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Market Orientation and Business Success of Small and Medium Scale Enterprises in Port Harcourt

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Abstract: *In theory, marketing orientation (MO) represents an established concept using a wide spectrum of approaches, methods, and tools and it may be considered as a strategy achieving sustainable competitive advantage. Although this concept has been thoroughly examined in various studies there is a research gap regarding the business success of small and medium enterprises (SMEs) in Port Harcourt and its environment. This paper aims to examine and evaluate the degree of marketing orientation in businesses from SMEs in Port Harcourt and its environs. Thus, to identify relationships between their marketing orientation and business success, a meta-analysis was used to explore the behavioral perspective for marketing orientation measurement using MARKOR scales as a base. It was shown from the Meta-analysis that, marketing orientation of businesses and their success on the market via chosen business performance indicators will exhibit better financial, economic, respectively market results. These findings will help businesses identify beneficial elements of marketing orientation that could be implemented to improve business success and position on the market. It was then recommended amongst others that managers should endeavor to foster a market orientation in their organizations while paying close attention to the selection of target markets and the allocation of effort among competing opportunities to maximize the potential for sales growth, customer retention, market share, and profitability. Thus, to overcome the shortcomings, future researchers should present empirical evidence, especially on a large data set on market orientation and SMEs' performance in Nigeria.*

Keyword*: Market Orientation, Business Success of SMEs*

INTRODUCTION

Market orientation has become a center of attention for over 30 years according to (Parasuraman, 1983, Whyte, 1985). Market orientation has an important effect on business profitability (Narver & Slater, 1990). SMEs have been described as a catalyst for economic growth and development in many countries, including developing countries (Buke & Myers, 2007). However, the performance of Most SMEs in Nigeria remains less satisfactory as many folds as soon as they open for business. It is important to encourage SMEs to adopt market orientation to enhance their performance (Sales Growth, Profit Growth, Market Share growth, etc.). Market orientation can be defined as a set of beliefs that shapes particular attitudes and culture of business or as an implementation of the marketing concept (McCarthy and Perreault, 1990).

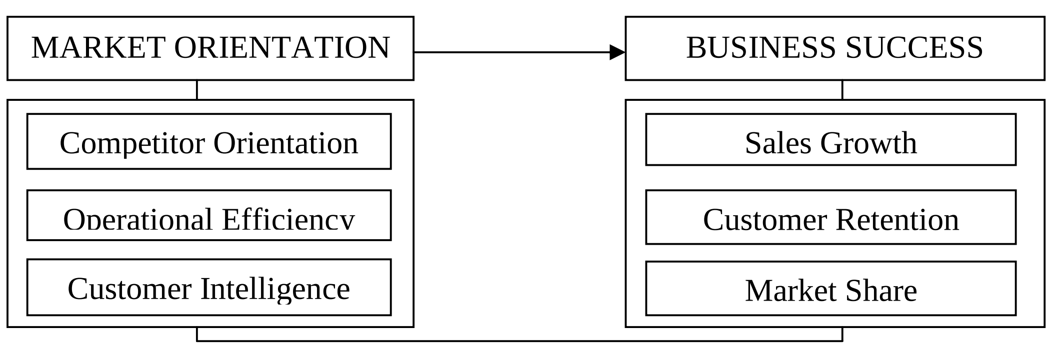
Business success is a financial reward that comes from being successful in business and success is the feeling of satisfaction and completion you have when your business career is over. A marketing orientation construct is a construct that is considered vital to the implementation framework. It is a range of techniques, plans, strategies motivated by demand or expectations of customers which a firm should adopt to be in tune with Lb customers by understanding the desired customer *value.* In scientific literature, die term of market orientation is frequently confronted with the term of market orientation. Some authors equate these two terms, others refer to one of them. On the other hand, Kohli and Jaworski (1996) defined marketing orientation from the behavioral perspective defining activities for the marketing oriented business, which are gaining information about market regarding current and future needs of the customer, disseminating this information across all departments of an organization and organizations ability to respond to this information. Kohli and Jaworski (1993) predominantly see the consequences of marketing orientation in customer satisfaction, employee loyalty, and the financial performance of the business. Waris (2005) revealed a proportional relationship between employees' commitment and marketing orientation and explained that their loyalty acts as an incentive for employees to be *aware* of customer needs and *the actions* of competitors. Although some studies suggested a negative or non-significant relationship between market orientation and business performance Han, Kim, & Srivastava, 1998), Most findings indicate a positive relationship between market and business performance (Slater and Narver, 2000). In this study, however, MO will be discussed from the perspective of Competitor Orientation, Operational Efficiency, and customer intelligence.

