

STRATEGIC AGILITY AND VENTURE SUCCESS OF TELECOMMUNICATION FIRMS IN RIVERS STATE, NIGERIA

Dr. Iheanyichukwu Godwin Amakor

iheanyichukwu.amakor@iaue.edu.ng, 08060987843

**Department of Entrepreneurship, Faculty of Administration and Management
Ignatius Ajuru University of Education,
Rumuolumeni, P.M.B. 5047, Port Harcourt,
Rivers State**

Dr. Barisi Chioma Daniel

barisi.daniel@iaue.edu.ng, 08033129200

**Department of Entrepreneurship, Faculty of Administration and Management,
Ignatius Ajuru University of Education, Rumuolumeni,
Rivers State, Nigeria.**

Dr. Nkasiobi Otuonye Okocha

nkasiobi.okocha@gmail.com, 07037176209

**Department of Entrepreneurship, Faculty of Administration and Management Sciences,
Ignatius Ajuru University of Education,
Rumuolumen, Rivers State, Nigeria.**

Abstract

This study examined the relationship between strategic agility and venture success of telecommunication firms in Rivers State, Nigeria. Strategic agility was conceptualised through two dimensions: operational agility and market agility, while venture success was measured using market share growth and customer retention. The study addressed two research questions and tested two corresponding null hypotheses. A descriptive survey research design was employed, with a population comprising registered telecommunication service providers operating in Rivers State. Using purposive sampling, data were collected via a structured questionnaire from 96 top and middle management staff directly involved in strategic planning and service delivery. Data analysis was conducted using Pearson's product-moment correlation coefficient. The findings revealed a significant positive relationship between operational agility and market share growth ($r = .712, p < .01$), and between market agility and customer retention ($r = .694, p < .01$). The study concludes that strategic agility is a critical driver of venture success in the telecommunication industry. It is recommended that telecommunication firms improve operational agility through flexible processes and fast decision-making to grow market share, while developing market agility through continuous sensing of customer needs and competitor moves to strengthen customer retention.

Keywords: *Strategic Agility, Operational Agility, Market Agility, Venture Success, Market Share Growth, Customer Retention, Telecommunication Industry, Rivers State, Nigeria*

INTRODUCTION

The telecommunication industry remains one of the most dynamic and fast-changing sectors in emerging economies. In Nigeria, the telecommunication sector has contributed significantly to job creation, financial inclusion, and economic growth (Oli & Ibrahim, 2024; Wegwu & Princewill, 2022). The sector is marked by strong competition, changing customer needs, and constant pressure to deliver reliable and affordable services. Telecommunication firms operating in major commercial cities such as Rivers State face rivalry from both large network operators and small internet service providers, making it important to develop and maintain flexible competitive strategies (Amakor et al., 2026; Iyamabor et al., 2025). In such a changing environment, firms must adopt clear strategic approaches to respond quickly to market changes and ensure long-term survival. One critical strategy that addresses this challenge is strategic agility.

Strategic agility refers to the ability of a firm to sense changes in its environment and respond quickly and effectively to take advantage of opportunities or reduce threats (Doz & Kosonen, 2010; Teece et al., 2016). It

reflects deliberate actions aimed at adjusting operations, reallocating resources, and reshaping market approaches to meet shifting demands. In strategic management writing, strategic agility is recognised as a key source of competitive strength that influences firm growth and survival (Bamel & Bamel, 2021; Weber & Tarba, 2020). For this study, strategic agility is examined through two major dimensions: operational agility and market agility.

