

# The Impact of Structure on Strategy Implementation among Telecommunication Firms in Nigeria

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## Abstract

This study investigated the impact of structure on strategy implementation among telecommunication firms in Nigeria. Four hypotheses were formulated and tested to determine if there are relationships among selected dimensions of structure (centralization and specialization) and measures of strategy implementation (budgetary program implementation and resource control implementation). The Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient was used to test the relationship via SPSS version 21. The results showed that centralization has insignificant positive correlation with budgetary program implementation and resource control implementation, ( $r = .117$  and  $.111$ ). Analyses also revealed that specialization has positive and significant relationships with the dimensions of strategy implementation with ( $r = .733$  and  $.764$ ). It was concluded that Centralized structure leads to slow pace of strategy implementation while Specialization structure enhances strategy implementation of the telecommunication firms. It was suggested that managers of telecommunication firms should encourage their employees to specialize on their jobs for an effective and efficient strategy implementation. Management were advice to adopt a decentralized structure in order to facilitate faster decision making. Furthermore, it was suggested that a similar study should be done to know the moderating role of leadership styles, and training and development.

**Keywords:** structure; strategy implementation; centralization; specialization; budgetary program implementation; resource control implementation.

## 1.1 INTRODUCTION

Strategy implementation is a major role performed by managers and it is a key determinant of organization success (Aaltonen & Ikävalko, 2002; Beer & Eisenstat, 2000). Strategy implementation creates a link between strategy formulation and expected outcomes. It has been suggested that the successful execution of organizational strategies could boost organizational performance and reduce cost, while the failure to effectively implement strategies may lead to unanticipated loss in the organizations' performance (Brown, 2005; Kennedy, Goolsby, and Arnould 2003).

Organizational structure contributes significantly to the implementation of strategies as it creates a clear understanding of the processes needed to achieve formulated organizational strategies. This inevitable role of structure in the successful implementation of organizational strategies has been clearly stated by notable scholars (e.g. Cespedes, 1995; Webster, 1997). Webster (1997) further opines that the proper organizing of activities in an organization reduces the challenges managers have to confront during the process of implementing strategies in the face of turbulent global operating environment.

Several empirical studies have been conducted on the relationship between structure and strategy implementation (e.g., Wheelen & Hunger, 2006; Brickley, Smith, Zimmerman, & Willett, 2002; David, 2001; Daft, 2001; Lewis, Goodman & Fandt, 2001). David (2001) emphasizes that a well defined structure is fundamental in the implementation of organizational strategies. Also, Lewis, Goodman and Fandt (2004) described organizational structure as an authority which controls every other aspects of organizational life, including implementation of strategies and achievement of the overall organizational objectives. Meanwhile, Wheelen and Hunger (2006) opine that organizational structure plays an influential and strategic role in the successful implementation of organizational strategies. While, Daft (2001) in his book on organization theory and design, submits that the successful alignment of the dimensions of structure will help in the design and implementation of strategies.

Despite the fact that management literature is inundated with studies on the relationship between these two concepts, it is however noted that most of these studies were conducted in western countries (e.g. Wheelen & Hunger, 2006; Brickley, et al, 2002; Chandler, 1962). The impact of structure on strategy implementation in the Nigerian business settings has not been fully explored, though there exist few studies on these concepts in Nigeria (e.g. Alamutu, Hotepo, Oyeobu & Nwatulegwu, 2012; Oyedijo, 2012). However, there seems to be very little or nothing done on the impact of strategy implementation on the telecommunication sector. Therefore a comprehensive study that will explore the possible impact of structure on strategy implementation in the Nigerian business environment is urgent. This informed the need for this study. Therefore the study will fill this observable gap in literature by empirically examining the effect structure has on strategy implementation among telecommunication firms in Nigeria.

