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Influence of Marketing Mix on the Growth of Selected Business in Akure, Ondo State, Nigeria

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Abstract

The study examined the influence of marketing mix on the growth of selected business in Akure, Ondo State, Nigeria. Purposive sampling technique was adopted in collecting primary data through questionnaire administration designed in likert scale method to the respondents of the selected organization. A total of 90 respondents were sampled, 80 copies of questionnaires were retrieved. Multiple regression analysis was employed to examine the effect of variables in each of the marketing mix, the result was also used to test for the hypotheses formulated for the study. It was found that each market mix (product, price, place and promotion) has combinations of variables that affect the achievement of goals of the organizations, The results revealed that there is strong relationship between these variables and business growth, with a significant value of 0.022 for product, 0.028 for price, 0.005 and 0.010 for place and promotion respectively, all the values were lesser than the acceptable significant value of 0.05. The study concluded that price, product, place and promotion were independently and jointly predictors of business growth. The study recommended that the variables that tends to be positive and has significant effect on business growth should be made the focal point of marketing tools and strategy for business growth and expansion.

Keywords*: Marketing mix, Business growth, Performance, Organization, Akure*

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Background to the Study

The achievement of any organization depends on the strategy put in place by the owners (Adepoju, 2016). Marketing is one of the strategies that important and effective in determining the output of any business organization (Baker, 2006). Activities performed in marketing includes the identification of customer's demand, market segmentation, product development, modification of products, product design, market research to mention but few. The products or services of the organization reach the customers through this strategy. It is difficult to have generally acceptable definition of marketing because of it wideness. It is much more than simply selling what a company produces but rather about deciding what to do and for whom (Grasby, Crossan, Frost, Haywood & Purdy, 2000). The American Marketing Association (AMA) (2008) defined marketing as an organizational function and a set of processes for creating, communicating and delivering value to customers and for managing customer relationships in ways that benefits the organization and its stakeholders. It is also the process of planning and executing the conception, pricing, promotion and distribution of ideas, goods, services of organization and events to create and maintain relationships that satisfies individual and organizational objectives (Adepoju, 2016). The latest definition however places emphasis on the marketing mix (4p's). Although there are other "p's" of marketing such as people, process and physical evidence but for the purpose of this study, the generally known 4p's of marketing -'product, price, place and promotion' were adopted. Similarly, it is a management process responsible for identifying, anticipating and satisfying customer requirements. Therefore, the concept of marketing is to simply create and achieve individual and organizational satisfaction. Organization has to create, produce and deliver the products that the customer wants and values, the achievement of these maximally depends on how well the 4p's are well combined.

Numerous studies have been done in literature in this context. For example, William and Ferrell (2012) study factors affect the growth of a business such as proper managerial skills. Safdar and Siddiqi (2011), entrepreneurial and non- entrepreneurial characteristics. None of these studies examine the effect of marketing mix on the growth of the business most especially in the study area. Hence the gap in the study which need to be filled. The study will enable us to fill the gap about how product, place, price and promotion affect business growth in the study area.

The study was carried out by using the following selected organizations in Akure, Nigeria; Primus table water, Sammy enterprises, Matna foods company limited, Coop cocoa, TS furniture and Oyato bakery. all the business owners of these enterprises are mainly concentrated in the aforementioned metropolis. Akure was choose for this study because is the capital city of Ondo State and highly competitive business organizations in the area. The study would give a better understanding and improve the knowledge of entrepreneurs on the marketing activities undertaken by the various small and medium scale businesses in the study area.

Objectives of the Study

The paper was set to achieve the following objectives

i. Determine how product consideration influences business growth in the study area;
ii. Determine how price influences business growth in the study area ;
iii. Examine the effect of place on business growth in the study area and
1v. Establish how promotion influences business growth in the study area.

Research Hypotheses

In line with the objectives of study, the following null hypotheses are set:

i. H_{01}: product does not have a significant influence on business growth in the study area.
ii. $H_{02:}$price does not have a significant influence on business growth in the study area.
iii. $H_{03:}$place has no significant effect on business growth in the study area.
iv. $H_{04:}$promotion has no significant effect on business growth in the study area.