The importance of Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) to the economic growth and development of a country cannot be over-emphasized. Indeed, SMEs have been described as a catalyst for economic growth and development in many countries, including developing countries (Asikhia, 2010a; 2010b; Oke, Burke. & Myers, 2007; Small and Medium Enterprises Development Agency of Nigeria SMEDAN, 2010). Due to this important role, successive Nigerian governments have implemented different policies to encourage the establishment of new SMEs and ensure the success and long-term performance of existing SMEs. Most of these policies are financially aimed at improving Inc access of SMEs to tow-cost capital (Asikhia, 20l0a Sanusi, 2003). For example, a survey of Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) in Nigeria in 2015 by SMEDAN in collaboration with the National Bureau of Statistics (NBS) estimated the population of MSMEs to be about 37 million (SME Online, 2016). The survey indicated that the MSMEs accounted for 48% of Nigeria’s GDP and 60% of jobs (SME Online, 2016). These MSMEs spread across all the sectors-industrial, commercial, Agricultural and service - of the Nigerian economy. However, the performance of Most SMEs in Nigeria remains less satisfactory as many fold up as soon as they open for business. For example, a survey showed that 80% of SMEs in the country folded up before their fifth anniversary (SMEDAN, 2008 cited in Asikhia, 2010a). This suggests thin access to funds is not effective in guaranteeing the performance of SMEs in the country (Arninu, Olayinka, Akinkunmi, Salau, & Odesaiiya, 2015; Asikhia, 2010; Sanusi, 2003). Rather, it is important to encourage SMEs to adopt market orientation (MO) to enhance their performance (sales growth, profit growth, market share growth, and others) in the highly competitive market involving numerous large and aggressive hems. In line with this, one study noted that being market-centric is seen as a permanent solution to a business problem of becoming More profitable Asikhia, 2010a). A study argued that, given the limitations or funding and technology of SMEs, need to focus More on customers, monitor competitive trends, and react appropriately to market intelligence (Mahmound, 2011). All of these are some of the components of MO as identified by pioneer scholars of the subject (Jaworski & Kohli. 1990; Narver & Slater, 1990).

Statement of the Problem

Organizations are ready to adopt the market orientation construct but observed inadequacies involved in the implementation frameworks which have prevented them from doing so effectively. In the service sector, the consumer and the producer are likely to be in direct personal contact as most is desired; therefore the use of construct is expected to be more relevant in service organizations that have created a vacuum. The implementation is inadequate with the special requirements of service firms and therefore different to operationalize. The concepts appear invincible for the true needs of the SMEs service firms and little research has only been made available for the framework in the service industry.