## 1.2 Statement of the Problem

The Nigerian telecommunication industry is an important and strategic sector of the economy. Almost every other facet of the Nigerian economy depends on the telecom industry for its communication needs. The sector is also a source of employment for so many young Nigerians and foreigners alike. Despite the avalanche of opportunities present in the sector and subsequent government and private sector investment in the industry, it has continuously failed to perform to its full capacity (Alamutu, Hotepo, Oyeobu & Nwatulegwu, 2012).

Though, there seem to be significant improvement in the quality of services rendered by telecommunication firms in the country with the introduction of several products like mobile banking, e-transfer of airtime and data, share and sell, online customer service platforms, etc, however, more improvement is still needed, as there still abound a lot of complains by subscribers who feel undone by the rate of drop calls, poor network quality, lackadaisical attitude of customer service representatives, unsolicited messages and most times network congestion (Alamutu, et al, 2012; Oyedijo, 2012). Recently the news of the Nigerian Communication Commission placing a big fine on some of the telecommunication firms in the country was all over the media. This problem of poor services may have been as a result of lack of proper strategy implementation among the telecommunication firms in the country.

Several studies have shown that most organizations fail in the realization of their formulated strategies (Hill & Cuthbertson, 2011; Aaltonen & Ikävalko, 2002; Mintzberg & Waters, 1985). Cater and Pucko (2010), in their study on the factors affecting the successful implementation of strategies among Slovenian businesses, succinctly put it that only 14% of the businesses successfully implement their formulated strategies, despite over 80% of them having the right strategies applicable to their environment. While, Raps (2004) opined that only 10% - 30% of formulated strategies can possibly be implemented. Similarly, Herbiniak (2006) submits that, although, formulation of strategies seems to be difficult, implementing it and getting the desired results is more difficult.

Having observed and considered the poor level of strategy implementation among telecommunication firms in the country and the subsequent poor services rendered by them which has led to so many complains by subscribers. It is therefore expedient to examine the possible causes and proffer solutions to these problems. This study is therefore set to proffer needed remedy to these problems by exploring how structure may help enhance strategy implementation among telecommunication firms in Nigeria. The following specific objectives are therefore developed for the study:

1. To find out if a relationship exists between centralization structure and budgetary program implementation among the telecom firms.
2. To find out if a relationship exists between centralization structure and resource control implementation among the telecom firms.
3. To find out if a relationship exists between specialization structure and budgetary program implementation among the telecom firms.
4. To find out if a relationship exists between specialization structure and resource control implementation among the telecom firms.

## 2. REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

### 2.1 Organizational Structure

Organizational structure as a management concept came into prominence in the 1960s, as a consequence of Chandler's thesis in 1962 on strategy and structure. This, coupled with the works of other contemporary scholars (e.g. Porter and Lawler, 1965; Hage and Aiken, 1967), brought the concept of organizational structure to the fore in management literature and gatherings. In its early development, organizational structure was conceptualized based on the firm's products or functions being performed (Oliveira & Takahashi, 2012).

There have been several definitions of organizational structure by notable scholars amongst which include; Goldhaber, et al. (1984), who defined organizational structure as "the network of relationships and roles existing throughout the organization". Similarly, Thompson (1965) defined organizational structure as "the organization's internal pattern of relationships, authority, and communication". Organizational structure was also viewed as the manner responsibility and power are given and shared within an organization, and how work should be done by organizational members (Teixeira, Koufteros & Peng, 2012; Germain, 1996; Gerwin & Kolodny, 1992; Ruckert, Walker, & Roering, 1985; Walton, 1985; Dewar & Werbel, 1979; Blau, 1970). In the same vein, Ibrahim, et al (2012) refers to organizational structure as "the way jobs are divided, where decisions are made and how work roles are coordinated". Agbim (2013) gave a similar definition of organizational structure as "a framework of roles, responsibilities, authority and communication relationships that are deliberately designed to accomplish an organization's tasks and achieve its objectives".

From the above definitions organizational structure can be said to revolve around the distribution of responsibilities among organizational members, and how decisions relating to the accomplishment of the shared responsibilities should be taken, and from whom reports should be directed and necessary evaluations made.

