With the world becoming a global village, and global markets becoming more interconnected, marketing has become a vital ingredient for the business success, exposure, and survival. In order to be successful in today's global market, being fuelled by advancement in technology and communication, firms must be able to think and act innovatively, must be willing to take advantages of current change and immediately adapt to the new ways of conducting business in the ever evolving business environment (Martin, 2011). It is important to understand the fact that it is almost impossible for a company to tackle the diverse tastes and preferences of the entire market by just introducing several products or even brands (Sule, 2015; Kotler & Keller, 2014).

Market segmentation is perceived as a consumer-oriented process, which can be applied to almost any type of market (Camilleri, 2018). In a developing country like Nigeria, with low income and high level of poverty, the need for effective marketing segmentation of the various sector's market is very essential if an organisation will achieve any success. This is essential as market segmentation can give a firm a market advantage, which is essential to its existence (Sule, 2015). It is argued that market segmentation is at the center of organisations' efforts to become customer driven; and that it is also the key to effective resource allocation and deployment (Yoram & David, 2007).

It is imperative to note that market could be segmented along consumer markets, business markets and international markets (Kotler & Keller, 2006). The focus of this study is limited to only consumer markets segmentation. This is because the study is limited in scope to cover airline companies in Nigeria.

In line with this, market segmentation is considered as an adaptive strategy, which refers to a process of grouping consumers from a particular market with similar needs, preferences, and lifestyles, who demonstrates similar purchasing patterns (Kotler & Keller, 2014). According to Hassan and Craft (2012), it involves understanding the individual needs of different groups of customers and grouping them for the target product benefits. It is a strategy that ensures that consumers are divided into various relative groups, and the market is divided to meet their needs. This implies that market segmentation involves the grouping of customers together with the aim of better satisfying their needs than the competitors, while maintaining economies of scale. This allows companies to approach customers with products or services addressing their precise needs, and meeting the preferences, while maintaining their competitive market edge.

In lieu of various definitions and perceptions, this study view market segmentation strategy as a process of systematically and strategically dividing an existing and or a potential market into distinct sub-sets of consumers, with common needs and characteristics, and strategically selecting one or more markets to target with the firm's distinct marketing mix. This is imperative because firms need to understand that they cannot appeal to all buyers in the market.

Dimensions to Market Segmentation Strategy

According to the most popular segmentation studies, there are four bases of segmenting consumer's market (Kotler & Armstrong, 2010; Kotler, Armstrong, Saunders, & Wong, 2002). As shown figure 1, they include geographic segmentation; demographic segmentation; psychographic segmentation; and behavioural segmentation.

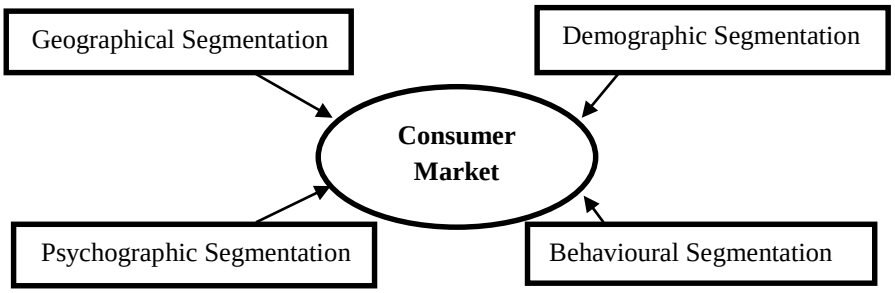

Figure 1: Segmentation Variables for Consumer Markets
Source: Kotler & Armstrong (2010)

Geographic Segmentation Strategy

Consumers' geographic location is usually the starting point of all market segmentation strategies. Mwenda and Elsy (2017) opined that geographical segmentation is one of the oldest ways to perform market segmentation. It is based on the belief that consumers who live in the same location may likely share related wants and needs, which could be different from the consumers who are living in other regions of the country (Martin, 2011). Geographical segmentation is made on the basis of location, such as by country, region, state, county, city, town terrain, size of metropolitan area, natural resources and population density (Camilleri, 2018). Invariably, the location of consumers would help companies operating in the Nigeria airline industry in planning their

marketing programs and activities. These geographic units may be nations, states, regions, areas of certain climatic conditions, urban and rural divide.