Operational agility refers to the extent to which a firm can change its internal processes, workflows, and resource use quickly to meet new demands. This includes flexible workforce management, fast decision-making, quick introduction of new services, and the ability to reallocate resources without delays (Zastempowski & Cyfert, 2023). Telecommunication firms that invest in operational agility create an advantage that is hard to copy, thereby securing faster response times and better service delivery. Research shows that firms that focus on operational speed and flexibility achieve higher market share and are more likely to keep their competitive position in the telecom sector (Felipe et al., 2020; Tallon & Pinsonneault, 2021). Market agility refers to the ability of a firm to sense changes in customer tastes, competitor actions, and market conditions, and then respond with suitable products or services (Sambamurthy et al., 2018). A market-agile firm listens to customers, tracks rival moves, and adapts its marketing and service offers without long delays. In the telecommunication industry, market agility helps firms to attract and keep subscribers who base their choices on network quality, pricing, and customer service (Makumbe & Tapfuma, 2023). Research on competitive dynamics shows that firms with strong market sensing and fast response capabilities achieve higher customer loyalty and better long-term results (Roberts & Grover, 2019).

While strategic agility explains how firms adapt to changes, venture success explains how firms achieve growth and market strength. Venture success refers to a firm's ability to grow its customer base, increase its market presence, and keep existing customers over time despite competition and market ups and downs (Wiklund & Shepherd, 2011; Audretsch & Belitski, 2019). In the telecom sector, success is shown in the ability to win new subscribers and keep existing ones happy. This study measures venture success using two key indicators: market share growth and customer retention.

Market share growth represents the increase in a firm's share of total industry sales over a period. High market share growth means that the firm is winning more customers compared to rivals, which is a direct result of its ability to respond faster and better than competitors (Zastempowski & Cyfert, 2023). Earlier studies identify market share growth as one of the most reliable signs of successful competitive behaviour in service industries (Morgan & Rego, 2020; Buzzell & Gale, 2019). Customer retention refers to the ability of a firm to keep its existing customers over time without them switching to another provider. High retention shows that customers are satisfied and find enough value to stay, which reflects the firm's success in being agile and responsive (Sahi et al., 2024). Strategic management writing recognises customer retention as a central part of business success in service sectors (Reichheld, 2021; Gupta & Zeithaml, 2020). Rivers State serves as a major telecommunication market in Nigeria, with high demand for mobile voice, data, and internet services from business people, students, government workers, and families (Wegwu & Princewill, 2022; Amakor et al., 2026). The competitive behaviour of telecommunication firms operating in this area may greatly affect their success outcomes. Although earlier studies have looked at strategic agility in relation to firm performance (Teece et al., 2016; Doz, 2020), not many empirical studies have specifically connected strategic agility to venture success within the Nigerian telecommunication industry context. This gap provides the basis for examining how operational agility and market agility influence market share growth and customer retention among telecommunication firms in Rivers State.

Statement of the Problem

Venture success has become more and more important for telecommunication firms operating in highly competitive and fast-changing markets. In Rivers State, Nigeria, the telecommunication industry is marked by strong rivalry, falling call and data prices, changing subscriber needs, and the arrival of new service providers (Amakor et al., 2026; Ologbosere & Erwat, 2024). Firms ranging from large network operators (MTN, Airtel, Globacom, 9mobile) to smaller internet providers compete for a mixed set of customers that includes business people, students, public servants, and households (Oli & Ibrahim, 2024). Despite large investments in network infrastructure and customer service, many telecommunication ventures in Rivers State find it hard to grow their market share and keep customers loyal over time. Problems such as customer switching, poor network quality, slow complaint handling, and weak customer care continue to hurt long-term success in the sector

(Wegwu & Princewill, 2022). Strategic agility has been identified in strategic management writing as a path through which firms build the ability to sense and respond to changes before rivals do (Teece et al., 2016; Doz & Kosonen, 2010). Telecommunication firms that are agile through fast operations and strong market sensing are expected to win more customers and keep them satisfied. However, in practice, it remains unclear whether the agility efforts made by telecommunication firms in Rivers State actually lead to measurable success outcomes such as market share growth and customer retention.

