

The Telecommunication Sector in Africa. The case of leadership



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Undergraduate and Postgraduate Assignments

Undergraduate and Postgraduate Assignments are designed in order to accommodate conceptual ideas. Moreover, they are designed to identify their relationship to **actual business situations**.

By studying the relationship between 'theories' and 'business cases' students are encouraged to see *how* specific theoretical concepts apply in actual situations where specific challenges and decisions need to be made.

The study of 'sectors' represents a useful opportunity for academics to engage students on how trends remain part of a wider set of conditions. For example, in some countries *austerity measures* have had a detrimental affect on job opportunities. Such trends generated subsequent implications on business having more difficulty trusting each other. However, austerity measures can become a positive force with encouraging people to think more creatively about their circumstances and how to come up with new products and services in order to maximise profit.

MBA Winner is at the forefront of different academic debates supporting students on their academic assignments.

Following requests for help on the telecommunications sector on Africa we chose to make this topic our main focus for this guide.

We take pride on the extensive help we are able to offer and for supporting students in their study.

The Telecommunications Sector in Africa

The **Telecommunications Sector in Africa** offers a rich business context for lecturers because of two reasons:

- (a) it is a 'current' topic. It involves actual trends that take place right now!**
- (b) it is an 'interesting' topic for understanding how waves of competition evolve over time.**

Studying the telecommunication sector in the African continent offers many opportunities for studying the occurrence of *economic, political, technological, social* developments.

- **Leadership** is the study of how decisions are made that involve the whole of the organization. These decisions are taken by individuals that hold senior decision making power. These individuals have the opportunity to influence the organization and its developments.

The Telecommunications Sector

If you have to write an academic assignment on this topic, either as an undergraduate or postgraduate student, then you need to pay attention for how to study the 'sector'. The 'sector' is the word used to discuss the *group of companies* that offer products and services in order to maximise their profits.

A sector is **not** produced because of the corporate desires of the companies themselves. The sector happens to exist because of the *already* existing infrastructure, as well as, ongoing developments that happen because of different forms of economic, social, political changes.

Not all sectors experience the same challenges and opportunities.

Whereas there can be a strong demand for telecommunication services in one country (that includes the wired and mobile telephony, the internet, and similar technologies) there might **not** be such strong demand for a different sector (e.g. the automobile sector). It is difficult to predict how and why consumers might be more interested in a particular sector. There are different factors that influence how waves of consumer demand actually take place over time.

Sector and Markets

A sector is comprised of different markets. Markets are defined as those specific business areas that involve practical business opportunities for selling products and services onto consumers. Within the telecommunications sector we find:

- the mobile phone market
- the internet market
- the satellite cable market

Often, companies are designing services that seek to reach one or more than one market. This is done in order to increase the number of people that buy more than one service from the **same provider**. **Demand for a specific market can vary from consumer demand in similar markets**. For example, whereas wired telephony constitutes an important market nevertheless it is being overpowered by **mobile technologies**. More consumers want faster internet connection and greater size of bandwidth

Managing your assignment topic

If you have been asked to write about an assignment that involves the *telecommunications sector in Africa* then you have to make a **series of choices** in order to better manage how you are going to develop your assignment. The telecommunications sector in Africa consists of many countries that offer different services to consumers.

In order to help you with making a start on your assignment in this help guide we provide you with a range of specific recommendations.

If you would like us to assist you further and to a greater extend then you need to get in contact with us by email support@mbawinner.com

FOCUS

You need to start by thinking about the following issues:

1. The country in which you want to examine the particular sector
2. The company or companies operating in this sector
3. Your academic topic in light of your chosen company.
4. How and why your use theories will apply within the chosen company.