In Nigeria aviation industry for instance, Lagos, Abuja and Port-Harcourt were the nodes with the greatest shares of traffic. Kano, Kaduna, Enugu and Osubi had medium volumes of passenger traffic (NCAA, 2018). However, much of the movements recorded in Lagos pertain to corporate travellers in the middle and high income categories, Lagos houses much of this group in Nigeria given its status as a megacity. In Abuja, passengers are mostly top government and private sector workers, while Port-Harcourt travellers are mostly oil workers (NCAA, 2018; Daramola & Fagbemi, 2019)

Demographic Segmentation Strategy

Camilleri (2018) refers to demographic segmentation as the process of dividing the market into groups that are identifiable in terms of physical and factual data. Kotler and Armstrong (2003) refers to demographic segmentation as the division of a market into sub-groups on the basis of demographic variables such as age, gender, family size, family life cycle, income, occupation, education, religion, race, generation and nationality. Therefore, with these variables in mind, a company can then select which consumer it will be able to serve. This segmentation method is a common way of segmenting the customer markets, as the variables are relatively easy to measure and because the desires, preferences and usage rates are closely related to demographic variable (Shili, 2009; Camilleri, 2018; Mwenda & Elsy, 2017). Even if other basis of segmentation is used, a marketer must know and understand demographics to assess the size, reach and efficiency of the market.

Psychographic Segmentation Strategy

Psychographic segmentation is a marketing strategy of dividing a consumer market into sub-groups on the basis of psychographic variables such as self-values, self-concept, and lifestyle. This implies that members of a consumer market can be segmented according to psychographic variables such as lifestyles, personalities, social class, opinions, interests, perceptions, behaviors and attitudes. Rajiv (2009) had argued that demographic is no longer sufficient for effective market segmentation and that only psychographic factors are independently sufficient to segment today's complex market in which consumers have a different type of ideology. Thus, the firm needs to know their consumers personality, habits and behavior to efficiently and effectively connect with them and for the consumer to identify the organisation's products (Martin, 2011). Marketing managers have understood that to attract a specific group of targeted consumers, it is necessary to know how these customers think and what their values and attitudes are, as well as who they are in terms of the traditional demographic variables (Mwenda & Elsy, 2017).

Behavioral Segmentation Strategy

Behavioral segmentation is a marketing strategy of dividing consumer market into segments based on the consumers' behavioural tendency toward a particular product. It means differentiating the market on the basis of variables such as benefits sought by consumers, user status, usage rate, loyalty status, buyer readiness and attitude, which may affect individual consumer purchase behaviour. In this segmentation strategy, customers are divided into groups on the basis of their knowledge of, attitude toward, usage of, or response to a product or service (Shili, 2009). Therefore, a whole market can be segmented on the basis of user status, such as non-users, potential users, or first-time users (Kotler & Armstrong, 2005). The real deal here is to consider that some potential

customers will soon become real customers in the nearest future. Thus, airline markets can be segmented into light, medium or heavy air travelers/customers.

From the foregoing, it is obvious that airline companies need to make a strategic marketing choice to identify what part of the market is best suitable for their brands and competencies. Important criteria to put into consideration ranges from the fact that whether there are enough consumers in the segment in order for the company to be able to make profit; whether or not the purchasing behavior of the consumer in the segment is suitable for the brands; and whether or not the competition from other companies is high.

Concept of Customer Satisfaction

Generally, flipping through the literature shows that customer satisfaction is a complex and dynamic concept which does not have a common definition and can be difficult to accurately measure (Ahmed, 2016; Ode, 2013; Anwar, Saeed, Hanif, Abbas, Hassan, et al., 2015). This is because customers are now highly informed and their demands and expectations are high (Darko, Terkper, Novixoxo, & Anning, 2018; Otaigbe & Beehner, 2019). The concept of customer satisfaction involves three psychological elements, including cognitive (thinking/evaluation), affective (emotional/feeling) and behavioural (Oghojafor & Adekoya, 2014). However, decisive reviews of literatures show an underlining consensus in the perspectives of scholars and practitioners, which posit that customer satisfaction, is the outcome of need fulfillment after a purchase experience. It is perceived as a purchase outcome, in which customers appraise benefits and costs with pre-determined consequences (Kotler, Keller, Brady, Goodman, & Hansen, 2009; 2013; Kotler, Armstrong, Agnihotri & Ehsan-ul-Haq, 2010).

