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Organizational Agility and Performance of Small and Medium Enterprises in Bauchi State, Nigeria

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Abstract: *This study investigated the relationship between Organizational Agility and Performance of SMEs in Bauchi state, Nigeria. Organizational Agility was conceptualized as the independent variable with Information Technology Adoption, Leadership and Resource Fluidity as dimensions. The study adopted the cross-sectional survey in its investigation of the variables. Primary source of data was generated through self- administered questionnaire. The population of this study was the entire SMEs registered under SMEDAN in Bauchi metropolis, totaling 364. The sample size for a given population was determined using the Krejcie and Morgan (1970) table. The table determined that our sample size should be 183 for our population. The simple random sampling technique will be applied in this study as the sample procedure. The research instrument was validated while the reliability of the instrument was achieved by the use of the Cronbach Alpha coefficient with all the items scoring above 0.70. Data generated were analyzed and presented using both descriptive and inferential statistical techniques. The hypotheses were tested using the Spearman's Rank Order Correlation Statistics. The tests were carried out at a 95% confidence interval and a 0.05 level of significance. The findings revealed a positive and significant relationship exist between Organizational Agility and Performance of SMEs in Bauchi state, Nigeria. The study recommends that there should be constant utilization and reallocation of resources in the SMEs. Labor mobility and institutionalization of job rotations that ensure that knowledge is shared should be implemented by the firms. Also, the study recommends that flexible budgets should be used and a continuous change in environmental dynamics is maintained.*

Keywords: *Information Technology Adoption, Leadership, Organizational Agility, Performance and Resource Fluidity*

INTRODUCTION

The environment in which business organizations conduct their activities is continually evolving, increasingly unpredictable, turbulent, and complex (Ansell & Trondal, 2018). Businesses ought to be dynamic and adopt management practices oriented towards agility. Firms have to rapidly respond by adopting strategies that equip their personnel, invest in technology, and research to compete favorably to manage uncertain situations. Agile organizations have structures, information systems, and personnel to respond to market variations and probable disruptions through their conversion into competitive opportunities. Garcia-Alcaraz et al. (2020) opine that agility is mandatory for ensuring the business thrives and expands with customer satisfaction as the core pillar.

Irrespective of a firm's size, industry, or age, the concept of organizational agility cannot be ignored. These businesses operate in open systems where interactions with other businesses and stakeholders present diverse challenges and uncertainties that ought to be handled to guarantee business continuity (Arokodare, Asikhia & Makinde, 2019). Strategic agility enables businesses to respond to global trends as it enables firms to continually and adequately adjust to the business environment that is both very unpredictable and uncertain (Arokodare, Asikhia & Makinde, 2019). In the same breath, Aminattalab and Ansari (2016) posit that a company's performance is dependent on its strategic agility approaches towards its rivals, clients, suppliers, partners, and government policies. This proposal was anchored on two basic theories; contingency and dynamic capabilities theories. The dynamic capabilities theory posits that firms are obligated to inorganizational, build, and reconfigure their internal and external competencies to respond effectively and efficiently to the fast evolving business environment. On the other hand, the contingency theory was proposed by Tosi and Slocum (1984) and posits that the best solution to a problem depends on diverse aspects such as the environment, technology, and people involved. Thus, this study adopts an open systems approach where SMEs interact with other factors and participants in the business environment besides drawing the resources to achieve their goals from the same environment.

Small and medium enterprises (SMEs) are an important sector in the growth and development of any economy in the world. For instance, in the European Union's businesses, 99% were SMEs and contributed 84% of the jobs created between 2002 and 2012. Across the Asian Pacific, 90% of all businesses are SMEs and account for more than 60% of the labor force (Auzzir Haigh & Amaratunga, 2018). The World Bank (2015) emphasized the significance of SMEs in developing countries economic growth – up to 45% of the labor force and accounted for more than a third of gross domestic product (GDP).