Although earlier studies have linked strategic agility to general competitive strength and survival (Bamel & Bamel, 2021; Weber & Tarba, 2020), not enough empirical attention has been given to its specific effect on venture success, especially within the Nigerian telecommunication industry. Most existing research treats strategic agility broadly without separating the direct contribution of its specific dimensions, namely operational agility and market agility, to success indicators such as market share growth and customer retention (Zastempowski & Cyfert, 2023; Felipe et al., 2020). As a result, there is not enough local evidence explaining whether strategic agility truly drives success or simply gives short-term gains. Furthermore, telecommunication firms in Rivers State operate within a unique social and economic environment marked by high mobile phone use, a young population, regular changes in government rules, and price wars among providers (Iyamabhor et al., 2025). Despite the presence of various agility efforts such as quick tariff changes and new data plans, achieving steady market share growth and customer retention remains a problem for many firms (Oli & Ibrahim, 2024). This raises concern about how well strategic agility works as a driver of venture success in the area. It is against this background that the present study examines the relationship between strategic agility, measured through operational agility and market agility, and venture success, measured through market share growth and customer retention, among telecommunication firms in Rivers State, Nigeria.

Conceptual Framework

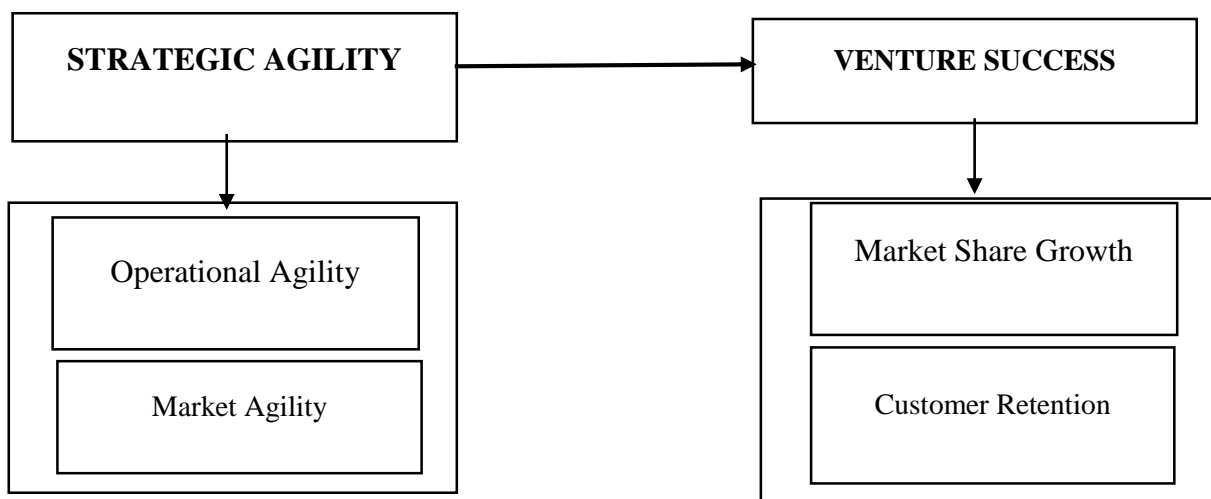


Figure 1.1: A Conceptual Framework Showing the Relationship between Strategic Agility and Venture Success of Telecommunication Firms in Rivers State, Nigeria.

Source: Adapted from Doz & Kosonen (2010); Teece et al. (2016); Wiklund & Shepherd (2011); Zastempowski & Cyfert (2023).

Aim and Objectives of the Study

The aim of the study was to examine the relationship between strategic agility and venture success of telecommunication firms in Rivers State, Nigeria. The specific objectives were to:

1. investigate the relationship between operational agility and market share growth of telecommunication firms in Rivers State;
2. examine the relationship between market agility and customer retention of telecommunication firms in Rivers State.

Research Questions

The following research questions were raised to guide the study:

1. What was the relationship between operational agility and market share growth of telecommunication firms in Rivers State?
2. How did market agility relate to customer retention of telecommunication firms in Rivers State?

Research Hypotheses

The following hypotheses were postulated to guide the study:

H₀₁: There was no significant relationship between operational agility and market share growth of telecommunication firms in Rivers State.

