

# **APPLICATION OF THE ANALYTIC HIERARCHY PROCESS IN DETERMINING RELATIVE IMPORTANCE OF RELATIONSHIP MARKETING VARIABLES FOR COMPANIES IN THE NIGERIAN FOOD AND BEVERAGE INDUSTRY**

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## **ABSTRACT**

Marketing practices and strategies are situation specific and are a function of many variables. Hence, organizations will need to design different marketing strategies and policies to achieve their set marketing goals and objectives. Relationship marketing is one such contemporary marketing strategy employed in both developed and developing economies. However, to make intelligent relationship marketing decisions, there is a need to adopt the analytic approach. This study investigates how the Analytic Hierarchy Process Model (AHP) can be used by companies in the Nigerian food and beverage industry to develop their strategic relationship marketing mix. To achieve this goal, we adopted the exploratory research method. A random sample of 67 companies was drawn out of a population of 130 companies in the Nigerian food and beverage industry based in Lagos; 600 questionnaires were administered to marketing personnel in these companies, 534 were completed, a return rate of 89%. Questions for this study were generated by making use of variables identified from previous empirical studies that can be used to measure the five relationship marketing variables, namely: Trust, Relationship Commitment, Communication, Internal Marketing and Support and Cooperation. This study revealed the relative importance of the relationship marketing variables. It also showed that the trust and relationship commitment variables are significantly more important than the communication, internal marketing, and support and cooperation variables in the strategic relationship marketing mix of the companies in the Nigerian Food and Beverage Industry.

Keywords: papers, relationship marketing, strategic relationship marketing variables, Nigerian Food and Beverage Industry