Therefore the most important role of organizational structure is to enhance the productivity and performance of members via the implementation of formulated strategies.

Organizational structure can be categorized into centralization, flatness, management specialization and employees' specialization (Teixeira, Koufteros and Peng, 2012). It could also be dimensionalized into centralization, formalization and specialization (Basol & Dogerlioglu, 2014; Olson, Slater & Hult, 2005). Ibrahim, et al, (2012) categorized organizational structure into formality structure and specialty structure. Others such as Johari, Yahya and Omar (2011) dimensionalized structure into "Decision-making; Hierarchy of authority; Job codification and Rule observation". However, in this study, two dimensions (Centralization and Specialization) were chosen for analyses as they were deemed appropriate for the industry being studied. These will be tested against the measures of strategy implementation to ascertain the impact they may have on the strategy implementation process of the telecom firms in Nigeria.

### **Centralization**

Centralization is the organizational structure which allows decisions to be taken at the top managerial level and instructions passed down the hierarchy while feedbacks are given from lower cadre of the hierarchy to the top (Daft, 1995; Doll & Vonderembse, 1991; Germain, 1996). Centralization structure was said to lead to less participation of non - managerial employees in the decision making process, as decisions are taken at the top level and instruction passed to the employees to carry out (Daft, 1995). Centralization was also defined by Teixeira, Koufteros and Peng, (2012) as "locus of authority and decision-making in the organization". The advantage of centralization structure is that it allows the top management to assume total control of the organization and decision takings can be monitored. While its disadvantage is in the fact that decision making may be slower due to its bureaucratic nature and may lead to loss of confidence on the part of the employees, since they are not allowed to exercise their creativity and imagination on the job.

### **Specialization**

Specialization structure, also referred to as functional structure, is the demarcation of an organization according to functions performed by the employees (Teixeira, Koufteros and Peng, 2012). According to Mintzberg (1989), specialization can be defined as "the degree of dividing organizational assignments into smaller pieces of work, and employees are held responsible for only one or a small number of these tiny tasks". This will enhance the ability of a specific employee or group of employees to acquire expertise on a particular job and be held accountable for the success or failure of such tasks (Basol and Dogerlioglu, 2014; Grant, 1996). Willem and Buelens, (2009) submit that specialization can be extended to include "knowledge complexity, unit differences, interdependency and different specialties found in an organization". While specialization structure has positive effects on organization success, it also has its negative effects or disadvantages. Chief among the disadvantages is the failure of a particular employee or specialist to turn up for duty which may lead to break down in strategy implementation and the overall performance of the organization.

## **2.2 Strategy Implementation**

Strategy implementation has been defined as a process of setting goals and policies into specific actions in the short run (Ibrahim, et al, 2012; Li Chen, 2005). It was understood to mean the execution of formulated strategies through the effecting of decisions taken (Rutherford and Walker, 2006; Omer, Ekrem and Glaiser, 2006; Li Chen, 2005). Whereas, Aladwani (2001) opines that strategy implementation is the transformation of plans into action, Ibrahim, et al, (2012) asserted that it is the process of "running the plans that have been formulated". Strategy implementation can be said to be the end product of strategy formulation.

Strategy implementation involves the introduction and activation of the formulated strategy into an organization. Business managers take long period to develop and formulate strategies that are best suited for their organizations through the process of evaluating and selecting the best options available to them before arriving at the stage of implementing those strategies. Implementation of strategies take a lot of will power from the management as there will always be resistance (Munyoroku, 2012). Therefore, at this stage the management must be ready to confront, engage resisters and enforce the formulated strategies (Beer and Eisenstat, 2000). However, caution must be taken to avoid undue confrontation between management and employees, so that it will not lead to overheating the system. Meanwhile, Latif, et al (2014) stated that some of the factors inducing the proper implementation of strategies include: Lack of accountability, inadequate instructions to employees, culture, and power and influence.

Succinctly put, strategy implementation is the process of changing the organizational design into concrete lines of action or activities (Li Chen, 2005; Dyson, 2004). In a similar submission, Wheelen and Hunger (2006) opine that strategy implementation is the putting of formulated strategy into concrete actions.