Specifically, there are at least two different conceptualisations of customer satisfaction (Boulding, Kalra, Staelin & Zeithaml; Yi & La, 1993). The first one is transaction-specific perspective and the second one is cumulative (Anderson, Fornell & Lehman, 1994). While transaction-specific perspective provides specific diagnostic information about a particular product or service encounter (Lam, Venkatesh, Krishna & Bvsan, 2004), cumulative perspective is an overall evaluation based on the total purchase and consumption experiences with a product or service overtime (Anderson, et al., 1994).

This current study looks at customer satisfaction from the perspective of cumulative because it attempt to links customer satisfaction to other business exchange measures. Moreso, the cumulative perspective is considered to be more holistic and appropriate than transaction in explaining the effectiveness of marketing strategies (Kotler & Amstrong, 2005; Wang & Lo, 2003) that could facilitate market advantage, particularly in a dynamic and competitive market environment.

Therefore, for the airline companies, passenger satisfaction arises when a company provides passengers with benefits that exceed passengers' expectations and this is considered value-added. If customers are satisfied with the product or service, they will fly the airline or patronise its products more, and do so more often. Thus, passengers' satisfaction must be an essential goal for every airline providing passenger's services (Archana &Subha, 2012). Conversely, if passengers are not satisfied, due to the negative experience, they will reconsider their buying decision for further flights and will probably switch to another airline. Thus, dissatisfied customers frequently change to competitors' products and may talk bad about the company's product to other existing and potential customers (Mahapatra, Kumar & Chauhan, 2010; Ibojo, 2015; Sultan, et.al., 2019). Tarigan and Hatane (2019) state that customer dissatisfaction brings a number of risks, such as the decrease in the level of sales, boycotts or protests from consumer

organisations, government intervention, and the reaction of competitors and also the rise of new substitution products to the market.

Customer dissatisfaction has been clearly associated with complaining behavior (Kotler, Ang, Leong, & Tan, 1999). In this era of digital age and social media, dissatisfied customers are likely to quickly share and spread their experience with friends and relatives in social media (Vuong & Rajagopal, 2018). This could go a long way in damaging the airline company or its brand. Simply put, when customers are unhappy, business suffers (Darko et al, 2018). According to Davood et al (2014), customer satisfaction can be measured in different ways, like personal interview, telephone interview, questionnaire etc., but the best way theoretically is from customers. Stretching it further, Ahmed (2016) opined that customer satisfaction can be measure using three types of methods. These include observational methods (observational studies and experimental studies); database methods (analysis of track record of customer purchase behaviour and re-purchase history); and subjective methods (questionnaire and interviews). This study employed method of questionnaire in measuring customer satisfaction due to the infinite number of customer population and difficulty in accessing the database of companies used for the study.

Conceptual Model

This study is conceptualised on the basis of input-process-output in order to allow for effective coverage of the concepts underpinning the study. Thus, the relationship between the study's dependent and independent components is conceptualised using input-process-output parameters as represented in figure 2:

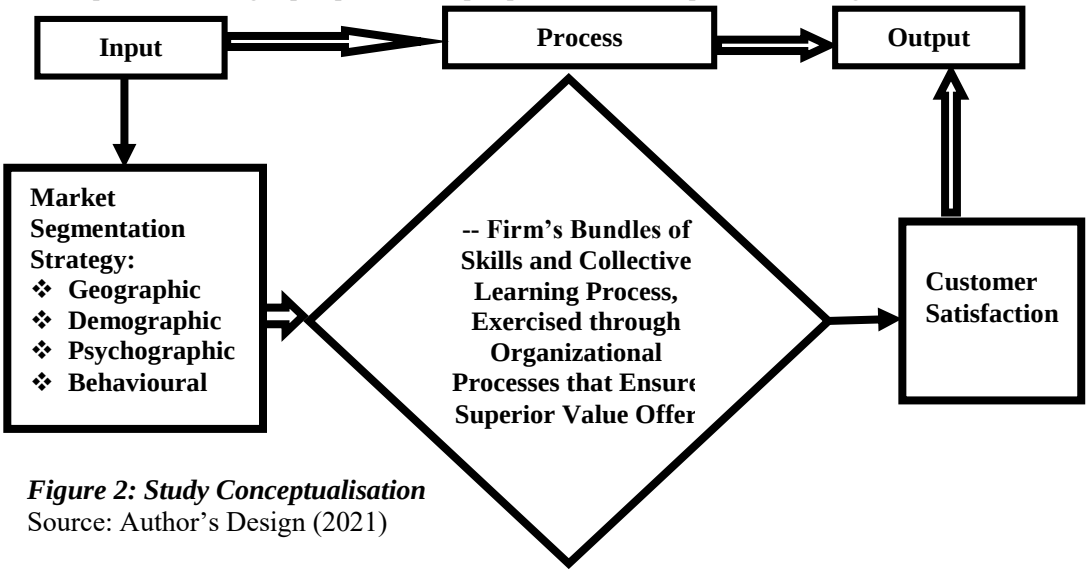

Figure 2: Study Conceptualisation
Source: Author's Design (2021)