Generally, there is much emphasis on marketing in large organizations with marketing in new and small ventures facing some problems (Hills & Hultman. 2006; Kraus. & Fink, 2010). The failure of SMEs in Nigeria is identified as a factor contributing to the Marketing gap (Aminu et al., 2015; Asikhia, 2010a). In the marketing gap, lack of MO by SMEs is a significant factor. Stokes and Blackburn (1999) affirmed this when they noted that SMEs do not adopt MO. MO is defined as a culture in which organizations strive to create value for their customers and superior performance for the business by focusing on customer needs and long-term profitability (Narver & Slater, 1990). MO enables a business to have a good understanding of its customers, competitors, and environment (Kara, Spillan, & DeSheilds, 2005), all of which affect profit and other objectives of the business. Narver and Slater (1990) identified five key dimensions of MO- customer orientation, competitor orientation, inter-functional coordination, long-term focus, and profitability. Unfortunately, the marketing activities of many SMEs in Nigeria are devoid of all or most of these key dimensions of market orientation, in tandem with the observation of stokes and Blackburn (1999). For example, many SMEs in the country find it difficult to compete with their large counterparts in their target markets and due to the economies of scale advantage of these large organizations, many SMEs resign to fate and show little or no interest in collecting competitive intelligence, consistent with the views of Wilson and Gilligan (197). Consequently, the performance of many SMEs in Nigeria has been undermined, leading to a high rate of SMEs' failure in the country. There is considerable research on MO within the context of developed countries covering all types and sizes of companies, there are few studies in developing countries. The bulk of these studies targeted large firms. In Nigeria, only a few studies have examined the MO of SMEs. In light of this, the need for a proper study became eminent hence this study.



Adapted from: Michael. L.; Maktoba. O. & Robert, W. (2011). Market Orientation and Innovators' Success: an Exploration of the Influence of Customer and Competitor Orientation, *Journal of Technology Management & Market orientation, 6(3) 4861.*

Objective of the Study

The general aim and objectives of this study are to contribute to the body of market orientation in the area of business success of small and medium enterprises (SMEs) in Port Harcourt and its environment. Specifically, it sets out:

1. To establish the extent of the relationship between competitor orientation and customer retention.

2. To ascertain the extent of the relationship between market dynamism and customer referral.

3. To investigate the extent of the relationship between customer intelligence and market share small and medium enterprises (SMEs) in Port Harcourt.

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

Theoretical Review

Resource-Based Theory (RBT) and Knowledge-Based Theory

The solid foundation of this study is on Resource-Based Theory and Knowledge-Based Theory.

Resource-Based Theory (RBT): It is considered relevant to the arguments raised in this study. It was propounded in 1817 by David Ricardo as the resource-based view of the firm and reinvented in the marketing literature in 1991 b Barney. It rests on two assumptions (1) Different firms possess different bundles or resources (2) that these resources are immobile and cannot be easy) acquired.

Knowledge-Based Theory: It considers knowledge as the most strategically significant resource of the firm. It argues that because knowledge-based resources are usually difficult to imitate and social complex. Heterogeneous divers in character or different diverse knowledge bases and capable among firms are the major determines of sustained competitive and superior success and performance.

Conceptual Review

Competitors' orientation: according to (Narver and Slater, (1990), It is an element of market orientation which means seller understanding the short term strength and weakness of key current and potential competitors.

Market Orientation and Business success

Market orientation, as corporate culture, characterizes an organization's disposition to continuously deliver superior value to its customers (Stater and Narver, 1994). To create superior customer value entails an organization-wide commitment to continuous information-gathering and coordination of customers' needs, competitors' capabilities, and the provisions of other significant market agents and authorities (i.e., suppliers and regulators) (Slater & Narver, 1994; Slater & Narver, 1995), The eventual outcome, according to Kohli and Jaworski (1990), is an integrated effort by individuals and across departments within an organization, which, in turn, gives rise to superior organizational performance. Kohli and Jaworski (1990) define market orientation in terms of three dimensions:

1. The generation of market information about the needs of customers and external environmental factors

2. The dissemination of such information among organizational functions

3. The development and implementation of strategies in response to the information

The major elements, in short, are continuous and systematic information-gathering customers and competitors, cross-functional sharing of information, coordination of activities, and responsiveness to changing market needs (Day, 1994).