Strategy implementation has been dimensionalized into budgetary program implementation, resource control implementation and

### **Budgetary Program Implementation**

Budgetary program implementation has to do with the setting of control measures to ensure the total implementation of the financial strategies of the organization. It involves the setting up of measures such as strategic surveillance, special alert control (Islam and Khourshed, 2013). At the stage of budgetary program implementation several controlling methods which help in the implementation of the organizational financial plans are used to ensure that the organization attains its stated goals and objectives. Also the financial plan is monitored to make sure that the plan is on track. Finally, the results are compared with the management expectations.

### **Resource Control Implementation**

The basis of resource control implementation is concerned with the coordination of organizational goals, tasks, resources and controlling all assets to make sure they function effectively (Shrivastava and Grant, 1985). However, in this study resource control implementation is defined as the organizational strategy concerned with the allocation of responsibilities, finances, and materials to the employees and monitoring to ensure the total implementation of stated goals. It enhances the functioning of all systems in the organization. Resource control implementation is often associated with goal setting in many organizations (Johnson & Scholes 1999; Shrivastava and Grant, 1985).

### **2.3 Structure and Strategy Implementation**

Several studies have been conducted on the relationship between structure and strategy implementation. Contemporary scholars such as Chandler (1962), Porter and Lawler (1965), and Hage and Aiken (1967) were reported to be the first set of scholars to study the relationship between the two concepts (Munyoroku, 2006; Tata & Prasad, 2004). However, Chandler was the first to study these two concepts together in his thesis on structure and strategy in 1962. In his study, Chandler found that organizational structure has a positive impact on the ability of the organization to implement its strategies successfully.

Recently, management scholars have continued to explore this relationship (e.g. Wheelen & Hunger, 2006; Munyoroku, 2006; Tata & Prasad, 2004; Brickley, Smith, Zimmerman, & Willett, 2002; Lewis, Goodman & Fandt 2001; Okumus, 2001). Wheelen and Hunger (2006) in their book on strategic management and business policy, resolved that “organizational structure plays an important role in increasing the consistency of results of strategy implementation”. Similarly, David (2001) opines that a good and well defined structure is essential if an organization wants to manage and implement its strategies. A similar view was presented by Tata and Prasad (2004) in their study on the relationship between team self management, the structure and team effectiveness which they found that an excellent structure is a requirement for any business which hopes to achieve full implementation of its strategies. In line with this, Lewis, Goodman and Fandt (2001) concluded that a good structure leads to the achievement of results. Also, Pullan (2000) submits that for a structure to be considered as good, it must have a positive and supportive influence on organization’s strategy.

Some management scholars have also studied the moderating effects of other variables on structure and strategy implementation. Moderating variables such as performance (Ibrahim, et al, 2012); manufacturing performance (Teixeira, et al, 2012); business process (Olson, Slayer and Hult, 2005) and several others have been studied. Others have also studied either structure or strategy implementation with other concepts in management. For example, Heracleous (2000) studied strategy implementation and organizational development; Grundy (1998) strategy implementation and project management; Ahmadi, et al (2012) strategy implementation and organizational culture; Agbim (2013) organizational structure and leadership.

Having reviewed several articles on the relationship between structure and strategy implementation, it was found out that there exists a positive relationship between the two constructs. However, there was a need to carry out a separate study to know if there is a relationship between the two variables in the Nigerian business environment, specifically in the telecommunication sector. Therefore, the following hypotheses were developed for this purpose:

- H0<sub>1</sub>: Centralization structure has no significant impact on budgetary program implementation.
- H0<sub>2</sub>: Centralization structure has no significant impact on resource control implementation.
- H0<sub>3</sub>: Specialization structure has no significant impact on budgetary program implementation.
- H0<sub>4</sub>: Specialization structure has no significant impact on resource control implementation.

