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Organisational Factors and Competitive Advantageof Small and Medium-Sized Enterprises in Ogun State, Nigeria.

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Abstract
Small and medium-sized enterprises are globally viewed as an important force driving economic development and employment creation in both developing and developed countries, which is well acknowledged. However, the performance of SMEs in developed and developing economies has been slow and in some cases even collapsed due to a number of challenges confronting this important sub-sector of the world economy. Extant studies on the competitive advantage of small and medium-sized enterprises have attempted to elucidate on the challenges of SMEs and the attendant supposed solutions, conversely, most of the extant research focus more on developed countries than developing countries such as Nigeria. Hence, this study examined the effect of organisational factors on competitive advantage of SMEs in Ogun State, Nigeria. Cross-sectional survey research design was adopted. The population was 2,465 registered small and medium scale enterprises in Ogun State, Nigeria. A sample size of 432 was determined using Cochran formula. Multistage sampling was adopted. A validated questionnaire was used to collect data. Cronbach's alpha reliability coefficients for the constructs ranged from 0.79 to 0.92. The response rate was 87.9%. Data were analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistics. Findings revealed that organizational factors had significant effect on the competitive advantage of SMEs in Ogun state, Nigeria (Adj. R^2= 0.042; F (4,375) = 5.186, p <0.05). It was concluded that organizational factors had significant effect on competitive advantage of SMEs in Ogun State, Nigeria, and recommended thatin order to choose appropriate competitive strategies,small and medium-sized enterprises should target a niche market and be intentional in adequately adopting organizational factorsto enhance their competitive advantage.

Keywords: *Organizational factors, Performance, Competitive advantage, Competitiveness, Small and Medium Enterprises.*

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I. Background To The Study

Small and medium-sized enterprises are globally viewed as an important force driving economic development and employment creation in both growing and developed countries, which is well acknowledged. However, the performance of SMEs in developed and developing economies has been slow and in some cases even collapsed due to a number of challenges confronting this important sub-sector of the world economy. SMEs face challenges from increased competition, the ability to adapt to rapidly changing market demand, technological change, and capacity constraints relating to knowledge, innovation, and creativity (Mazanai & Fatoki, 2015).Small and medium scale enterprises account for over 90 percent of all businesses in developed countries thereby signifying their importance (Fjose, Grunfeld & Green, 2017).

Small and medium scale enterprises also account for 52% of the private work force and 51% to United States of America (USA) GDP (Longenecker, 2015) while in the United Kingdom (UK), they are associated with 62% of total employment and 25% to Gross Domestic Product (Burns, 2011; Day, 2014). Small and medium scale enterprises contribute 79% of Italian employment, 63% and 60% of France and Germany employment respectively (Burns, 2001). In China, SMEs employ 80% of urban population and contribute 60% of GDP (Sham, 2014). SMEs, by number, dominate the world business stage. Although precise, up-to-date data are difficult to obtain, estimates suggest that more than 95% of enterprises across the world are SMEs, accounting for approximately 60% of private sector employment (Ayyagari, 2011).

SMEs play an important role in the African continent compared to the rest of the world. In Morocco, for example, 93% of industrial firms are SMEs, accounting for 38% of the production, 33% of investment and 30% of exports. The contribution of SMEs is considerably higher in South Africa. The estimated 91% of the formal business entities in South Africa that are SMEs contribute 52–57% to GDP. In Ghana, SMEs are even more prominent in the local economy, representing about 92% of Ghanaian businesses and contributing about 70% to Ghana's GDP (Abor & Quartey 2010). When compared with larger businesses, SMEs' contribution to output tends to be lower per firm because they tend to be more labor intensive than larger firms and concentrated in service sectors. They therefore typically achieve lower levels of productivity, though they do contribute significantly to employment (Wymenga, Spanikova, Barker, Konings, & Canton, 2012).