Small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) make up a significant portion of Nigeria's economy and contribute significantly to its gross domestic product (GDP). According to a report by the National Bureau of Statistics, SMEs account for about 96% of businesses in Nigeria and employ about 70% of the country's workforce. Like all other organizations, SMEs that are not agile enough to respond to these changing dynamics would not survive the rivalry in the market. The study assessed the relationship between organizational agility and performance of SMEs in Bauchi state, Nigeria

This study provided answers to the following research questions

i. What is the relationship between resource fluidity and performance of SMEs in Bauchi Metropolis?
ii. What is the relationship between leadership and performance of SMEs in Bauchi Metropolis?
iii. What is the relationship between information technology adoption performances of SMEs in Bauchi Metropolis?

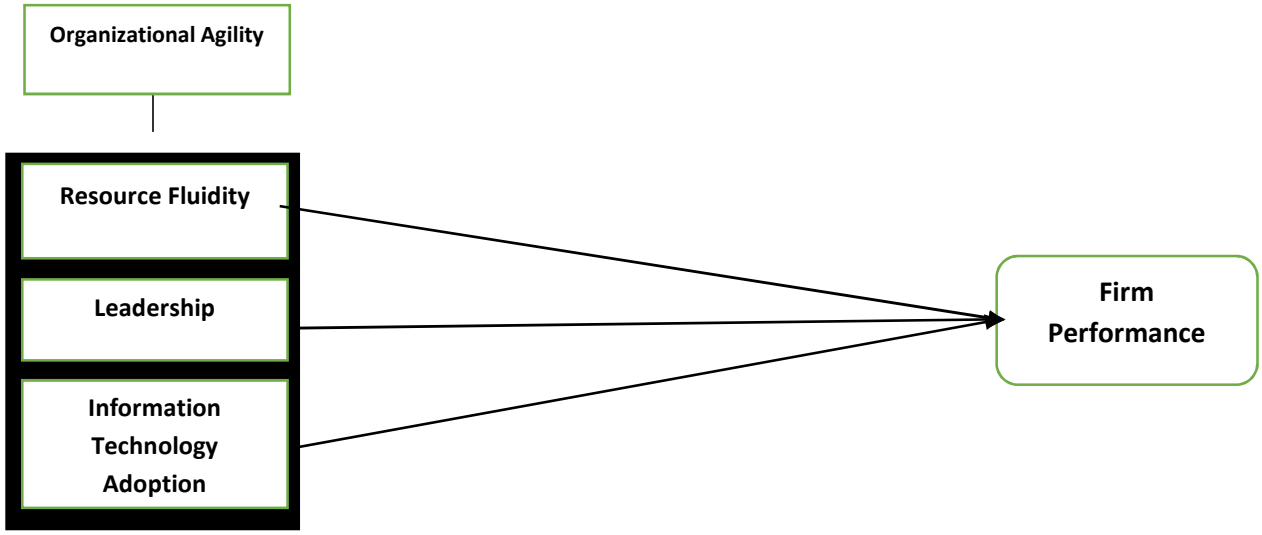

Figure 1: Conceptual Framework showing relationship between study Variables

LITERATURE REVIEWS

Theoretical Framework

Resource-Based Theory

Barney (1991) and Wernerfelt (1984) provide a clear case of the significance of this theory by arguing that organizations gain competitive advantage through using diverse resources that are rare and that such firms can sustain competitive advantage when the said resources are inimitable or non-substitutable by competitors. This theory notes that possessing the resources alone is not sufficient; organizations need to leverage their internal capabilities to respond to the changing economic environment to be agile (Badrinarayanan, Ramachandran & Madhavaram, 2019).

According to this theory, firms achieve a competitive advantage by possessing valuable and rare resources and competencies that are not easily imitable and hard to substitute by the competitors. By possessing these resources and capabilities, firms can deploy them and attain superior performance relative to their competitors. While this theory is applicable to this study as it can inform the acquisition and deployment of strategic resources, it is critiqued for only focusing on firms that want to achieve competitive advantage. Another limitation of this theory is that it places little emphasis on its capabilities to utilize its resources to attain a competitive advantage. The theory provides insufficient information on how managers acquire these resources and orchestrate them by leveraging their capabilities to augment organizational productivity, agility, and competitiveness (Badrinarayanan, Ramachandran & Madhavaram, (2019). However, to stay competitive, SMEs need to adjust to the changing business environment by using diverse resources, including technology, human resources, and their networks with other industry players. These assertions imply that the propositions of the RBT would enable SMEs to capitalize on the resources and capabilities they have to become agile and perform better.