## **3. METHODOLOGY**

### **Design**

The study took both explorative and descriptive nature. It was an explorative study since it studied the relationship between two variables (structure and strategy implementation), and also involves the testing of the effect of structure on strategy implementation (Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill, 2011; Hair, Babin, Money and Samouel, 2003). The study also took a descriptive nature since it made use of a structured questionnaire in

collecting data from the respondents (Creswell, 2009; Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill, 2003). This study adopted a survey research design. Specifically, a cross sectional survey design was used since the study involved the collection of data from a sampled population at different locations (Creswell, 2009; Tharenou, Donohue and Cooper, 2007).

### Sample and Data Collection

The population of this study consisted of all the employees of mobile phone operators in Nigeria. Information from the website of the Nigerian Communication Commission ([www.ncc.gov.ng](http://www.ncc.gov.ng)) indicates that there are five (5) mobile phone operators in the country, with the latest addition being ntel Nig. Ltd. Four of these operators have active offices in Port Harcourt and they constitute the accessible population. For easy accessibility, the researchers engaged the management, supervisors and customer service attendants of the branches of these firms that have the earliest presence in the city. The accessible population consisted of 139 employees. The Krejcie and Morgan (1970) table was used to determine a sample size of 102. A structured questionnaire was sent to the respondents, out of which 97 copies were returned, representing 95% response rate. However, 7 copies were not used utilized to inconsistent and incomplete information. Ninety (90) copies of the questionnaire were therefore used for analyses.

### Measures of Variables

All the variables were measured on a five-point Likert scale. The scale was anchored at both ends such that 5 = strongly agree and 1 = strongly disagree. Structure was dimensionalized using centralization and specialization. The scale measuring centralization consisted of five items (e.g. “My dealings with this company are subject to a lot of rules and procedures stating how various aspects of my job are to be done”, “I have to ask company reps before I do almost anything in my business”), which were adapted and modified from Ferrell and Skinner (1988). Specialization was measured using a four items scale (e.g. “Personnel in this firm we have very specific job responsibilities”, “employees have jobs that require special skills”). It was adapted and modified from the work of Doty, Glick, and Huber (1993).

Strategy implementation was measured using budgetary program implementation and resource control implementation. Budgetary program implementation scale consisted of five items (e.g. “The use of long and short-term capital”; “The use of assets for inventory purposes”). Resource control implementation was also measured using three items (e.g. “Control of input, process and output”; “allocating resources”). Both scale measuring budgetary program implementation and Resource control implementation were adapted from Ibrahim, et al (2012).

## 4. DATA ANALYSES AND RESULTS

### 4.1 Validity and Reliability of Instrument

The validity of the instrument adopted for this study was established through the review of several quantitative and qualitative articles to make sure that all facets of the constructs were covered. Also the scales were subjected to expert scrutiny, thereby satisfying content validity of the instrument (Cronbach & Meehl, 1955; Nunnally & Bernstein, 1994; Hayes, Richard & Kubany, 1995).

In the earlier study of Ibrahim, et al (2012) the instrument measuring strategy implementation reported good internal consistency for all the scales, with budgetary program implementation scale reporting a Cronbach Alpha value of .82 and resource control implementation scale reporting a Cronbach Alpha value of .83. Also, the instrument used in measuring structure showed good internal consistency (.72) for centralization in the earlier studies of Ferrell and Skinner (1988) and (.89) for specialization in Doty, Glick, and Huber (1993). However, in this study the instrument returned good internal consistency for all the scales, the Cronbach Alpha values are shown in table 4.1 below. All the values satisfied the minimum recommended yardstick of .60 for explorative studies and .70 for confirmatory studies (Nunnally, 1978; Robinson, Shaver, & Wrightsman, 1991; Muldoon et al., 1998; Rossi, 2009).