In Nigeria, SMEs have not made the desired impact on the Nigerian economy in spite of all the efforts and support of succeeding administration and governments gives a cause for concern (Osotimehin, 2012). According to Ebitu, Basil and Ufot (2015), SMEs in the southern part of Nigeria, are constantly confronted with issues such as difficulty in managing firm's advertising, lack of adequate marketing research, unawareness of competition, poor branding and packaging, low level of knowledge on business market analysis, poor promotion, poor segmentation strategy, poor pricing technique and unplanned distribution contribute negatively in affecting SMEs' profit margin and their sales volume. Taiwo, Ayodeji and Yusuf (2013) also averred that SMEs operating in Ogun state are constrained by lack of financial support, poor management, corruption, lack of training and experience, poor infrastructure, insufficient profit and low patronage. Oduyoye, Adebola, and Binuyo (2013) suggested that the Ogun state chapter of SMEDAN performed below expectation in linking SMEs with cheaper sources of finance and that SMEs operating in Ogun state are yet to be a beneficiary of SMEDAN's laudable schemes.

Organisational factors are aspects of a company that control its operations and business performance (Ahmed; Brohi; Khuwaja & Othman, 2018). Organisational factors are the core framework and working practices for integrating the principal elements necessary for the achievement of an organisation's long-term objectives and growth in firm's performance (Thaden & Wiegmann, 2004). Organisational factors are known to make the management of firms more credible to investors either in the absence of or in addition to other means of controlling SMEs performance. Organisational factors are crucial especially when it comes to making decisions and solving issues related to the financial problems, and if not well managed and controlled, can lead to poor SMEs performance (Ockley, Senaji, & Kinyanjui, 2017).

Small and medium scale enterprises have been skilled in developing innovations in order to exploit profitable market opportunities but less effective at sustaining the competitive advantages that are based on distinguished firm-specific resources needed to exploit those opportunities over time (Mazanai & Fatoki, 2015). There has been comparatively little research that explores competitive advantage in small firms as compared to studies of competitive advantage in large companies. That competitive advantage in the smaller firm often arises accidentally as a result of particular operating conditions surrounding the enterprise could be shown as one of the main reasons(Oshikoya & Hussain, 2017). In addition, it is thought that traditional competitive advantage models are not completely applicable for smaller firms because they assume the existence of scale economies and it is recognized that small firms cannot compete with larger organizations in terms of economies of scale (Arinaitwe, 2016). Complete understanding of a competitive advantage requires a complex, multidimensional portrayal of all points of superiority or deficiency between a business and its competitors. The creation of a competitive advantage through the development of a competitive strategy entails the ability to compare the firm's position with its competitors (Singh, Garg & Deshmukh, 2014). Based on the global, African, Nigerian and SMEs issues in Ogun state discussed above, this study therefore investigated the effect of organisational factors on competitive advantage of SMEs in Ogun State, Nigeria.

II. Literature Review

Organisational factors are aspects of a company that control its operations and business performance (Ahmed; Brohi; Khuwaja & Othman, 2018). Organisational factors are the core framework and working practices for integrating the principal elements necessary for the achievement of an organisation's long-term objectives and growth in firm's performance (Thaden & Wiegmann, 2004). Organisational factors are known to make the management of firms more credible to investors either in the absence of or in addition to other means of controlling SMEs performance. Organisational factors are crucial especially when it comes to making decisions and solving issues related to the financial problems, and if not well managed and controlled, can lead to poor SMEs performance (Ockley; Senaji, & Kinyanjui, 2017).

Competitive advantage is the process where a firm is able to achieve and sustain profit that exceeds what its competitors are achieving. An Organisation is able to gain a competitive advantage over its competitors by understanding its market, customers. It is a situation whereby an Organisation is able to deliver the same benefits as competitors but at a lower cost (cost advantage), delivers benefits that exceed those of its competitors' products (differentiation advantage) and creates superior value for its customers (Porter, 2010). Competitive advantage is the ability gained through attributes and resources to perform at a higher level than others in the same industry or market (Al-Swidi & Mahmood, 2011). Wang (2014) asserts that an Organisation is able to obtain a competitive advantage by developing or acquiring a set of attributes that will help it to outperform its competitors. Competitive advantage allows a firm to create superior value for its customers and profits for itself.