Literature Review

Marketing mix is one of the major concepts in modern marketing, it is defined as the set of controllable marketing tools that the firm blends to produce what the customers' wants in the target market. It consist everything the firm can do to influence the demand for its product (Adepoju, 2016). This can be grouped into different variables known as the "P's" of marketing: Product, price, place, promotion, physical evidence, process, and people (Bashan, 2011).An effective marketing program blends all the" P's" together in other to achieve the company's marketing objectives. It constitutes the company's tactical tool kit for establishing strong positioning in target markets (McCarthy, 2002; Adepoju, 2016). Marketing strategies and tactics are connected with taking decisions on different variables to influence mutually-satisfying exchange dealings and relationships. Characteristically, marketers have different tools they can use and also called P's of marketing (McCarthy, 2002). Many organizational leaders in many firms have applied these marketing concepts in their operation. The marketing idea and variants like the total quality management concept for example, are fundamentally concerned with satisfying customers' needs and wants beneficially. Creating and implementing efficient and effective marketing strategies which incorporate relevant dimensions of the marketing concept, engage the organic tasks of selecting a target market (customers or clients) in which to operate and implementing an efficient and effective marketing ingredient combination. Literature, in part, centers on the conversation of whether physical product marketing is comparable to, or different from, the marketing of service and concludes that the differences between physical product and service might be a subject of emphasis rather than of nature or kind (Creveling, 2005). There are number of definitions of marketing strategy in the literature and such definitions reflect different viewpoints (Lee, Yoo & Donthu, 2000). On the other hand, the consensus is that marketing strategy gives the avenue for utilizing the resources of an organization in order to gain its set goals and objectives. In general, marketing strategy deals with the adapting of marketing mix-functions to environmental forces. It evolves from the interaction of the marketing mix elements and the environmental factors (Lee, Yoo, & Donthu, 2000). Therefore, the function of marketing strategy is to determine the nature, strength, way, and interaction between the marketing mix-elements and the environmental factors in particular circumstances (Jain & Punj, 2002).

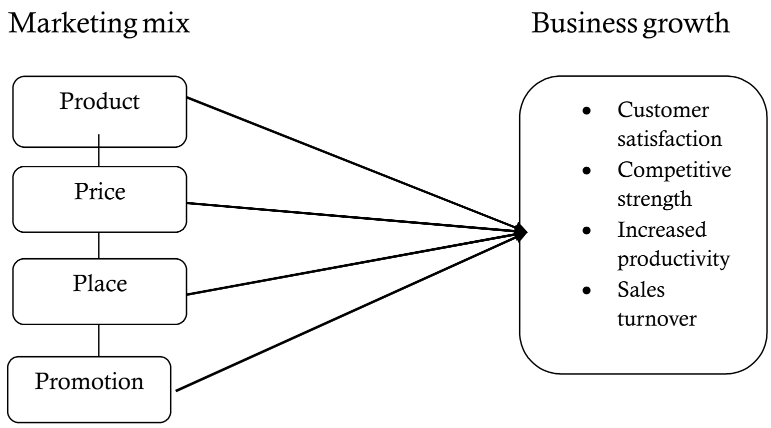
Product refers to the goods and services offered by the organization to the market to satisfy a need and want (Kotler, 2013). People paying not for the tangible product but for the benefit it will provide. Product can be described as a bundle of benefits which a marketer offers to the consumer for a price. Thus, the term product refers to goods and services offered by the organization for sale (Kotler, 2013). The marketers have to recognize that consumers are not simply interested in the physical features of a product but a set of tangible and intangible attributes that satisfy their wants. Therefore, product is defined as "anything that can be offered to a market to satisfy a want". These include physical objects, services and supporting services like brand name, packaging accessories, installation, after sales service etc.