H₀₂: There was no significant relationship between market agility and customer retention of telecommunication firms in Rivers State.

CONCEPTUAL REVIEW

Concept of Strategic Agility

Strategic agility refers to the ability of a firm to notice changes in its environment and respond quickly and effectively to seize opportunities or avoid threats. It is a combination of sensing, deciding, and acting without long delays. As a key strategic ability identified by Doz and Kosonen (2010), strategic agility helps firms to stay relevant when markets shift suddenly. In the telecommunication industry, agility shows up in the speed of launching new data plans, the flexibility of customer service, and the ability to change pricing fast in response to rival moves (Teece et al., 2016; Ologbosere & Erwat, 2024). The concept covers both internal and external aspects of fast response. Internal agility includes flexible work rules, quick approval processes, and the ability to move staff or money to where they are needed most (Zastempowski & Cyfert, 2023). External agility involves understanding what customers want, watching competitors, and changing marketing messages without delay. Telecommunication firms that combine both internal and external agility build abilities that are hard for rivals to copy quickly (Sambamurthy et al., 2018). Firms that balance fast operations with strong market sensing tend to keep better competitive positions and achieve stronger customer loyalty (Weber & Tarba, 2020; Alkhamery et al., 2024).

Strategic agility matters because it drives successful outcomes. Agile telecommunication firms often grow their subscriber base faster, keep customers longer, and respond better to price wars (Makumbe & Tapfuma, 2023). Fast response to customer complaints encourages trust and positive word-of-mouth that lowers marketing costs while growing use of services naturally (Roberts & Grover, 2019). In the telecom sector, good agility supports a culture of fast action where all teams work together to deliver a smooth customer experience that strengthens competitive advantage. However, poorly managed agility can lead to confusion, wasted resources, and mixed service quality (Bamel & Bamel, 2021). Therefore, firms must match agility efforts with their internal abilities and market needs. For this study, strategic agility is examined through two dimensions: operational agility and market agility. These dimensions capture the action and sensing sides of a firm's fast response ability in the market.

Operational Agility: Operational agility refers to the ability of a firm to change its internal activities, workflows, and use of resources quickly to meet new demands. It captures the deliberate investment in flexible systems, fast decision-making, and the ability to start or stop activities without large costs (Felipe et al., 2020). In the telecommunication industry, this may include quick rollout of new data bundles, fast repair of network problems, flexible shift arrangements for call centre staff, and the ability to move network capacity from one area to another. Theoretical discussions suggest that firms with high operational agility continuously look for ways to shorten the time between seeing a need and meeting it (Zastempowski & Cyfert, 2023). Fast operations create a smooth experience for customers that encourages them to stay and use more services. This dimension goes beyond simply following industry norms, showing a deep organisational commitment to speed and flexibility. Operational agility is shaped by management style, employee freedom to decide, and investment in fast technology (Sahi et al., 2024). Telecommunication firms that focus on these areas show higher levels of customer happiness and market share growth (Tallon & Pinsonneault, 2021; Ologbosere & Erwat, 2024). In the competitive Rivers State telecom market, operational agility serves as a basic platform for achieving steady business success.

Market Agility: Market agility reflects the degree to which a firm has developed the ability to sense changes in customer likes, competitor actions, and market conditions, and then respond with suitable products or services (Sambamurthy et al., 2018; Makumbe & Tapfuma, 2023). Unlike operational agility, which is mostly about internal actions, market agility works at the sensing and responding level, shaping how a firm learns about, understands, and acts on market signals. It includes customer feedback systems, competitor tracking, market research, and the ability to change pricing or promotions without delay. This concept stresses ongoing learning, fast interpretation of market data, and quick response across all customer touchpoints (Roberts & Grover, 2019). Telecommunication firms with strong market agility benefit from better customer understanding, faster reaction to rival price cuts, and higher ability to launch offers that match what customers want at that moment. An agile market approach also enables firms to build good relationships with dealers and agents who value quick support. Together with operational agility, market agility gives a full view of how telecommunication firms build and keep strategic flexibility, covering both the sensing and responding sides of superior market behaviour (Wegwu & Princewill, 2022; Amakor et al., 2026).