Aziz and Samad (2016) in their study to "examine the effect of Innovation on the competitive advantage of food manufacturing SMEs in Malaysia" revealed that innovation had a strong positive impact on

SMEs competitive advantage, in which innovation contributed 73.5% of the competitive advantage. The study also found some moderating effect of firm age on the Innovation- competitive advantage relationship. Secluk (2016) in his study on “factors affecting firm competitiveness: evidence from an emerging market”, found positive significant effect of firm size on firm competitiveness indicated by profitability and return on assets. Kiss (2011) carried out a study on the impact of innovation on firm competitiveness in Hungary where he analyzed the determinants of innovation activities and the impact of innovation on competitiveness on Hungarian firms. The study found no significant relationship between innovation and competitiveness. Najib (2013) carried out a study on the internal sources of competitiveness in small and medium Indonesian food processing companies. In the study he examined the potential of market orientation and innovation as sources of competitiveness in food processing SMEs. Competitiveness in the study was represented by business performance. Business performance was operationalized as a composite variable of three measures; sales volume, profitability and market share. Research findings indicate that innovation had positive effects on competitiveness of SMEs. They concluded that innovation was one of the most important factors that can be used to enhance competitiveness.

Underpinning Theory

This study is anchored on resource-based view theory which was propounded by Pfeffer & Salancik in 1978. The resource-based viewtheory claims that firm resources include all assets, capabilities, organisational processes, firm attributes, information, knowledge, and so on, that enable the firm to conceive of and implement strategies that improve its efficiency and effectiveness. The resource-based view theory is selected to guide this study because its assumptions are keen to how organizational factors become modernized and creative to gain increase in SMEscompetitiveness. The justification for this theory was based on its theoretical explanation related to the variables in this research. The primary assumption of the resource-based view theory is that for SMEs to achieve superior performance there is need for them to possess resources and capabilities that cannot be substituted but are rare, valuable and inimitable. The possession of such resources by an organisation that has the capacity to absorb them, will result in the organisation achieving competitive advantage that if sustained may lead to superior performance.

Critiques have also argued that sustainable competitive advantage is not actually achievable since both the skills and resources, and the way the Organisation uses them must constantly change leading to the creation of continuously changing temporary advantages (Fiol, 2001). In a dynamic environment, firms cannot derive sustainable competitive advantage from static resources. Dynamic environments call for dynamic capabilities (Helfat, Finkelstein, Mitchell, Peteraf, Singh, Teece and Winter, 2007) hence this does not nullify the sustainability of RBV. Furthermore, the possession of resources is not sufficient and it is only by being able to deploy these resources that sustainable competitive advantage can be achieved (Makadok, 2001).

III. Methodology

This study adopted cross-sectional survey research design and investigated the effect of organizational factors on competitive advantage of SMEs in Ogun state, Nigeria. The selection of Ogun state, is based on the facts that the state has one the largest concentrations of SMEs operating in Nigeria. The study’s population is two thousand, four hundred and sixty-five (2,465), which are the duly registered Small and Medium Enterprises Development Agency of Nigeria (SMEDAN) as at 31st December 2017. However, adopting the Cochran formula (1997) and a sample size of four hundred and thirty-two (432) was determined with N (the population size) = 2,465; Z (95% confidence interval) = 1.96; P (5% error term) = 0.5; q =1-p; d (degree of accuracy) = 0.05.

$$nn = \frac{2{,}465\ (1.96)^2 \times 0.5 \times 0.5}{(0.05)^2\ (2{,}465 - 1) + (1.96)^2\ (0.5 \times 0.5)} \qquad n = 332$$

Based on the attitude of respondents and as recommended by Zikmund, Babin, Carr, and Griffin (2010), the sample size became432 which was adopted for the study through the addition of 30% of the calculated sample (332 + 100 = 432) to make up for nonresponse issues as well as compensate for errors and omissions in questionnaire response. The study utilized primary data collected with a structured questionnaire adapted from extant literature as follows: Abbasi, Wang, & Danish (2017); Amaradiwakara & Gunatilake (2016); Aminu (2018); Begonja, Cicek, Balboni & Gerbin (2016); Cyril, Renuel, & Meshach (2018).Hoffman & Tadelis (2018); Kum, (2018); Rohrbeck & Kum, (2018); Sayyadi-Tooranloo & Saghafi, (2018) and Waweru, (2016).

In order to evaluate the effect of organizational factors (X) on competitive advantage (Y), an econometric model was developed.

$Y = f(X)^n$.

Where:
Y = Dependent Variable
X = Independent Variable
Hence the model was structured as such;
$CA = \beta_0 + \beta_1 TC + \beta_2 AF + \beta_3 IN + \beta_4 MS + \mu_i$------------------------- Eqn 1
Where:
CA = competitive advantage; Organisational Factors (TC = Technological Capabilities; AF = Access to Finance; IN = Innovation; and MS = Managerial Skill).