Charging price has a profound impact on marketing strategy, price elasticity of the product which then affects demand and sales. Marketers are also advised to be aware of the customer perceived value when setting price for the product. Pricing strategies are: market skimming, market penetration and neutral pricing. Price changes have inverse relationship with sales (demand) for a normal good and other things assumed. Pricing include: discount, allowance and credit. Research indicates that there is a positive relation between suitable prices with customer loyalty (Martin, Ponder & Lueg, 2008). It must be remembered that customers who are loyal to a brand or company will always be less price sensitive. The challenge therefore lies in procuring these product(s) in large quantities in order to enjoy reduced unit cost of transport, storage and procurement. However, prior to setting a price, marketers often set objective for the price to facilitate the process of price determination. The objective usually is to remain in the market, to capture a large market share, maximize profit by highlighting product quality. (Armstrong & Kotler, 2000) A suitable price is one that will cover the costs (fixed and variable) and leave the proprietor with a reasonable profit. Consequently, the contribution margin per a unit of any product sold is critical in determining volume to be sold in order to break even and even to post a profit. The industry is profit making and highly competitive. Therefore, very small changes in price may translate into significant volumes of sale and also higher profits.

Goods are produced to be sold to the consumers must be made available to the consumers at a place where they can conveniently make purchase. It is necessary that the product and service which is to be sold is available at reachable areas. This involves a chain of individuals and institutions like distributors, wholesalers and retailers who constitute firm's distribution network (also called a channel of distribution). The organization has to decide whether to sell directly to the retailer or through the distributors/wholesaler (Maleka, 2002).

The purpose of promotion is to communicate benefits of using a product or service so that more customers are attracted to buy (Lamb, Kotler &Keller, 2009). Strategies employed are advertisement, merchandise promotion (sales promotion) and direct selling (Lamb, Kotler &Keller 2009; Kevin, 2009). It has been applied in order to remind users about the product and to increase product demand. (Jager, 2007) Each product or service requires a unique mix of promotional activities to yield maximum effect. Therefore, each seller must tailor product promotion to suit the product and the market segment. Some users are attracted to product characteristics while others are attracted to discount price (Jager, 2007). Marketing strategy requires decisions about the specific target of customers. Besides, marketing mix may be developed to target market by positioning it suitably in a superior way. In this context, the study of the effectiveness of the marketing tools is essential for an appropriate marketing strategy. Appropriateness of marketing strategies may be viewed as the congruence of market offerings of a set of products and its corresponding consumer perception among its target segment.

Figure 1: Conceptual framework showing the relationship between marketing mix and business growth.



Source: Adopted from Adepoju (2016).

Methodology

The study survey 6 selected business organizations in the study area, questionnaires were administered to the 90 respondents considered as sample size for the study by using purposive sampling technique. 80 copies of questionnaires were retrieved for analyses. The respondents were top and low level managers and customer that regularly patronizes the said organizations. Individual interview was also adopted so as to get full and complete information about the study from the respondents. Information and reports that was gotten from these set of people were useful in achieving the objectives of this study. The 5- likert scale method was adopted in providing answers to the questions from 1 to 5, for 1- strongly disagree, 2- disagree, 3- undecided, 4- agree, 5- strongly agree. The distributions are shown in table. 1.0. Multiple regression analysis was used to analyzed the effect of the variables in each of the 4p's. The result was also used to test for the hypotheses formulated for the study.

Measurement of Variables

The following independent and dependent variables were identified for the study:

Independent Variables

Product (quality, features, brand name, packaging and services);
Price (list price, discount, allowance for wholesalers, retailers and distributors and credit terms); Place (channels of distribution, coverage, inventory, transport and logistics) and
Promotion (advertising, publicity, personal selling and sales promotion)

Dependent Variable: Business growth

The model formulation for each of the independent variable are also stated below:

General Model

$Y = f\,(P_1 + P_2 + P_3 + P_4)$

$Y = a_1 + \beta_1 P_1 + \beta_2 P_2 + \beta_3 P_3 + \beta_4 P_4 + \ell_1$

Where,

Y=Business growth, P_1 = Product, P_2 = Price, P_3= Place, P_4 = Promotion, a_1 = intercept, β_1, $\beta_{2,}\beta_3$and $\beta_4$are co-efficient of the independent variables.