Methodology

Cross sectional survey method was employed for the study, which was in line with the submission of Hair, Money, Samuel and Pages (2007); Cooper and Schindler (2011) that the method is appropriate for examining and assessing characteristics of a large population and that it employs the use data collection from a sample that correctly represents the population to which generalisation is to be made.

Population of the Study

Airlines in Nigeria, as in several places, are mostly passenger' carriers, hence, the focus of this study is on passenger traffic only. It has been reported that Lagos State,

precisely, Murtala Mohammed International Airport, is the busiest node with the greatest shares of traffic (NCAA, 2018). This was obvious as Lagos has the most passengers' travelling, being boosted by presence of middle and high income categories. Therefore, Murtala Mohammed International Airport was targeted as the base of this study. The population for this study consists of all passengers of the domestic airlines departing from Murtala Muhammed international airport terminal one and two, who are flying with any functional domestic airline to any destination in Nigeria. The selected airlines include Arik Air, Aero Contractors, First Nations Airways, Overland Airways, Air Peace, Dana Air, Medview Airline, Discovery Air, and Azman Air Services Limited. These were purposely selected because they fly regularly and always available. However, the exact population of these passengers could not be ascertained, hence, the population was considered as infinite (Krejcie & Morgan, 1970; Rahim, 2016).

Sample Size and Sampling Techniques

The study adopts a multistage sampling technique in the process of selection of its sample size. The first phase was to grouped flight schedules into three categories (i.e. morning, afternoon and evening flight schedules). Thereafter, traffic frequency was used to assign a proportional quota to the three flights schedules; that is, morning flights (40%), afternoon flights (35%), and evening flights (25%), so as to distribute the survey instrument to the respondents. This is because preliminary investigation by the researcher had shown that flight traffic is highest in the morning, followed by afternoon then evening, which justifies use of quota being used. In the second phase, a purposive sampling method was used to select respondents that can provide accurate information relevant to the study. The study purposefully excludes passengers of below the age of 18 years, because they were not considered matured enough to express their views openly. Lastly, convenience sampling was used to distribute the questionnaire to passengers of domestic flights that are accessible at the departure lounge of the airport.

A targeted sample of 450 domestic flight passengers at the departure lounge of the selected airlines was sampled (representing 50 respondents for each of the nine respective airlines). However, the passengers must have sufficient flight experience–i.e., up to three flight trips (within July, 2020 to July 2021 period). Fifty passengers per airline, regardless of varying customer traffic was selected to obtain a balanced sample selection, insofar as a sample based on customer traffic could caused bias or shift the estimate from the real value. More importantly, the study is interested in the aggregate view (industry level) as against company/firm's level analysis (Musa, 2016; Rahim, 2016).

Method of Data Collection

A self–administered questionnaire strategy also called drop off and pick procedure was employed as instrument for collecting primary data for the study. The questionnaire was distributed before flight departure. However, possible in-flight issues were incorporated in the responsiveness of the questionnaire. It has been demonstrated that flight passengers do not differentiate between in-flight or ground services, but view the air travel experience as a whole (Ekaterina, 2012; Rahim, 2016). Moreover, four hundred and fifty (450) copies of questionnaire were distributed to the passengers of the selected airlines. Likert Rating Scale of five points was employed for sampling, measuring and recording the respondents' opinions as expressed in the questionnaire. This enabled the researcher to rate the respondents' responses on a scale ranging from strongly agreed (5 point) to strongly disagree (1 point). Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill

(2000) asserted that Likert-style rating method of questionnaire design enables researcher to ask respondents on how they agree or disagree with a series of statements.

The responses to the questionnaire administered (appendix 1) depicts that out of a total of four hundred and fifty (450) copies of questionnaire administered to the respondents, three hundred and eighty two (382) copies representing approximately 85% were returned and considered suitable for the study. This implies that majority of the respondents positively responded to the questionnaire, making it relevant for the estimate.