IV. Analysis And Findings

Out of the 432 respondents targeted, 380 respondents correctly filled out the research instrument satisfactorily, which is an 87.9%success rate. To test for the hypothesis of this study which states that:Organisational factors do not significantly affect competitive advantage of SMEs in Ogun State, Nigeria, the SPSS process analysis was used examine the effect of organisational factorson competitive advantage of SMEs in Ogun State, Nigeria. Data from three hundred and eighty (380) respondents was collated and analyzed. The results of the process analysis are shown in table 1.

Table 1.1: Summary Results of Multiple Regression Analysis of Organizational Factors on Competitive Advantageof the selected SMEs in Ogun state, Nigeria

Model	*B*	*T*	*Sig.*	*F*(4,375)	R^2	Adj. R^2	F(Sig)
(Constant)	13.640	7.405	.000	5.186	0.052	0.042	0.000
Technological Capability	.091	1.512	.131				
Access to Finance	.098	1.698	.090				
Firm Innovation	.065	1.090	.276				
Managerial Skill	.111	2.031	.043				

a. Dependent Variable: competitive advantage
b. Predictors: (Constant), Managerial Skill, Technological Capability, Innovation, Access to Finance
Source: Researcher's Field Survey Data (2020)

Table 1.1 shows the multiple regression analysis results for the effect organizational factors (technological capabilities, access to finance, firm innovation and managerial skills) on Competitive advantage of the selected SMEs in Ogun state, Nigeria. The results revealed that out of the organisational factors, only managerial skill ($B = 0.111$, $t = 2.031$, $p = 0.043<0.05$) has positive and significant effect on competitive advantage of the selected SMEs in Ogun state, Nigeria. However, technological capabilities ($B = 0.091$, $t = 1.512$, $p = 0.131>0.05$), access to finance ($B = 0.098$, $t = 1.698$, $p = 0.090>0.05$) and firm innovation ($B = 0.065$, $t = 1.090$, $p = 0.276>0.05$) have positive but insignificant effect on Competitive advantage of the selected SMEs. This implies that only managerial skill is a significant predictor of competitive advantage of the selected SMEs in the study area.

The results further reveal that organizational factors (technological capabilities, access to finance, firm innovation and managerial skills) explained 4.2% of the changes or variation in Competitive advantage of the selected SMEs in Ogun state ($Adj.\ R^2 = 0.042$). However, the model did not explain 95.8% of the variation in competitive advantage of the selected SMEs, implying that there are other factors associated with competitive advantage of the selected SMEs in Ogun State were not captured in the model. Also, the results of Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) for regression coefficients used to test the significance of the overall regression model revealed F ratio of 5.186 with p-value of 0.000 which was less than 0.05 [$F_{(4,375)} = 5.186$, $p= 0.000$]. This shows that the overall model was significant in predicting the effect of organizational factors on Competitive advantage of the selected SMEs. This means that at least one of the organizational factors influences the competitive advantageof the selected SMEs in Ogun state. Multiple regression model from the results is thus expressed as:

$CA = 13.640 + 0.111MS$ ……………………… Eq. (i)
Where:
CA = Competitive advantage
MS = Managerial Skills

From the above regression equation above, it was revealed that holding managerial skills constant (at zero), competitive advantageof the selected SMEs will be 13.640. This implies that if managerial skills take on the values of zero (do not exist), there would be 13.640 times level of repetition of the competitive advantage of the selected SMEs in Ogun state, Nigeria. The model shows that an improvement in managerial skills will leads to a change in competitive advantageof the selected SMEs by 0.111 factor. The results reveal that managerial skill

($B = 0.111$, $t = 2.031$, $p = 0.043 < 0.05$) was the most significant predictor (among organizational factors) of Competitive advantageof the selected SMEs while technological capabilities, access to finance and firm innovation were the insignificant predictors of Competitive advantageof the selected SMEs in Ogun state Nigeria ($B = 0.091$, $t = 1,512$ $p = 0.131 > 0.05$), ($B = 0.098$, $t = 1.698$, $p = 0.090 > 0.05$) and ($B = 0.065$, $t = 1.090$, $p = 0.276 > 0.05$) respectively. Since at least one of the regression coefficients was significant at 5% significance level as indicated in Table 4.16, there is a reason to reject the null hypothesis. Therefore, the null hypothesis one (H_{01}) which states that organizational factors do not significantly affect competitive advantage of SMEs in Ogun State, Nigeria is rejected (Adj. $R2 = 0.042$; $F (4,375) = 5.186$).