Specifics Model

i. $Y = P_{1QUA} + P_{1FEA} + P_{1BRA} + P_{1PAK} + P_{1SER}$

$Y = a_1 + \beta_1 P_{1QUA} + \beta_2 P_{1FEA} + \beta_3 P_{1BRA} + \beta_4 P_{1PAK} + \beta_5 P_{1SER} + \ell_1$

Where,

Y = Business growth, QUA= quality, FEA= feature, BRA= brand name, PAK= packaging, SER= service, ℓ_1= error term.

ii. $Y = P_{2LIS} + P_{2DIS} + P_{2ALW} + P_{2PAP} + P_{2CRE}$

$Y = a_1 + \beta_1 P_{2LIS} + \beta_2 P_{2DIS} + \beta_3 P_{2ALW} + \beta_4 P_{2PAP+} \beta_5 P_{2CRE} + \ell_1$

Where,

Y= Business growth, LIS = list price, DIS = discount, ALW = allowance, PAP = Payment periods, CRE = credit terms, ℓ_1= error term.

iii. $Y = P_{3CHA} + P_{3COV} + P_{3INV} + P_{3TRA} + P_{3LOG}$

$Y = a_1 + \beta_1 P_{3CHA} + \beta_2 P_{3COV} + \beta_3 P_{3INV} + \beta_4 P_{3TRA} + \beta_5 P_{3LOG} + \ell_1$

where,

Y = Business growth, CHA = channel, COV = coverage, INV = inventory, TRA = transport, LOG = logistics

iv. $Y = P_{4ADV} + P_{4PUB} + P_{4PER} + P_{4SAL}$

$Y = a_1 + \beta_1 P_{4ADV} + \beta_2 P_{4PUB} + \beta_3 P_{4PER} + \beta_4 P_{4SAL} + \ell_1$

where,

Y= Business growth, ADV = advertisement, PUB = publicity, PER = personal selling, SAL = sales promotion, ℓ_1= error term.

Results and Discussion

The result of the data collected were analyzed and presented as shown in table 1.Out of 90 copies of questionnaires distributed to the respondents of the six selected organizations, 80 copies of questionnaires which represent 88.9% were retrieved.

Table 1: Number of Questionnaires Distributed and Retrieved

Respondents / Organization	Number distributed	Number retrieved	Percent
Matna Foods company limited	15	13	86.7
Oyato Bakery	15	13	86.7
Coop Cocoa	15	14	93.3
TS Furniture	15	13	86.7
Primus table water	15	14	93.3
Sammy Ventures	15	13	86.7
Total	90	80	88.9

Source: Field survey, 2016**.**

Regression Analysis of the Marketing Mix

In other to determine how marketing mix consideration influences business growth in the study area, multiple regression analysis was used to test the effect of the 4p's (independent variable) on the business growth(dependent variable).The results of each of these independent variables were shown in table 2, 3, 4, 5, 6 and 7.

Table 2: Regression Coefficients for Product

Variable	Coefficients	T	Sig
(Constant)	2.102	7.554	.000
Quality of product	.528	-4.258	.000
Features of product	.101	-1.000	.021
Product's brand name	-.193	-1.331	.187
Product's packaging	-.003	-.018	.986
Service of product	.402	3.211	.002

Source: Field survey, 2016.

Table 2 shows that quality, features and service of product all correlated positively to the dependent variable. This result indicates that an increase in any of these variables will bring about an increasing effect in business growth in the study area. On the other hand, the negative sign of product's brand name and packaging in the table 2 shows that an increase in these variables will have a reducing effect on business growth in the study area. This revealed that quality, features and service of product are statistically significant while products brand name and packaging are statistically not significant in explaining marketing mix effect on business growth. From the parameter coefficient shown in table 2the equation for business growth is given as:

$$Y = P_{1QUA} + P_{1FEA} + P_{1BRA} + P_{1PAK} + P_{1SER}$$

$$Y = a_1 + \beta_1 P_{1QUA} + \beta_2 P_{1FEA} + \beta_3 P_{1BRA} + \beta_4 P_{1PAK} + \beta_5 P_{1SER} + \ell_1 \cdots\cdots\cdots\cdots \text{(I)}$$

Hence the regression model is given as:

$$Y = 2.102+0.528P_{1QUA}+0.101P_{1FEA}-0.193P_{1BRA}-0.003P_{1PAK}+0.402P_{1SER} \cdots\cdots\cdots\cdots \text{(ii)}$$

Where,
Y= Business growth, QUA= quality, FEA= feature, BRA = brand name, PAK= packaging, SER= service, P_1= Product, ℓ_1= error term.