Concept of Venture Success

Venture success refers to a firm's ability to grow its customer base, increase its market presence, and keep existing customers over the long term despite competition, changing customer needs, and other pressures. It shows the ability of a business to stay relevant, grow its market share, and satisfy customers across changing conditions (Wiklund & Shepherd, 2011; Audretsch & Belitski, 2019). In the telecommunication sector, success is shown in the firm's ability to win new subscribers, keep existing ones happy, and grow its share of total industry revenue (Iyamabhor et al., 2025). Venture success is therefore both a goal and a result that shows how well a telecom firm's main strategies are working. Within changing and competitive markets, venture success serves as a sign of a firm's ability to adapt and stay focused. Telecommunication firms that achieve success show that they have built fast routines, loyal customer bases, and service cultures that help them survive competitive shocks and market changes (Oli & Ibrahim, 2024). Venture success is often linked to the quality of strategic choices made by management, including decisions about operational flexibility, customer listening, and pricing approaches (Morgan & Rego, 2020). As customer needs change and competition grows, telecommunication firms that keep investing in fast operations and market sensing are better placed to keep customer loyalty and grow market share over time (Sahi et al., 2024). Strategic management studies suggest that venture success is both a result and a driver of better performance. High customer retention lowers the cost of finding new customers and increases revenue stability, while market share growth brings economies of scale and stronger bargaining power with suppliers (Reichheld, 2021). In the Nigerian telecom sector, achieving success requires more than low prices; it needs deliberate agility to create value that customers always prefer over rivals (Wegwu & Princewill, 2022). Research shows that venture success is not an automatic result of being busy; it requires focused investment in the drivers of customer loyalty and market growth to turn strategic actions into lasting performance results (Felipe et al., 2020; Amakor et al., 2026). For this study, venture success is conceptualised through two measures: market share growth and customer retention. These measures capture the main signs of how telecommunication firms keep their market position and competitive relevance in response to market pressures.

Market Share Growth: Market share growth refers to the increase in a firm's share of total industry sales over a given period. It is a widely used sign of success in service sectors. In the telecommunication industry, high market share growth shows that a firm is winning more customers compared to its rivals (Zastempowski & Cyfert, 2023). Firms with higher market share growth show an ability to meet customer needs better, respond faster to market changes, and defend their position against aggressive competitors. The theoretical importance of market share growth comes from its role as a direct measure of competitive strength and customer preference. In industries where service quality and price matter a lot, a steady rise in market share shows that the firm's offers keep matching customer expectations and preferences (Buzzell & Gale, 2019). Market share growth is also linked to financial benefits, as firms with larger market shares often enjoy lower costs per customer, better brand recognition, and higher profits (Morgan & Rego, 2020). Telecommunication firms that focus on fast network improvements, good pricing, and strong customer care tend to achieve higher market share growth than those that focus only on advertising (Oli & Ibrahim, 2024). Market share growth is not only a number but also a reflection of how well a firm positions itself. Telecommunication firms that keep

growing their market share often get better deals from equipment suppliers, earn more revenue, and attract investors who support long-term health (Amakor et al., 2026). However, lasting market share growth needs more than short-term price cuts; it needs a continuous commitment to customer happiness, fast complaint handling, and steady improvement in network quality (Makumbe & Tapfuma, 2023). Therefore, market share growth, as a measure of venture success, captures both competitive performance and strategic consistency.