Validity and Reliability Test

Cronbach's alpha was used to measure the reliability of the instrument because it is the most commonly used test of instrument's internal reliability (Bryman & Bell, 2007). Thus, Cronbach's Alpha was used to examine how well one item's score was internally consistent with composite scores from all other items that remain. The reported Cronbach's Alpha as shown in Table 1 indicated that the average of each variable was above the threshold level. The values include; customer satisfaction (0.783); customer repurchase intention (0.756); geographic segmentation strategy (0.728); demographic segmentation strategy (0.749); psychograph segmentation strategy (0.738); and behavioural segmentation strategy (0.776).

Table 1: Cronbach's Alpha for Reliability Statistics

Variables	Cronbach's Alpha	No of Items
Overall	0.781	18
Customer satisfaction	0.728	3
Customer repurchase intention	0.749	3
Geographic segmentation strategy	0.783	3
Demographic segmentation strategy	0.756	3
Psychographic segmentation strategy	0.738	3
Behavioural segmentation strategy	0.776	3

Source: Field Study, 2021

Thus, the instrument was subjected to both face and content validity, which was done through the help of the supervisor and two other senior lecturers in the field of management. Their observations, corrections and suggestions were incorporated into the final draft of the instrument.

Method of Data Analysis

Inferential statistical tools including multiple regression analysis was used in presenting and analysing the data collected, with the aid of IBM SPSS (Version 22.0). Multiple regressions was considered appropriate to test the hypotheses because it is a statistical analytical tool that indicates the direction and magnitude (the degree of variability changes in the level of dependent variable as a result of the independent variable) of the effect of one variable (independent) on another variable (dependent variable).

Model Specification

The model is mathematically expressed as:

$CusSat = ß_0+ß_1GeoSegStr+ß_2\ DemSegStr+ß_3\ PsySegStr+ß_4\ BehSegStr+ε$

Where:

CusSat = Customer satisfaction (Dependent variable)

GeoSegSt r= Geographic segmentation strategy (Independent variable)

DemSegStr = Demographic segmentation strategy (Independent variable)
PsySegStr = Psychographic segmentation strategy (Independent variable)
BehSegStr = Behavioural segmentation strategy (Independent variable)
$ß_0$ = Intercept of the model.
$ß_1$ = Estimate of the parameter of the independent variable in the model of the slope.
ε = Error term.

Results and Discussion

Test of Hypothesis

This section analysed data from the field of study to test the hypotheses formulated for the study using multiple regression analysis with the aid of SPSS. The study uses four explanatory variables, i.e, geographic segmentation strategy (GeoSegStr), demographic segmentation strategy (DemSegStr), psychograph segmentation strategy (PsySegStr), behavioural segmentation strategy (BehSegStr) for the purpose of predicting both customer satisfaction and customer repurchase intention respectively.

$H_0$1*: Market segmentation strategy has no significant influence on customer satisfaction in the Nigeria airline companies.*

Table 2: Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.702[a]	.614	.612	.710

a. Predictors: (Constant), BehSegStr, GeoSegStr, DemSegStr, PsySegStr

Source: Author's Computation, 2021

The regression model shown in table 2 posits that market segmentation strategy dimensions could definitely predict customer satisfaction. The table depicts that the correlation coefficient (R-value) was 0.702 (70.2%) which signifies that market segmentation strategy dimensions' variables are strong, positive and jointly related to customer satisfaction as predicted in the model. Thus, the correlation coefficient (R) value of 0.702 (70.2%) posits a significant and strong relationship between customer satisfaction (dependent variable) and market segmentation strategy dimensions (independent variables). This implies that market segmentation strategy (independent variable) could explain customer satisfaction (dependent variable) up to 70.2%, while other variables not specified in the model were assumed to be constant.

The table further revealed the R^2 value to be 0.614 (61.4%), which posits that market segmentation strategy dimension (independent variable) metrics jointly accounted for 61.4% when determining customer satisfaction (dependent variable), while the remaining 38.6% was accounted for by the exogenous variable not considered by the model. Moreover, the adjusted R^2 value of 0.612 (61.2%) established that geographic segmentation strategy (GeoSegStr), demographic segmentation strategy (DemSegStr), psychographic segmentation strategy (PsySegStr), and behavioural segmentation strategy (BehSegStr) independently and actually contributed to variation in the level of customer satisfaction (CusSat).