Table 3: Regression Coefficient for Price

Variable	Coefficient	T	Sig
(Constant)	1.714	3.703	.000
List price	.104	.652	.016
Discount on price	.086	-.592	.050
Allowance for wholesaler	-.412	-3.000	.004
Payment periods	.196	1.181	.041
Credit terms	-.107	-.612	.243

Source: Field survey, 2016.

The regression coefficients for price were shows in table 3. Variables such as list price, discount on price and payment periods all has positive effects on the dependent variable. This indicates that an increase in any or all of these independent variables will bring about increase in dependent variable. On the other hand, the negative coefficients of allowance for wholesalers, distributors and retailers, along with that of credit terms in the table depicts that a presence of a unit increase on these variables will imply a decreasing effect on business growth in the study area.

From the parameter coefficient shown above, the equation for business growth is given as:
$Y = P_{2LIS} + P_{2DIS} + P_{2ALW} + P_{2PAP} + P_{2CRE}$
$Y = a_1 + \beta_1 P_{2LIS} + \beta_2 P_{2DIS} + \beta_3 P_{2ALW} + \beta_4 P_{2PA+} \beta_5 P_{2CRE}$.................. (iii)

Therefore, the regression model is given as:
$Y = 1.714 + 0.104P_{2LIS} + 0.086P_{2DIS} - 0.412P_{2ALW} + 0.196P_{2PAP} - 0.107P_{2CRE}$................(iv)

Where,
Y= Business growth, LIS = list price, DIS = discount, ALW = allowance, PAP = Payment period CRE = credit terms, ℓ_1= error term.

Table 4: Regression Coefficients for Place

Variable	Coefficients	T	Sig
(Constant)	-.140	-.316	.753
Channels of distribution	.206	1.534	.029
Coverage	.227	1.706	.042
Inventory	.093	.784	.046
Transport	.270	2.477	.016
Logistics	-.189	-1.619	.110

Source: Field survey, 2016.

The regression coefficient of the variables of place in table 4 shows that, channels of distribution, coverage, inventory and transport all correlated positively on the dependent variable. This result indicates that an increase in any or all of these variables will bring about an increasing effect in business growth in the study area. While the negative coefficient of logistics depicts that a presence of a unit increase in logistics will imply a decreasing effect on business growth in the study area. The result also shows the general significant level of all the independent variables of product. This result shows that place as a marketing mix is considered to have a positive influence on business growth. As place increases, the level of business growth in the study area also increases. Therefore, place as a marketing mix can be said to increase business growth. This is supported by the research of Ferdous and Towfique (2008) indicated a significant relationship between distribution (place) and customer satisfaction.

From the parameter coefficient shown above, the equation for business growth is given as:
$Y = P_{3CHA} + P_{3COV} + P_{3INV} + P_{3TRA} + P_{3LOG}$
$Y = a_1 + \beta_1 P_{3CHA} + \beta_2 P_{3COV} + \beta_3 P_{3INV} + \beta_4 P_{3TRA} + \beta_5 P_{3LOG} + \ell_1 \cdots\cdots\cdots\cdots$ (v)

Therefore, the regression model is given as:
$Y = -0.140 + 0.206P_{3CHA} + 0.227P_{3COV} + 0.093P_{3INV} + 0.270P_{3TRA} - 0.189P_{3LOG} \cdots\cdots\cdots\cdots$. (iv)

where,
Y = Business growth, CHA = channel, COV = coverage, INV = inventory, TRA = transport, LOG = logistics

Table 5: Regression Coefficients for Promotion

Variable	Coefficients	T	Sig
(Constant)	2.149	8.756	.000
Advertising	.294	-2.338	.022
Publicity	.184	-1.539	.028
Personal selling	-.372	-2.929	.005
Sales promotion	.208	1.617	.010

Source: Field survey, 2016.