Customer Retention: Customer retention refers to the ability of a firm to keep its existing customers over time without them switching to another provider (Sahi et al., 2024). In the telecommunication industry, high retention shows that a firm is successful in creating satisfying and reliable experiences that make customers want to stay. Firms with higher customer retention show an ability to meet customer needs steadily, build emotional trust, and defend their customer base against aggressive rivals. The theoretical importance of customer retention comes from its role as a direct measure of relationship strength and service value. In industries where switching is easy, a stable base of loyal customers shows that the firm's offers always meet customer expectations and preferences (Reichheld, 2021). Customer retention is also linked to economic benefits, as kept customers cost much less to serve than new ones and are more likely to buy more services and tell others (Gupta & Zeithaml, 2020). Telecommunication firms that focus on personalised care, loyalty rewards, and fast network problem fixing tend to achieve higher retention than those that focus mainly on winning new customers through low prices (Ologbosere & Erwat, 2024). Customer retention is not only a number but also a reflection of strategic positioning success. Telecommunication firms that keep high retention often enjoy better revenue predictability, lower marketing costs, and a stronger brand name that supports long-term financial health (Wegwu & Princewill, 2022). However, lasting retention requires more than occasional service fixes; it needs a deep commitment to customer happiness, fast complaint resolution, and ongoing improvement in the customer experience. Therefore, customer retention, as a measure of venture success, captures both relationship performance and strategic steadiness.

THEORETICAL REVIEW

Dynamic Capabilities Theory

The study was anchored on the Dynamic Capabilities Theory, which explains how a firm's ability to integrate, build, and change its resources helps it to stay ahead in fast-changing markets. Dynamic Capabilities Theory, popularised by Teece, Pisano, and Shuen (1997) and extended in later work, holds that firms achieve long-term success when they can sense new opportunities, seize them quickly, and keep changing their asset base (the sensing, seizing, and transforming framework). These capabilities include learning quickly, reconfiguring operations, and adapting to market shifts (Teece et al., 2016; Alkhamery et al., 2024).

The key ideas of Dynamic Capabilities Theory are that firms differ in how fast they can sense and respond, and that these differences last over time, leading to different success levels (Eisenhardt & Martin, 2018). The theory assumes that firms that invest in building fast decision-making, flexible operations, and strong market sensing are better able to adjust their offers and beat rivals over the long term (Makumbe & Tapfuma, 2023). Specifically, the theory states that strategic agility works best when built on routines and abilities that rivals cannot copy easily, thereby ensuring that agility efforts turn into lasting competitive strength and venture success (Teece, 2018; Alkhamery et al., 2024).

The theory identifies three core micro-foundations of dynamic capabilities: (1) sensing - the ability to identify and shape opportunities; (2) seizing - the ability to mobilise resources to capture value from identified opportunities; and (3) transforming - the ability to continuously renew and reconfigure the firm's asset structure (Teece, 2016). In the context of this study, operational agility aligns with the seizing and transforming capabilities, as it involves fast reconfiguration of internal processes and resources. Market agility aligns with the sensing capability, as it involves detecting changes in customer preferences and competitor moves. Together, these two dimensions of strategic agility represent the practical application of dynamic capabilities in telecommunication firms.

Dynamic Capabilities Theory is relevant to this study because it provides a way to see how strategic agility helps telecommunication firms in Rivers State to achieve venture success. By viewing operational agility and market agility as dynamic capabilities, the theory allows for a clear understanding of how focused investment in fast operations and market sensing turns into observable success outcomes such as market share growth and

customer retention (Teece et al., 2016; Doz, 2020). The theory thus connects strategic action and success in the context of the telecommunication industry.

EMPIRICAL REVIEW

In a study conducted by Felipe, Roldán, and Leal-Rodríguez (2020), titled *Impact of Organisational Agility on Business Performance*, the researchers sought to examine how agility dimensions, including operational and market agility, affect business success in fast-moving service sectors. The objective of the study was to find out how much agility strategies affect long-term firm growth and customer loyalty across service industries. The study used a quantitative design and a survey method to collect data from managers and strategic decision-makers in 160 service firms operating in European markets. The population of the study was 780 senior and middle-level managers, from which a sample of 320 people was chosen using stratified random sampling to get good coverage across industries and management levels. Data were analysed using structural equation modelling to test the link between strategic agility dimensions and success outcomes. The results showed that firms with higher levels of operational agility and market agility experienced significantly higher market share growth and stronger customer retention compared to less agile rivals. The study concluded that strategic agility is a key strategic approach for improving venture success, especially in service-based industries. The authors advised that firms keep investing in fast operations, improve market sensing through ongoing customer listening, and build internal abilities that support agility advantages over time.