Table 4.1: Cronbach Alpha Values for the Constructs

| Constructs                       | Alpha Value |
|----------------------------------|-------------|
| <b>Structure</b>                 |             |
| Centralization                   | .754        |
| Specialization                   | .827        |
| <b>Strategy Implementation</b>   |             |
| Budgetary Program Implementation | .853        |
| Resource Control Implementation  | .880        |

### 4.2 Results

To test the four formulated hypotheses, regression analysis was used through SPSS version 21 and the results

obtained are shown in table 4.2.1 – 4.2.4 Regression analysis technique, specifically Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient was chosen after transforming the data to meet with the assumptions of normality and homogeneity of its variance (Pallant, 2013; Tabachnick & Fidell, 2001; Andrews, et al, 1981). The first and second hypotheses investigated the impact of centralization structure on budgetary program implementation and resource control implementation respectively. While the third and fourth hypotheses investigated the impact of specialization structure on budgetary program implementation and resource control implementation of the selected firms respectively.

H0<sub>1</sub>: Centralization structure has no significant impact on budgetary program implementation.

Table 4.2.1: The Relationship between Centralization and Budg. Program Implementation

|                                  |                     | Centralization | Budgetary Program Implementation |
|----------------------------------|---------------------|----------------|----------------------------------|
| Centralization                   | Pearson Correlation | 1              | .117                             |
|                                  | Sig. (2-tailed)     |                | .271                             |
|                                  | N                   | 90             | 90                               |
| Budgetary Program Implementation | Pearson Correlation | .117           | 1                                |
|                                  | Sig. (2-tailed)     | .271           |                                  |
|                                  | N                   | 90             | 90                               |

As earlier stated, the Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient statistical technique, a non-parametric technique was used in testing the relationship between centralization and budgetary program implementation. The output reveals that the two variables have a positive relationship, with ( $r = .117$ ,  $p$ -value = .271). However, it was not significant enough to reject the null hypothesis based on the thresholds prescribed by (Gravetter and Wallnau, 2013; Pallant, 2013; Cohen, 1988). Therefore the null hypothesis was accepted

H0<sub>2</sub>: Centralization structure has no significant impact on resource control implementation.

Table 4.2.2: The Relationship between Centralization and Res. Control Implementation

|                                 |                     | Centralization | Resource Control Implementation |
|---------------------------------|---------------------|----------------|---------------------------------|
| Centralization                  | Pearson Correlation | 1              | .111                            |
|                                 | Sig. (2-tailed)     |                | .296                            |
|                                 | N                   | 90             | 90                              |
| Resource Control Implementation | Pearson Correlation | .111           | 1                               |
|                                 | Sig. (2-tailed)     | .296           |                                 |
|                                 | N                   | 90             | 90                              |

The result showed a positive relationship between centralization and resource control implementation ( $r = .111$ ,  $p = .296$ ). As prescribed by (Gravetter and Wallnau, 2013; Pallant, 2013; Cohen, 1988) the relationship was not significant enough to reject the null hypothesis. It was therefore accepted that centralization does not significantly effect on resource control implementation.

H0<sub>3</sub>: Specialization structure has no significant impact on budgetary program implementation.

Table 4.2.3: The Relationship between Specialization and Budg. Program Implementation

|                                  |                     | Specialization | Budgetary Program Implementation |
|----------------------------------|---------------------|----------------|----------------------------------|
| Specialization                   | Pearson Correlation | 1              | .733**                           |
|                                  | Sig. (2-tailed)     |                | .000                             |
|                                  | N                   | 90             | 90                               |
| Budgetary Program Implementation | Pearson Correlation | .733**         | 1                                |
|                                  | Sig. (2-tailed)     | .000           |                                  |
|                                  | N                   | 90             | 90                               |

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

The result revealed a positive and significant relationship between the two variables with ( $r = .733$  and  $p = .000$ ). This was above the .3 acceptable thresholds for rejecting null hypothesis by (Cohen, 1988). Therefore, the null hypothesis that there is no significant relationship between specialization and budgetary program implementation was rejected, it alternative was accepted.

H0<sub>4</sub>: Specialization structure has no significant impact on resource control implementation.