V. Discussion of Findings

The findings on the hypothesis that organizational factors do not significantly affect competitive advantage of SMEs in Ogun State, Nigeria revealed that organizational factors had significant effect on competitive advantage of SMEs in Ogun State, Nigeria through managerial skills. The findings affirm the positions of past studies that managerial skills influence competitive advantage (Ahmed, 2018; Aduloju, 2014; Olowu & Aliyu, 2015).

Conceptually, managerial skill of the owner-manager is very important to the success or failure of the business (Osamwonyi & Tafamel, 2010). Papulová (2007) identified four areas of managerial skills which includes: Technical skill-this is not skill related to technology, such as skills of engineer. Rather, it represents the managerial skill of using methods like break even analysis in planning or ability to prepare for and structure work in an organisation. Interpersonal Skill-the skill of knowing how to lead people, where manager will have the abilities to motivate workers, solve work conflicts and work with people; Conceptual Skills-the skills of looking at and working with the organisation as a small and controllable unit and appropriately relating it with the surrounding environment and Communication Skills-the skill of receiving and disseminating information. In another view, managerial skills include planning skills-the skill of allocating resources, developing alternatives; organising skill-designing structure, coordinating parts, arranging delegation, and managing conflict and change in an organisation; leading skills-implementing decisions, providing climate, forming communications, and developing personnel; controlling skills-establishing standards, measuring performance, taking action and Instigating self-control.

This agrees with the finding of Olowu and Aliyu (2015) that managerial skills have positive impact on small scale business performance and growth in Nigeria. Another study by Shehu, et al. (2013) in Kano north western Nigeria, through questionnaire method on 278 SMEs established significant relationship between skills and SMEs performance. In line with this Ahmed (2017) examined the relationship between development, managerial factors and managerial performance and its influence on the overall Organisational performance: in the context of size of the Organisation and ownership and found that there is a relationship between managerial factors, managerial performance and Organisational performance. In the same vein the result of this study is supported by the findings of Aduloju (2014) which found that IT is a necessary, but not sufficient, condition for sustainable competitive advantage in customer service. Results showed that the interaction of IT investments and tacit, path-dependent, and firm-specific IT managerial factors significantly explains variations in customer service performance.

Therefore, human capital theory argued that firms will be less willing to pay for general skills primarily because, in a competitive labour market, where workers receive their marginal product, firms could never recoup their investments in general skills, so they will never pay for general training. Moreover, as the skills are classed as ‘generic’ in nature, an employee could easily switch to another employer as their skills are not firm-specific. Thus, the firm would lose its initial investment. Instead, Becker argued that employees themselves would have the right incentives to improve their general skills because, in competitive markets they are the sole beneficiaries of the improvements in their productivity (Acemoglu and Pischke 1999). Moreover, workers can undertake such investments quite easily by accepting a lower wage than their productivity during the period of training (Becker 1964). The logic behind this observation relates to the idea that employees will view paying for general training as an investment, which they anticipate will lead to higher future wages, regardless of the firm they are working with.

VI. Conclusion And Recommendations

The study on the basis of the findings as discussed above concludes that there was positive statistically and significant effect of organizational factors on competitive advantage of small and medium scale enterprises in Ogun State, Nigeria. The study indicated that with the appropriate knowledge and skills, an organisation would have the necessary resources to adapt to the changing environment and remain competitive in the market. The influence of the shortcomings in their organisational factors on competitive advantage can also be minimized. Basically, this study also produced theoretical evidence that specifically supported the theory of RBV, which posited that the market structure and industrial structure do not affect competitive advantage, but rather the internal resources of an organisation. The organisational factors are able to withstand the risk of imitation, which make these internal resources highly valuable for an organisation. Thus, it can be theoretically assumed that these resources reflect the success of an organisation. In view of the findings of this study, it is recommended that in order to choose appropriate competitive strategies small businesses should target a niche market and be intentional in adequately adopting organizational factors to enhance their competitive advantage.Future researchers could carry out a comparative study of other industries and SMEs so as to observe and compare this study findings with other industries and this will enable the researcher to compare results.

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