Kirsner (2001) places heavy reliance on the critical role of information, the value of which is maximized when it is shared among all functions in an organization, and is acted on in a coordinated manner. Narver and Slater (1990) however, advance three behavioral components of market orientation:

I. Customer orientation

2. Competitor orientation

3. Inter-functional coordination

Each of these components is concerned with intelligence generation and dissemination and with responsiveness to the collected information. Hence, the three core behavioral components arc posited as being equally important in ft formation value. In sum, market orientation scholars forward market-oriented corporate culture as prescriptive of superior customer value and business success. For this study, Narver and Slater's (1990) scale is preferred for three reasons. First, it incorporates the essential aspects of Kohli and Jaworski's constructs of intelligence gathering, dissemination, and responsiveness, while assessing organizational cultural factors (Hooley, Greenley, Cadogan,& Pithy, 2005; Ellis. 2006; and Gebhardt et al., 2006) Second, researchers (Hooley et at., 2005; Kills, 2006) have noted that Kohli and Jaworski's constructs more accurately reflect marketing concept than market orientation (a concern about customers and competitors has been reflected in Narver and Slater's construct). Third, some empirical studies, which attempt to develop parsimonious versions of a market orientation scale on the basis of a synthesis (using a factor analysis) of individual items from Narver and Slater. Kohli and Jaworski , and other scales, find that the synthesized versions draw more items from Narver and Slater's instrument (Peiham, 2000). A number of researchers ha e examined the link between market orientation and performance. Most of the studies suggest a positive relationship Narver and Slater, 1990; Eboreime, 2000; Pelham. 2000: Ellis. 2006; Osuagwu, 2006. Narver and Slater (1990) suggest that the logic of expecting a strong link between market orientation and performance s based on the concept of a sustainable competitive advantage. A few researchers report mixed results (Jaworski & Kohli, 1993; Han, Kim, & Strivastava. 1998). Research findings in Nigeria on the market orientation and market performance relationships imply that focal firms are better than their competitors in terms of their marketing competencies. However, none of the previous studies have explicitly focused on marketing competencies as an intermediate (endogenous) variable in linking market orientation and business success.

Market orientation (MO) and components

It is important to examine MO and its various component before attention is shifted to MO-SMEs performance nexus. There are different definitions of MO. MO referred to "the creative culture that Most effectively and efficiently creates the necessary behaviors for the creation of superior va1ue for buyers and thus continuous superior performance for the business" (Narver & Slater, 199cfl. MO is seen as 'the organization-wide generation dissemination, and responsiveness to market intelligence (Kobli & Jaworski, 1990, p. 3). MO is concerned with the implementation of the marketing concept (Jaworski & Kohl 1 993; Kohli & Jaworski, 1990: Kotler, 2003; Kotler & Keller, 2012: Narver & Slater, 1990), which has been described as "a cornerstone of marketing discipline" (Kohil & Jaworski, 1990). The changing customer needs and expectations demand that firms must regularly track and respond to these changing needs (Jaworski & Kohli, 1993). As a result, almost all companies see MO as crucial for their decision-making activities (Kasaganabai, 2008) because it provides them with a better understanding of their customers and other stakeholders in the market and increases their performance (Ogunsiji & Adewunmi. 2015). MO is affected by several factors, which include top management (emphasis and risk aversion), interdepartmental dynamics (conflict and connectedness), and organizational systems (formalization, centralization, departmentalization mid reward systems) (Jaworski & Kobli, 1993).

Narver and Slater, (1990) have identified different components of MO. These include customer orientation, competitor orientation and inter-functional coordination (behavioral components) and profit objective and long-term focus (decision criteria): intelligence generation, intelligence dissemination and responsiveness (Nwokah. 2008; Kohli & Jaworski, I 090'); and target market, customer needs, coordinated marketing and profitability (pillars of marketing concept) (Kotler, 2003; Kotler & Keller, 2012). Due to its exhaustiveness and popularity among scholars, Narver, and Slater's components of MO are adopted in this paper. A brief review of the components follows. Customer orientation According to Narver and Slater (1990), a firm is customer-oriented if it sufficiently understands its target market and consistently creates superior value for it. A customer-oriented firm obtains intelligence from the market and acts accordingly (Kohli & Jaworski, 1990). To be successful in a competitive market organization, including SMEs in all sectors must exhibit strong customer orientation (Aminu et al., 2015).