Table 5 shows the regression coefficient table for the variables of promotion. The table indicates that advertising, publicity, personal selling and sales promotion has an effect which is considered to be positive on the dependent variable (business growth). This result indicates that an increase in any or all of these variables will bring about an increasing effect in business growth in the study area. On the other hand, the negative coefficient of personal selling shows that a presence of a unit increase in personal selling in the study area will imply a decreasing effect on business growth. This result is supported by the discoveries of Kotler (2007) that Promotions have become a critical factor in marketing mix which consists of the specific blend of advertising, personal selling, sales promotion, public relations and direct marketing tools that the company uses to pursue its goals in the target market. As promotion increases, the level of business growth in the study area also increases. The purpose of promotion is to communicate benefits of using a product or service so that more customers are attracted to buy the product (Lamb, Kotler &Keller 2009). Strategies employed are advertisement, merchandise promotion (sales promotion) and direct selling (Lamb, Kotler & Keller 2009; Kevin, 2009). This includes a mix of promotional elements like advertising, public relation, merchandise promotion and personal selling. (Boone & Kurte, 2007).

From the parameter coefficient shown above, the equation for business growth is given as:
$Y = P_{4ADV} + P_{4PUB} + P_{4PER} + P_{4SAL}$
$Y = a_1 + \beta_1 P_{4ADV} + \beta_2 P_{4PUB} + \beta 3 P_{4PER} + \beta_4 P_{4SAL} + \ell_1$ ························· (vii)

Therefore, the regression model is given as:
$Y = 2.149 + 0.294 P_{4ADV} + 0.184 P_{4PUB} - 0.372 P_{4PER} + 0.208 P_{4SAL}$ ·······················(viii)

where,
Y = Business growth, ADV = advertisement, PUB = publicity, PER = personal selling, SAL = sales promotion, ℓ_1 = error term.

Table 6: Regression Coefficients for Marketing Mix (Combine effect)

Variable	Coefficients	T	Sig
(Constant)	1.142	8.751	.000
Product (P_1)	.294	-2.338	.022
Price (P_2)	.184	-1.214	.028
Place (P_3)	.372	-2.929	.005
Promotion (P_4)	.208	1.617	.010

Source: Field survey, 2016.

The study also goes further by using the 4p's as independent variables and it effect on dependent variable. The results were shows in table 6. All the 4P's have positive correlation with the dependent variable. This indicates that a unit increase in each of these variables will lead to a corresponding increase in business growth. The analysis of the general independent variables (product, price, place and promotion) and the consideration of the results of the specific independent variables gave a general result that can be withheld that the 4p's of marketing have an effect which is positive on the dependent variable. These findings are in line with Mohammad, Wang and Sunayya (2012) who said that for any organization to retain its consumers, it needs to create a successful mix of the right product, sold at the right price, in the right place and using the most suitable promotion.

Peter and Donnelly (2007) also confirmed that each element of the marketing mix can influence consumer loyalty and retention. Businesses achieve its advertising and marketing objective when marketers offer products and services that consistently have strong physical attributes-based satisfaction, provide high emotional experience and high perceived value summing to a high total customer experience they will automatically generate high and lasting customer loyalty.

Thus, the general model of the equation is given below:

$Y = f\,(P_1 + P_2 + P_3 + P_4)$

$Y = a_1 + \beta_1 P_1 + \beta_2 P_2 + \beta_3 P_3 + \beta_4 P_4 + \ell_1$ .... (ix)

$1.142 + 0.224P_1 + 0.145P_2 + 0.322P_3 + 0.106P_4$ .... (x)

Where,

Y = Business growth P_1 = Product, P_2 = Price, P_3 = Place, P_4 = Promotion, a_1 = intercept, β_1, $\beta_{2,}\beta_3$ and β_4 are co-efficient of the independent variables and ℓ_1 is the error term.

Test of Hypotheses

The result for the 4p's as shown in table 7 gives the coefficient of determination R^2 for product as 32.3%. This means that the combined influence of the predictor variables explains 32.3% of the variations in business growth. The correlation coefficient of 56.8% indicates that the combined influence of the predictor variables has a positive correlation with business growth.

Analysis of variance (ANOVA) depicts that the combined effect of these explaining the effect product as a marketing mix has on business growth. This is demonstrated by a significant value of 0.000 which is less than the acceptable significant value of (0.05). Therefore, product is considered to have a significant influence on business growth. Hence H_{01} is rejected. This suggests that business firms, that invest resources (financial, human, non-human) in producing quality products through the use of quality raw materials, components and parts, standard quality control and assurance measures, improved features in terms appearance, design, texture etc improves on organizational growth through customer's satisfaction. Furthermore, business organizations that improve on their service towards customers are considered to have higher competitive edge over competitors through repeated purchase by customers. Hence customers are retained. These findings concur with the study of Chavan (2003) that business firms that improves in characteristics of the product and totality of its features and services, are likely to experience higher customer's satisfaction and increased profit levels. Bastos and Gallego (2008) provide evidence that service quality directly affects satisfaction and satisfaction directly affects business growth.