Contingency Theory

The contingency theory was initiated in 1964 by Fiedler, who argued that an optimal course of action relies on the internal and external situations of an organization. This assertion implies that inter and intra-organizational factors are vital in how a firm is prepared to respond to the

environment's unexpected changes. The contingency theory attempts to comprehend the interrelationships within and among a firm's subsystems and the way the organization as a whole interacts with the business environment in which it operates (Dahlgaard-Park, Reyes & Chen, 2018). The underlying assumptions of this theory include; that the better fit between the firm's subunits and the environment, the better the performance; that performance is measured using financial measures only; and that causal inference is made amid the respective variables, even though the deterministic causal model may not be applicable. The suggested theory mirrors the current study as it considers firms operating in an open system where information and resources are exchanged through the input-process-output approach.

In the case of SMEs, the input encompasses the internal and external variations; the process encompasses firms' responses to these changes and the outputs as results or performance of the firms based on responses to these variations in the environment. The contingency theory is critiqued for lack of clarity as there are no concrete contingent variables that organizations have to focus on to improve their performance. The theory was also criticized for being simplistic and adopting a deterministic approach that cannot solve circular problems (Patil, et. al. 2020). However, the continued interest in research on organizational agility and performance validates the assumptions of the contingency theory, especially regarding the need to identify diverse environmental factors that firms have to focus on to achieve a competitive edge.

Concept of Performance

Performance is the competency of an organization to transform the resources within the firm in an efficient and effective manner to achieve organizational goals (Al Karim, 2019). (Al Karim, 2019). Organizational goals vary depending on the purpose for which they are established. Like manufacturing companies, businesses have three main objectives: survival, growth, and profit. Establishing organizational goals, tracking progress toward those goals, and making necessary adjustments to meet those goals more effectively and efficiently are all part of organizational performance (Adubasim, Unaam, & Ejo-Orusa, 2018). Organizational performance is the difference between an organization's actual output or results and its intended outputs (or goals and objectives). Organizational performance is related to the firm's productivity and effectiveness. It is a contextual idea related to the phenomenon under investigation (Adubasim & Odunayo, 2019).

Organizational performance is primarily influenced by management style, followed by employees' proper and active participation in achieving the organizations' strategic goals. Strategic goals are fulfilled by adhering to established plans and procedures as well as by creating and acquiring new knowledge across all areas of the organization's activity. Some businesses will focus on their interactions with customers in an effort to improve customer satisfaction and retention through a deeper comprehension of their wants and needs. Other businesses will concentrate on their goods (continually developing new ideas and getting them to market quickly). The third category of businesses primarily focuses on internal operations (exchange of best practices among various departments, cost-cutting, and increased productivity) (Aguinis & Glavas, 2019). Anyhow, a variety of obvious results, including an increase in sales, improved productivity, efficiency, and return on investment, among others, express organizational performance. An organizational performance index gauges how well an institution or organization has accomplished its objectives (George, Walker & Monster, 2019). According to another definition, organizational performance is a tool for improving organizational, team,

and individual outcomes by taking certain standards and goals into account. It is obvious that whenever individuals are aware of what they are expected to do, and are involved in setting those expectations, they make great effort to fulfill them as well (Ronnie & Philip, 2021).