For optimal performance SMEs in Nigeria need a good market' intelligence system o collect information about their customers, identify their needs, and use the information to effectively and efficiently serve them better than the competitors consistent with Kotler's (2003) view. They need to get customers' feedbacks to determine their level of 7 satisfaction or otherwise with, the firm's offerings. Competitor orientation is concerned with obtaining and disseminating intelligence, across the business, about competitors in the target market (Narver & Slater, 1990). A market-driven approach to marketing should strike a balance between a firm's responsiveness to customers' needs; and monitoring of competitors' activities (Wilson, 1988). Gathering and using market and competitive information is critical to the understanding of customers' requirements and learning about competitors' strategies (Calantnne, di Benedetto, & Bhoovaraglaran, 1996). The key personnel across the departments in the firms should continually identify, discuss and compare competitors' strengths, weaknesses, and strategies Inter-functional coordination Inter-functional coordination referred to "the coordinated utilization of company resources in creating superior value for customers (Narver & Slater, 1990).

This is referred to as coordinated marketing by Kotler (2003). Inter-functional coordination involves marketing and all other personnel across the firm to collaborate to deliver value for customers (Kotler. 2003; Narver & Slater, 1990). Effective coordination of functional competencies that centers on customers enhances a firm's market competitiveness (Asikhia, 2010b). Then, is no doubt that 8Mb in Nigeria that promotes coordinated working relationships among their departments and units would be in a position to better serve their customers. Unfortunately, many SMEs are not properly organized in Nigeria; some of them do not have a marketing department, resulting in none marketing professionals overseeing marketing activities; and poor market performance. This situation is at variance with the observation of Pelham (2000) that SMISs enjoy a sustainable competitive advantage because of their simpler organizational structure and term focus. Narver and Slitter (1990) argue that a firm should adopt a long- term perspective to cope with the intense competition in the market place. They advocated for the implementation of a range of tactics and investments that would provide value for customers in the long term. The profit objective is identified by the authors as an important aspect of a long-term focus.

A market-oriented company must focus on customers and long-term profitability (Narver & Slater, 1990). Profit is "appropriately perceived as an objective of business" (Narver & Slater, 1990, p. 22). Profit is a consequence of market orientation (Kohli & Jaworski, 1999) and of creatively solving customer problems more than competitors can do and results from effective targeting, proper identification of customers' needs, and adequate integrated marketing Kotler, and 2003). This suggests that a market-oriented SME should sacrifice a short-time profit objective (many will have the temptation of pursuing this) for a long-term objective, which involves developing and delivering long-term value for customers and other stakeholders. There is a vast literature that relates MO to firm (including SME) performance. This section reviews the literature on MO and SMEs. It is posited that a strong market-oriented culture enables SMEs to adapt to the changing business environment (Hajipour & Ghanaviti. 2012). Provides them with a competitive advantage over their larger competitors (Pelham, 2000; Suliyanto & Rahab, 2012) and enhances their performance (Aliyu. 2014; Mahmoud, 20W Narver & Slater, 1990).

The sustainable competitive advantage enjoyed by small enterprises (such as Esther barbing saloon at 77 Aggrey Road, Port Harcourt, Johnson textiles shop 13 Creek Road, Port Harcourt, Super king Restaurant 77 Ikwerre mad Port Harcourt) is due to simpler organizational structure, greater flexibility and a greater tendency for speed and market orientation. Conceptually, though. Operational efficiency is the capability' of the enterprise to deliver products or services to the customer in the most cost-effective manner while ensuring the quality of its products service and support operational is achieved. Customer intelligence is to know the secret of delivering in a personalized marketing action. Therefore, it is the process of gathering and analyzing information regarding customer and their detail and activity to build customer relationships and improve decision to build customer relationships and improve decision making. It is about producing insight into a customer that is both smart and useful. The company must draw multiple sources. Sale growth is the parameter used to measure the performance of the sales term to increase the revenue over a predetermined period.