In a more recent study, Zastempowski and Cyfert (2023) examined *A New Angle on SMEs' Competitiveness: How Do Agility Capabilities Affect a Firm's Competitive Position?* The objective of the study was to determine how agility capabilities, competence, flexibility, responsiveness, and speed affect the competitive position of small and medium enterprises, as measured by market share and profitability. The study collected data from 1,286 small and medium enterprises in Poland using a quantitative survey design. The population comprised owners and managers of SMEs across various industries, and a sample of 1,286 respondents was drawn using random sampling. Data were analysed using structural equation modelling and regression analysis. The findings revealed that agility capabilities positively impacted competitive position, with flexibility having the strongest effect on market share growth ($\beta = 0.41$, $p < 0.001$), and responsiveness having the strongest effect on profitability ($\beta = 0.38$, $p < 0.001$). The study concluded that agility capabilities are essential for firms to improve their market position and achieve sustainable success. The researchers recommended that firms should develop all four agility capabilities, but with particular emphasis on flexibility when the goal is market share growth.

Gap in Literature/Knowledge

Although earlier studies have shown that strategic agility can drive venture success in service industries (Felipe et al., 2020; Zastempowski & Cyfert, 2023), there is not enough empirical research focused on Nigerian telecommunication firms, especially in Rivers State. Moreover, existing studies have not clearly examined how the specific dimensions of strategic agility, namely operational agility and market agility, directly affect key measures of venture success, such as market share growth and customer retention, within the Rivers State telecom market context. While some Nigerian studies have examined related concepts like entrepreneurial orientation (Wegwu & Princewill, 2022) and competitive aggressiveness (Amakor et al., 2026) in Rivers State, a specific focus on strategic agility dimensions remains underexplored. This gap shows the need for research that studies these links in the local context to give context-specific insights for strategic management in the Rivers State telecommunication industry.

Methodology

The study adopted a descriptive survey research design to examine the relationship between strategic agility and venture success among telecommunication firms in Rivers State, Nigeria. The population comprised 62 registered telecommunication service providers operating in Rivers State. The study adopted a census approach. Purposive sampling was employed to select top and middle management staff who were directly involved in strategic planning, service management, and customer response within these firms. A total of 110 structured questionnaires were distributed, and 96 were retrieved and deemed valid for analysis. Data were collected using a structured questionnaire designed to measure operational agility, market agility, market share growth, and customer retention. Content validity was confirmed through expert review by lecturers and

researchers in strategic management and business administration. A pilot test involving ten respondents outside the study area produced a Cronbach's Alpha of 0.86, indicating high reliability of the instrument. Data were analysed using the Pearson Product-Moment Correlation Coefficient (PPMCC) with the aid of SPSS version 25. All hypotheses were tested at a 0.05 significance level to determine the strength and significance of the relationships between strategic agility dimensions and venture success measures. The methodology ensured that the study produced reliable and valid findings relevant to the strategic context of telecommunication firms in Rivers State.

Results and Discussion

Ho₁: There is no significant relationship between Operational Agility and Market Share Growth of telecommunication firms in Rivers State.

Table 4.2: Bivariate Analysis between Operational Agility and Market Share Growth

	Operational Agility	Market Share Growth
Operational Agility	1.000	.712**
	.	.000
	92	92
Market Share Growth	.712**	1.000
	.000	.
	92	92

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

There is a strong positive correlation ($r = .712^{**}$) between Operational Agility and Market Share Growth, significant at the 0.01 level. The null hypothesis is rejected, showing that telecommunication firms with higher operational agility experience greater market share growth.