Organizational Agility

Organizational agility refers to firm's ability to sense opportunities and threats and respond by assembling the needed organizational resources with rapidity (Wamba, Akter & Guthrie, 2020). Agility, as a business concept, was coined in a manufacturing context – particularly in relation to flexible manufacturing systems (Del Giudice, et al. 2021). Agile organization has the ability to survive and prosper in a competitive environment of continuous and unpredictable change by reacting quickly and effectively to changing markets, driven by customer-defined products and services. An agile system has capabilities (hard and soft technologies, human resources, educated management, and information) to meet the rapidly changing needs of the marketplace (speed, flexibility, customers, competitors, suppliers, infrastructure, and responsiveness) (Schirrmacher & Schoop (2018). Organizational agility emphasizes on speed and flexibility as the primary attributes (Žitkienė & Deksnys (2018). An equally important attribute of agility is the effective response to change and uncertainty. Responding to change in proper ways and exploiting and taking advantages of changes are the main characteristics of an agile organization.

Gligor, et. al. (2019) proposed that organizational agility is the successful application of responses such as speed, flexibility, innovation, and quality by the means of the integration of reconfigurable resources and best practices of knowledge-rich environment to provide customer-driven products and services in a fast changing environment. Williams & Olajide (2020) note that organization agility helps an organization sustain competitive advantages in turbulent environments.

Empirical Review

Resource Fluidity and Firm Performance

Kitur & Kinyua (2020) investigated to establish the effect of resource fluidity to organizational performance on two manufacturing firms in Nigeria. A survey research design was utilized, and sample selection was done by use of a stratified sampling method in different departments. The research instruments used to collect data were questionnaires, and a 92% response rate was realized. Inferential and descriptive statistics were utilized in the data analysis. From the findings, resource fluidity has a positive effect on performance. The study, however, used perceived performance as the dependent variable. The current study made use of non-financial indicators to measure performance.

In a study to determine the interactive effect of resource fluidity to organizational performance in Nigeria, AlTaweel & Al-Hawary (2021) used a stratified random sampling. The sample size was one hundred and six. The study used a questionnaire to collect data, which was analyzed using descriptive statistics. The tests of hypotheses were done using Multiple Analysis of Variance, Canonical Correlation, and Multiple regression analysis. The results established that there is no significant relationship between resource fluidity and organizational performance. However, the study used financial indicators to measure organizational performance. The current study used non-financial indicators. It also used proportionate random sampling in the sample selection.

Locally, Wangasa (2018) investigated the effect of strategic agility on the performance of the 43 accredited commercial banks in Kenya. Using primary data collected from semi-questionnaires, the study used resource fluidity, collective commitment, and strategic agility sensitivity as the independent variables. The performance indicators used were financial. The results of the study established that resource fluidity has a significant impact on the performance of commercial banks in Kenya. The current study focused on the tours and travel industry and utilizes non-financial indicators to measure organizational performance.

HO1: Resource fluidity has no significant relationship with performance of SMEs in Bauchi Metropolis.

Leadership and Firm Performance

Liu, Jarrett & Maitlis, (2022) examined the impact of strategic leadership on performance and identified ecological and administrative attributes that recount to speed of decisions. The study was conducted based on data collected from 318 Chief Executive Officers (CEOs) for the period 1996-2000. The study was drawn upon the strategic decision-making model and organizational theory to build a hypothesis that decision speed acts as a mediator in the association between organizational and environmental attributes and performance. The results of the study indicate that strategic leadership speed affects organizational growth and profits.

Alrowwad & Abualoush (2020) researched on the association among transformational leadership and performance of 56 high-technology startup companies in the USA using structural equation modeling techniques. The study found out that transformational leadership has a strong positive impact on the performance of startup firms as compared to already established companies. This study, however, did not consider more extensive factors like the tasks performed by subordinates and management as a team to measure leadership. Also, the study relied on data from only the technology industry. Therefore, it is difficult to establish the degree to which the findings of the study can be generalized to other industries.

Kalsoom, Khan & Zubair, (2018) examined the effect of leadership styles on organizational performance in Pakistan and established that leadership speed has a significant effect on firm performance. The study used a quantitative research design, and a questionnaire was utilized to collect the data which was analyzed using the SPSS. Para-González, Jiménez-Jiménez & Martínez-Lorente, (2018) conducted a study to investigate the effect of transformational leadership on firm performance through knowledge and innovation in Spain. The study established that transformational leadership affected slack knowledge, organizational learning, and innovation.