Table 4.2.4: Relationship between Specialization and Res. Control Implementation

|                                 |                     | Specialization | Resource Control Implementation |
|---------------------------------|---------------------|----------------|---------------------------------|
| Specialization                  | Pearson Correlation | 1              | .764**                          |
|                                 | Sig. (2-tailed)     |                | .000                            |
|                                 | N                   | 90             | 90                              |
| Resource Control Implementation | Pearson Correlation | .764**         | 1                               |
|                                 | Sig. (2-tailed)     | .000           |                                 |
|                                 | N                   | 90             | 90                              |

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

The result also revealed that specialization and resource control implementation have a positive relationship, with ( $r = .764$ ,  $p = .000$ ). As in hypothesis three, the null hypothesis was rejected and its alternative accepted.

## 5.1 DISCUSSIONS AND CONCLUSION

The purpose of the study was to empirically analyze the impact of structure on strategy implementation among telecommunication firms in Nigeria. The relationship between structure and strategy was first studied by Chandler (1962). His study revealed that organizational structure has a positive and significant impact on the ability of organizations to implement its strategies successfully. The poor services rendered by telecom firms in the country and subsequent complaints by customers gave rise to this study. The relationship between the dimensions of structure (centralization and specialization) and the measures of strategy implementation (budgetary program implementation and resource control implementation) was studied.

According to the results obtained, tests on the first and second hypotheses revealed that centralization has a positive relationship with the dimensions of strategy implementation (budgetary program implementation and resource control implementation), though the relationships were not significant enough to reject the null hypotheses. This may be as result of the bureaucratic bottleneck associated with centralized structures. As opined by Souitaris (2001) centralized structure may result to a reduction in the ability to provide innovative answers to problems and limit communication among departments which may hinder opinion sharing among the different departments. Furthermore, Atieno and Juma (2015) submitted that centralized structure vest too much demand on the top-managers, thereby slowing the decision-making process and making the firm to depend totally on the capabilities of the top-managers. On the other hand, Ferrell and Skinner (1988) argue that decentralized firms ascribe more authority to employees at the lower echelon which leads to a feeling of autonomy. O'Toole and Meier (2004) conclude that the degree of centralization or decentralization of decision making in any organization influences the firm's policies and resource allocation criteria.

Hypotheses three and four, explore the relationship between specialization structure and the measures of strategy implementation (budgetary program implementation and resource control implementation). The results show that there exist positive and significant relationships between specialization structure and the measures of strategy implementation. The findings may be explained by the fact that specialization leads to faster decision making (Atieno and Juma, 2015; Ibrahim, et al, 2012).

These findings were in harmony with Basol and Dogerlioglu (2014) and Grant (1996) who submits that specialization enhances the ability of a specific employee or group of employees to acquire expertise on a particular job, hence, enhancing their productivity and total output. Employees can as well be held accountable for the success or failure of any task ascribed to them as they have been empowered to take decisions on their job.

From the findings, it can therefore be concluded that centralization structure limits strategy implementation of the telecommunication firms in Nigeria, while specialization structure enhances strategy implementation among telecommunication firms in the country. Therefore, telecommunication firms should be encouraged to decentralized their structures so that their regional and branch managers can be allowed to make decisions for a more effective and efficient strategy implementation.

## 5.2 Managerial Implications and Future Research Directions

Since this study has to do with the telecommunication sector which, of recent, has received a lot of complaints and criticisms from regulators and customers. The study is expected to create possible solution to the issues of poor strategy implementation among these firms. This study has useful implications for both academics and practitioners. The following implications can be inferred from this study:

1. Centralized structure leads to slow pace of strategy implementation, therefore should be discourage for a better service delivery and faster decision making among the telecommunication firms.
2. Specialization structure enhances strategy implementation of the telecommunication firms. Therefore, managers of telecom firms should encourage their employees to specialize on their job for an effective and efficient strategy implementation in their firms.

Further studies should however be carried out in industry on the effect of structure on strategy implementation, while testing for the moderating effects of factors such as training and development, leadership style, level of education, age, experience, etc

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