Ho₂: There is no significant relationship between Market Agility and Customer Retention of telecommunication firms in Rivers State.

Table 4.3: Bivariate Analysis Between Market Agility and Customer Retention

	Market Agility	Customer Retention
Market Agility	1.000	.694**
	.	.000
	92	92
Customer Retention	.694**	1.000
	.000	.
	92	92

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

A strong positive correlation ($r = .694^{**}$) exists between Market Agility and Customer Retention, significant at the 0.01 level. The null hypothesis is rejected, indicating that telecommunication firms with stronger market agility achieve significantly higher customer retention.

Relationship between Operational Agility and Market Share Growth

The finding shows a strong positive correlation ($r = .712^{**}$) between Operational Agility and Market Share Growth, significant at the 0.01 level. This indicates that telecommunication firms in Rivers State that can change their internal processes, workflows, and resource use quickly are more likely to grow their share of the market and win customers from rivals. The result aligns with the Dynamic Capabilities Theory, which suggests that firms with the ability to sense and respond fast achieve lasting competitive advantage (Tece et al., 2016; Alkhamery et al., 2024). Specifically, the seizing and transforming aspects of dynamic capabilities explain how operational agility enables firms to reconfigure internal processes to capture market opportunities. It also supports earlier empirical evidence showing that operational agility drives market share growth in fast-moving service markets (Felige et al., 2020; Zastempowski & Cyfert, 2023). The finding is consistent with

Zastempowski and Cyfert's (2023) result that flexibility (a key component of operational agility) had the strongest effect on market share growth ($\beta = 0.41, p < 0.001$). Furthermore, this finding aligns with recent Nigerian studies by Oli and Ibrahim (2024) which showed that tactical planning—requiring operational flexibility—positively affects business growth, and by Amakor et al. (2026) which showed that competitive action intensity significantly relates to subscriber growth rate in Rivers State.

Relationship between Market Agility and Customer Retention

A strong positive correlation ($r = .694^{**}$) was observed between Market Agility and Customer Retention, significant at the 0.01 level. This implies that telecommunication firms in Rivers State that sense changes in customer likes, competitor actions, and market conditions, and then respond fast, are better able to keep their existing customers loyal. The result reinforces the Dynamic Capabilities Theory view that sensing and responding abilities enable firms to keep performance advantages over time (Teece, 2018; Makumbe & Tapfuma, 2023). The sensing micro-foundation of dynamic capabilities directly explains how market agility helps firms detect shifts in customer preferences and competitor moves, while the seizing capability explains how they respond quickly with suitable service adjustments. This finding is consistent with earlier studies showing that market agility improves customer retention in service and telecommunication industries (Felipe et al., 2020; Sahi et al., 2024). It also aligns with the findings of Wegwu and Princewill (2022) in Rivers State, which showed that proactiveness and innovativeness are substantially connected to competitiveness, and with Ologbosere and Erwat (2024) who found that market sensing significantly boosts service performance in Nigerian telecom firms.

Conclusion

This study examined the relationship between strategic agility and venture success of telecommunication firms in Rivers State, focusing on operational agility and market agility as the key dimensions of strategic agility. The findings revealed that both operational agility and market agility have significant positive relationships with market share growth and customer retention. This implies that telecommunication firms that invest in changing their internal operations quickly and sensing market changes fast are more likely to grow their market share and keep loyal customers over time. The study, therefore, concludes that strategic agility is a critical driver of venture success and should be deliberately built to ensure long-term competitiveness and market strength in the telecommunication industry in Rivers State.

Recommendations

1. Telecommunication firms in Rivers State should improve operational agility by investing in faster decision-making systems, flexible workforce management, and quick response processes for network issues, thereby strengthening market share growth and long-term competitiveness.
2. Telecommunication firms should improve market agility by setting up regular customer feedback systems, tracking competitor pricing and promotions, and launching new offers quickly based on market signals, thereby ensuring higher customer retention and steady market position.

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