Para-González, Jiménez-Jiménez & Martínez-Lorente, (2018) sought to inspect the relationship between top management leadership andd firm performance in Korea. The empirical study analyzed 4,468 respondents from 147 firms belonging to different industries. The study used corporate survey data, and a stratified random sample from listed private firms in the Korea Investors Service (KIS) was drawn. The study showed that top management leadership has a significant effect on the performance of organizations. The study only used financial information to measure firm performance and excluded the non-financial information.

HO2: Leadership has no significant relationship with performance of SMEs in Bauchi Metropolis.

Information Technology and Firm Performance

Para-González, Jiménez-Jiménez & Martínez-Lorente, A. R. (2018) conducted a study to examine the association among strategic information technology alignment and agility. A sample of 1,600 firms was randomly drawn from a population of 2,826 widely operated companies in S&P Compustat. The focus of the study involved two areas of expertise, that is, information technology and business strategy. The study established a positive association between alignment and agility. It also found out that agility was positively connected to performance. Further, the study established that environmental volatility did positively moderate the association between alignment and agility.

In their study on the effect of Information Technology capabilities on organizational performance with mediating roles of absorptive capacity and supply chain agility, Burananuth & Tamprateep, (2019) established that absorptive capacity had an indirect effect on performance by shaping supply chain agility. The variables used in the study were flexible information communication infrastructure, information technology assimilation, absorptive capacity, supply chain agility, and firm performance. The control variables used include firm size and IT department size.

Benitez, et. al. (2018) examined the relationship between information technology (IT) and organizational performance in the US. The information technology resources in the study were considered to be; IT infrastructure, human IT Resources, and IT-enabled intangibles. The results of the study established that organizations with high information technology ability outperformed firms with low information technology capability in terms of cost-based performance and profit-based performance measures. The study however utilized external rankings of IT leaders to measure superior IT capacity which has inherent potential biases because they are not founded on the objective evaluation of an organization's IT resources.

HO3: Information Technology Adoption has no significant relationship with performance of SMEs in Bauchi Metropolis.

METHODOLOGY

The cross-sectional survey approach was used to collect data for the study. The population of this study was the entire SMEs registered under SMEDAN in Bauchi metropolis, totaling 364. The sample size for a given population was determined using the Krejcie and Morgan (1970) table. The table determined that our sample size should be 183 for our population. The simple random sampling technique will be applied in this study as the sample procedure. With the help of the SPSS Package version 23, descriptive statistics and Spearman's rank correlation were employed for data analysis and hypothesis testing.

DATA ANALYSIS AND RESULTS

Bivariate Analysis

The hypothesis test included the bivariate hypotheses Ho_1, Ho_2 and Ho_3, which were all expressed in the null form. To conduct the analysis, we used the Spearman Rank (rho) statistic. The 0.05 significance level is used as a threshold for the probability of either accepting or rejecting the null hypotheses at ($p>0.05$).

Table 1: Correlation Matrix showing Relationship between Organizational Agility and Firm Performance

			Firm Performance	Resource Fluidity	Leadership	Information Technology Adoption
Spearman's rho	Firm Performance	Correlation Coefficient	1.000	.723**	.803**	.811**
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.	.000	.000	.000
		N	159	159	159	159
	Resource Fluidity	Correlation Coefficient	.723**	1.000	.685**	.706**
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.	.000	.000
		N	159	159	159	159
	Leadership	Correlation Coefficient	.803**	.685**	1.000	.738**
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.	.000
		N	159	159	159	159
	Information Technology Adoption	Correlation Coefficient	.811**	.706**	.738**	1.000
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000	.
		N	159	159	159	159

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

Source: Research Data, 2023 (SPSS output, version 23.0)

The table above illustrates the test for the three previously postulated bivariate hypothetical statements.

HO1: Resource fluidity has no significant relationship with performance of SMEs in Bauchi Metropolis.

The correlation coefficient 0.732 shows that there is a strong and positive relationship between resources fluidity and firm performance. The p value 0.000<0.05 indicates that the relationship is significant. Therefore, the null hypothesis is hereby rejected and the alternate upheld. Thus, resource fluidity has significant relationship with performance of SMEs in Bauchi Metropolis.