Despite the fact that you might have **not** been given all the information that you need from your tutor and for how to address the assignment, it is important that you take the **initiative!** Narrow down the focus of *how* you are going to approach it. You need to remember that tutors will **not** provide you with all the information for how to complete the assignment during every step of the way. It is *your* responsibility to actually think and make decisions for how you will go about completing it. Hence, it is important that you have a clear focus about how you will address it making certain decisions about what you are going to 'include' or 'exclude' from it.

We know that this experience carries challenges. Some students can feel frustrated by how to go about reaching various milestones. However, MBA Winner is proud to offer a service in support of the students' challenges. We offer you this guidance report so that you can maximise your own learning experience but also opportunities for getting a high grade!

Assignment Structure

It is important that you develop a **rough plan** for how to go about developing your assignment. The structure we suggest that you follow is the following

1. Introduction
2. Main Body
 - The telecommunications sector
 - The company of your choice
 - Discussion of your academic topic (e.g. strategy, leadership, performance management, etc)
3. Conclusion

MAIN BODY

In developing the main body of your work you need to think about 2 important issues:

- **First**, the study of the trends that concern the sector and the specific activities of your chosen organization.
- **Second**, the study of the **topic** that you are asked to address.

In this guide we only focus on *leadership*. However, you might be asked to address the issue of 'strategy', 'employee engagement', 'performance management' and others. **Whatever business topic you are asked to address you need to make sure that you have a 'balanced' approach between the two above mentioned elements.**

The Telecommunications Sector

When starting to examine the telecommunications sector you need to start by looking **at general trends**. Industry reports are useful in offering information about current types of corporate activity. One of the most evident trends that happens in the whole of Africa is the rising levels of economic investment.

Economic Investment

The telecommunications sector in African has grown partly because of the growing foreign investment. This investment is mainly from many countries but it is especially sourced from China. Such investment concerns the intervention on infrastructure improvements.

According to the *Financial Times* (2019) (see <https://www.ft.com/content/9f5736d8-14e1-11e9-a581-4ff78404524e>) it is stated that

It is China's massive infrastructure projects, including dams, railways, ports and telecommunications networks, that capture most attention. Between 2000 and 2014, the stock of Chinese investment in Africa went from 2 per cent of US levels to 55 per cent. McKinsey estimates that, at the current breakneck pace, China will surpass US levels within a decade.

- ➔ As you are presented with information coming from similar reports identify important information about the specific trends and then elaborate on discussing their developments in your own words.
- ➔ Try to be less concerned about your style of writing during this stages of discussion. Instead, just focus on developing your thoughts and place them into a narrative format.
- ➔ By producing additional discussion on the various ideas you have the opportunity to build you overall narrative and make succinct changes as you work with it.

The Company

The study of the telecommunications sector is not enough as an activity on its own and *unless* you are explicitly instructed to only examine trends within the sector. The next important choice you will need to make is deciding on the *company*. A choice of one or more companies is important! This is you will be heavily relying on the information you will collect for responding to the assignment brief. Take your time to consider the type of company you want to examine and the country or countries in which it is operating. Regardless of your academic focus on 'leadership' or 'or 'strategy' provide the **context** of the country as well as the context of the organization.

This is an assignment support guide only. If you require further help with your assignment then please email us at support@mbawinner.com

Some of the African countries that you can explore are the following

- ✚ Uganda
- ✚ Tanzania
- ✚ Nigeria
- ✚ Sudan
- ✚ South Africa
- ✚ Kenya

Issues in Your Own Chosen Company

In seeking to understand about leadership within your chosen company you might be asking the following question: *how can someone know what are the important business practices within my chosen company?* In order to assist you with this we suggest that you break down this 'challenge' into the following points.

A. Get an overall picture about what is important about the company.

This can be done by reading the mission statement in the company's annual report as well as information found on the company's website. You are able to start familiarizing yourself with the particular company and its issues. It is important to pay attention onto key terms used in this information and in order to discuss its 'values' and 'mission'.