Table 3: Coefficients[a]

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	T	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	3.803	.225		16.930	.000
	GeoSegStr	.448	.054	.342	8.364	.000
	DemSegStr	.166	.044	.162	3.802	.000
	PsySegStr	.281	.058	.279	4.842	.000
	BehSegStr	.437	.061	.433	7.152	.000

a. Dependent Variable: CusSat (Customer satisfaction)

Source: Author's Computation, 2021

The estimated equation of the model was expressed as $CusSat=ß_0+ß_1GeoSegStr+ß_2\ DemSegStr+ß_3\ PsySegStr+ß_4\ BehSegStr+ε$. As displayed in table 3, the coefficient values for all the metrics of market segmentation strategy dimension positively and significantly influence customer satisfaction. The table revealed that customer satisfaction (CusSat) would be equal to 3.803 when all other variables remain unchanged. It would however increase by 0.448, 0.166, 0.281, and 0.437 respectively when there is a unit increase in geographic segmentation strategy (GeoSegStr), demographic segmentation strategy (DemSegStr), psychograph segmentation strategy (PsySegStr), and behavioural segmentation strategy (BehSegStr) respectively, while other variables remain constant.

Furthermore, as depicted in the table, the standardized beta coefficient in respect to geographic segmentation strategy (GeoSegStr) was 0.342 with t-test value of 8.364 at 5% level of significance. This established that geographic segmentation strategy (GeoSegStr) was a positive predictor of customer satisfaction (CusSat). The standardized beta coefficient in respect of demographic segmentation strategy (DemSegStr) was 0.162, with t-test value of 3.802 at 5% level of significance. This implied that demographic segmentation strategy (DemSegStr) was significantly relevant in predicting customer satisfaction (CusSat). The standardized beta coefficient in respect to psychographic segmentation strategy (PsySegStr) was 0.279, with t-test value of 4.842 at 5% level of significance and this posits that psychographic segmentation strategy (PsySegStr) was significantly pertinent in predicting customer satisfaction (CusSat). The standardized beta coefficient in respect to behavioural segmentation strategy (BehSegStr) was 0.433, with t-test value of 7.152 at 5% level of significance. This established that behavioural segmentation strategy (BehSegStr) was significantly important in predicting customer satisfaction (CusSat).

The findings show that the metric values for the market segmentation strategy dimension positively and significantly influence customer satisfaction in the selected airline companies in Nigeria. This therefore led to the rejection of the null hypothesis and acceptance of the alternative hypothesis which established that market segmentation strategy has significant effect on consumer satisfaction. The result is in congruent with the assertion of Camilleri (2018) that market segmentation is at the center of organisations' efforts to become customer driven and it is the major determinant in facilitating process of satisfying customers by ensuring effective resource allocation. Imperatively, it was found that behavioural segmentation strategy (BehSegStr) depicts highest positive effect on customer satisfaction; this was followed by geographic segmentation strategy (GeoSegStr), then by psychographic segmentation strategy

(PsySegStr), while demographic segmentation strategy (DemSegStr) contributed the least to variation in customer stratification.

Conclusion and Recommendations

Customer satisfaction is a critical issue that requires constant attention in order for organisations to achieve stated organisational goals. Based on the findings of this study, it is concluded that market segmentation strategy as a whole contributed significantly to customer satisfaction and could be used as instrument of influencing customer re-purchasing decision respectively. Thus, effective and efficient application of the market segmentation strategy dimensions measured, including geographical, demographic, psychographic and behavioural segmentation strategy would therefore enable airline companies in Nigeria to build and sustain strong customer satisfaction. However, geographical and psychographic segmentation strategy, in line with the findings of other studies in the extant literature, is considered more significant than other segmentation strategies in determining customer satisfaction in the Nigeria airline industry. This posits that organisations in the Nigerian airline industry must strategically promote geographical and psychographic segmentation strategy that is appealing to the current and potential buyers, so as to turn them into repeat buyers.

The following recommendations were made on the basis of the aforementioned conclusion:

i. The companies in the Nigerian airline industry should embrace appropriate segmentation strategy that allows them to be more effective than competitors in creating, delivering, and communicating superior customer value to their chosen target markets. This is because the four segmentation strategy dimensions measured in the study were found to be significant in determining customer satisfaction.
ii. As the findings established that geographical and psychographic segmentation strategy contribute the highest value in determining customer satisfaction and influencing customer repurchase decision respectively, there is need therefore for the organisations to concentrate more resources and efforts on improving its brand value in relation to this marketing strategy so as to established solid relationship between their respective brands and customers.

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