HO2: Leadership has no significant relationship with performance of SMEs in Bauchi Metropolis.

The correlation coefficient 0. 803 shows that there is a positive and strong relationship between leadership and firm performance. The p value 0.000<0.05 indicates that the relationship is positive but weak. Therefore, the null hypothesis is hereby rejected and the alternate upheld. Thus, leadership has significant relationship with performance of SMEs in Bauchi Metropolis.

HO3: Information Technology Adoption has no significant relationship with performance of SMEs in Bauchi Metropolis.

The correlation coefficient 0. 811 shows that there is a positive but weak relationship between Information Technology Adoption and firm performance. The p value 0.000<0.05 indicates that the relationship is positive but weak. Therefore, the null hypothesis is hereby rejected and the alternate upheld. Thus, there is a significant relationship between information technology adoption has significant relationship with performance of SMEs in Bauchi Metropolis.

Discussion of Findings

Using the Spearman's rank order correlation tool and a 95% confidence interval, the data demonstrated a strong and positive significant relationship between organizational agility and performance of SMEs in Bauchi Metropolis. This study's findings indicated that the dimensions of Organizational agility (Resources fluidity, Leadership and Information Technology Adoption) had a significant relationship with performance of SMEs. This finding was backed by Mikalef, et. al. (2020) who in their study established that organizational agility or the ability to execute innovations and competitive moves with speed, surprise, and competitive disruption has attracted significant attention as a business capability for enhancing operational performance in the current business environments. Agile firms are resilient to shocks and upheavals in their business

environments; they are adaptive to emerging opportunities, and entrepreneurial in creating new business models or significant operational improvement (DiBella, J. et. al. 2022).

Similarly, Ullah & Narain (2021), posits that firms focus on mass customization and postponement strategies, which allow more space to respond to demand changes in a flexible way. Organizations also promote information systems (IS) as platforms that foster agility by helping achieve time reductions and quality enhancements in product design and development (Frayret Nagel & Preiss, 2001), and by facilitating communication necessary to coordinate work activities for enhanced operational performance. Dove (2005) in a study to establish the relationship between knowledge management and agility notes that knowledge management can enable agility by providing greater or faster awareness of changes. Brunsson, & Olsen, (2018) contends that the capacity to change the organization and business rules by which it operate can make the business more effective and efficient in its operations. Furthermore, Chen, C. J. (2018) in their study describe agility as an edge in an organization, noting that organization uses various mechanisms to be agile to cope with the ever-changing business environment and to achieve and maintain enhanced operational performance to achieve competitiveness.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Small and Medium Enterprises are becoming a force to reckon when it comes to the matters of economic development. The first specific study objective was to determine the relationship between resource fluidity and the performance of SMEs in Bauchi metropolis. The study concluded that resource fluidity had a statistically significant relationship with the performance of SMEs in Bauchi metropolis. The second specific objective of the study was to determine the relationship between leadership and performance of SMEs in Bauchi metropolis. The study concluded that there was a statistically significant relationship between leadership and performance of SMEs in Bauchi metropolis. Similarly, the third specific study objective was to establish the relationship between information technology adoption and performance of information technology. The study thus concludes that there exist a significant relationship between organizational agility and performance of SMEs in Bauchi metropolis in Bauchi state, Nigeria.

The study thus recommends that:

i. There should be constant utilization and reallocation of resources in the SMEs. Labor mobility and institutionalization of job rotations that ensure that knowledge is shared should be implemented by the firms. Also, the study recommends that flexible budgets should be used and a continuous change in environmental dynamics is maintained.
ii. SMEs should implement a proper flow of information as well as create avenues where staff a involved in making some of the decisions that affects them. The SMEs can also make use of a workforce architecture that focuses on role categorization, rewards, competencies, and key performance indicators.
iii. SMEs should promote more information business partnerships with other companies to boost their performance. The management of SMEs need to encourage integration by

rotating IT managers and provide IT over site to the managers who oversee other functions.

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