B. Understand the company's corporate strategy

In order to understand more about the company's business strategy you need to focus on what the company really wants to achieve into the future and what is the overall leadership that drives its decisions *right now*. You can do this by selecting one of the more well-known-telecommunication players in Africa (see list below).

Orange Egypt

<https://www.orange.eg/en/about/company-overview/>

Telecom Egypt (Egypt)

<https://www.te.eg/wps/portal/te/Personal/>

MTN South Africa

<https://www.mtn.co.za/Pages/Home.aspx>

Vodacom Group (South Africa)

<https://www.vodacom.co.za/>

Telkom (South Africa)

<https://www.telkom.co.za/today/>

MTN Nigeria (Nigeria)

<https://www.mtnonline.com/>

Company Reports

In accessing information about a particular company you will be able to identify the overall mission of the company. For example, if we take Telkom, (an information and communications technology (ICT) services provider in South Africa), we observe the following information as it is presented in its website:

Our customers are at the heart of all we do, and this is reflected in our strategy. Our five strategic objectives are:

- fixed-line retail voice services and calling plans;
- to be South Africa's number one digital transformation partner;
- to grow into South Africa's number-one broadband and data services business;
- to be the communications infrastructure provider of choice;
- to be the largest provider of data-driven digital marketing solutions for South African SMEs, and
- to unlock value by commercialising the property portfolio.

In the above section **carefully** study the language used. We notice the company's main objectives. The question we need to ask now is: *'what do these objectives really mean for the company and why are they set in the first place?'*

The answer to the question needs to be given by further examining the company's *overall* strategy. For example, *'what does it mean for the company to want to be South Africa's number one **digital transformational** partner?'* In studying further about the company, its structure, its mission, its history, its values, etc, you will be able to understand more about its overall leadership approach.

Academic Concepts

In producing your academic assignment it is not acceptable to focus only on the sector and its trends. You also need to focus on how these trends can be understood and explained in light of the *academic concepts* covered in your module. In proceeding with your assignment it is important that you understand academic debates and the relevant theories. For this guidance support we choose to focus on leadership only. If you are asked to look at other business concepts then you need to do the same. Here, our intention is to give you guidance and examples for how to think about your own assignment.

The Challenge

In producing your own assignment the question likely to bother you is:

how do I really decide what information I select and keep and what information do I leave out?

This is a legitimate question and the answer to the question is how YOU choose to identify what is important to discuss in light of the information that you will find. For example, in studying about leadership authors are concerned about two levels.

- The **macro level** concerns the long-term direction that leaders choose to exercise onto the organization. This perspective includes the overall mission and the type of language that is used to influence others to support this mission.
- The **micro level** of leadership concerns how leadership influence takes place on day-to-day basis and involves how methods of communication, the management of challenges, the ways in which leaders are trying to influence others.

Academic tutors are not willing to make too detailed propositions for how to address an assignment. This is because such approach would take away your own sense of liberty and for developing the topic how you think it needs to be developed best! Academic tutors are satisfied with whatever approach students take as long they are able to support and argue for that position in the assignment.

Theories

Theories often become the cause of headaches for students. This is because they seem to be simple to understand, but then, start to become more complicated in explaining them and using them. Following your study of your chosen organization about the telecommunications sector in Africa it is your duty to become familiar with those theories that seem to be prominent within your given academic topics. Your real aim with studying theories is not to generate more confusion and increase your sense of frustration! Instead, it is to understand how a topic is discussed within its academic community of researchers.

Leadership

In the following section we provide you with an extensive list of references to help you start with reading some key publications.

In reading about leadership pay attention onto how authors discuss theories. Theories are conceptual frameworks. They are used to help us understand how and why something happens. Leadership theories include the case of leadership styles

- authoritarian or autocratic
- participative or democratic
- delegative or laissez-fair (free-rein)
- The transactional style
- The transformational style

If you would like to get further help on your specific assignment then please email us at support@mbawinner.com with your assignment request and we will be happy to advise and help you further.

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