Table 7: Analysis of Variance

Variable	R	R^2	Adj R^2	F-statistic	Std. Error	Sig.
Product	.568	.323	.227	7.047	.392	.000
Price	.387	.150	.092	2.608	.439	.032
Place	.497	.247	.196	4.857	.413	.001
Promotion	.476	.226	.185	5.472	.416	.001

Source: Field survey, 2016.

The table also reveals that the R^2 of price is 15%. This means that the combined influence of the predictor variables explains 15% of the variations in business growth. The correlation coefficient of 38.7% indicates that the combined influence of the predictor variables has a relationship on business growth. The overall data were significant at 0.032 which is less than acceptable significant value of 0.05, therefore H_{02} is rejected. The result of this study collaborates with the findings of Jeffrey (2006) who asserted that through pricing power, successful companies achieve higher profits and become better in their business activities in many aspects. Those who focus mainly on volume and market share tend to get tied up in price wars. The result also concurs with the study of Jager (2007) who stated that some users are attracted to discount price. The study indicates that there is a positive relation between suitable prices and customer's satisfaction. (Martin, Ponder & Lueg, 2008).

The R^2 of place and promotion are 0.24.7 and 0.226 respectively and indication that 25% and 23% of these combined influence of the predictor variables in the study area is attributed to the independent variables used for the assessment. The correlation coefficient of 49.7% and 47.5% for the place and promotion respectively indicates that the combined influence of the predictor variables has a relationship on business growth. Analysis of variance (ANOVA) also indicates that the combined effect of channels of distribution, coverage, inventory, transport and logistics was statistically significant. The overall values of the two variables are also significant at 0.001 which is less than acceptable significant value of 0.5, therefore H_{03} and H_{04} are also rejected.

Findings of this study agree with the study of Kevin (2009) who posited that customers benefit from a well-managed and effective distribution network. Research by Ferdous and Towfique (2008) indicated a significant relationship between distribution (place) and customer satisfaction. However, other study Sin(2000) negates the above findings that there was no significant correlation between performances of companies with distribution channels. The study also supported by the discoveries of Kotler (2007) that Promotions have become a critical factor in the marketing mix which consists of the specific blend of advertising, personal selling, sales promotion, public relations and direct marketing tools that the company uses to pursue its goals in the target market. The purpose of promotion is to communicate benefits of using a product or service so that more customers are attracted to buy the product (Lamb, Kotler &Keller, 2009).

Conclusion and Recommendations

This study has investigated the effect of marketing mix elements on business growth with reference to some business organizations in Akure. The results revealed that there is strong relationship between the 4p's of marketing and business growth. On the basis of the findings of this study, it can be concluded that price, product, place and promotion were independently and jointly predictors of business growth. This result supported Kotler (2005) who discovered that marketing mix elements have become major business tools for company to pursue its marketing objective. The 4p's have particular significance to marketing of goods but only few business organizations in study area have understood the real meaning of marketing mix, its impact in organizational growth and how to incorporate it as a tool in increasing productivity. Product with its imbedded elements is the core of marketing mix strategy with which organizations offers consumers symbolic and experiential attributes to differentiate an organization's product from that of competitors. The price an organization sets for its product or service plays a large role in its marketability hence, output. The impact of place in marketing cannot be over emphasized. It is important that marketers make their service available to customers at the right time and conveniently with minimal effort. Promotion plays a major role in creating awareness about a new product, process or technology. It has become a critical factor in persuading customers and promoting the company's image.

The study recommend that all the variables that tends to be positive and significant effect on business growth should be made the focal point of marketing tools and strategy for business growth and expansion. This study only considered the traditional 4p's of marketing, upcoming researchers should beef up their studies by incorporating other 'p's' of marketing that are not evaluated in this study.

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