Customer retention refers to the activities and actions of companies and organizations take to reduce the number of customer defections. The goal of the customer retention program is to help companies retain as many customer s as possible often through customer loyalty and brand loyalty initiative. Market share represents the percentage of an industry or markets total sales that are earned by a particular company over a specified period of tune. It is calculated by taking the company sales over the period and dividing it by the total sales of the industry over the same period.

Empirical Review

The empirical research of Suliyanto and Rahab (2012) in the Banyumas Regency in Indonesia revealed that MO has no positive effect on SME's performance. One study in Malaysia found that one of the components of MO. inter-functional coordination is not positively related to the performance of SMEs in the country (Muzjan & Md Sallek 2012). Another study found that none of the measured components of MO (e.g. customer orientation, competitor orientation, and inter-function coordination) has a direct and significant relationship with the performance of the organization, including small and large organizations (Johnson, Dibrell, & Hansel, 2009). Using specific measures of performance found a negative relationship between MO and one or 'non-measures of performance.

Using the More objective measure of market share, Jaworski awl Kohlz (1093) found that MO is negatively related to performance in the U.S. Slater and Narver's (1993) study did not also find a positive relationship between MO and sales growth. The foregoing review suggests that studies on market orientation and SMEs performance in Nigeria are very scarce, thus justifying this presents paper. Therefore, this paper contributes to extend the frontier of knowledge in SME development in the 11 countries. This is important as governments, at all levels, are developing and supporting initiatives, financial at d none financial (with little or no emphasis on marketing) towards SMFs development and effective performance. Conclusion MO is an important marketing strategy that significantly impacts the performance of organizations, irrespective of their size. However, the lack of MO by SMEs in Nigeria has constrained the performance of SMI3s (Asikhia, 2010a, 20l0b). While several studies, especially in developed countries have examined the MO-large organization performance link, only a few companies have examined the MO-SMISs performance nexus. This paper extends existing literature and reviews literature on this important topic. The paper noted that a strong market-oriented culture enables SPARs to adapt to the changing business environment (Hajipour & Ghanaviti. 2012), provides them with a competitive advantage over their larger competitors (Pelham, 2000; Suliyanto & Rahab, 2012) and enhance their performance (Aliyu, 2014; Jaworski & Kohli, 1993; Mahmoud, 2011, Narver & Slater, 1990).

It notes further that the sustainable competitive advantage enjoyed by SMEs, due to simpler organizational structure, greater flexibility, and a greater tendency for speed mid-market orientation (Pelham. 2000). In this regard, the paper concludes that the implementation of the different elements of MO (customer orientation, competitor orientation, orientation, coordination, long-term perspective, and profitability) will positively a considerably impact SMEs' performance in Nigeria. Customer orientation will focus SMEs on customer needs identification and satisfaction; competitor orientation will make them monitor competitor activities, react promptly to any competitive attack and outsmart competitors; inter-functional coordination will result in effective coordination of SMEs personnel and activities for optimal performance; long-term focus will help SMEs to emphasize enduring, long-term activities and investment that will deliver and communicate value to customers, the firms themselves and all other stakeholders: and finally, profit objective will be realized and 12 provides justification for all the investments SMI!s make over time. Based on this conclusion, it is strongly recommended that, in addition to providing financial support and increased access of SMEs to low-cost funding, stakeholders should make deliberate and sustained effort to encourage SMEs in Nigeria to adopt mid implement MO to enhance their success and performance.

For example, Slater and Narver (1993) empirical research in the U.S. showed that MO is positively related to sales growth. Slater and Narver (1996) cited in Kasaganabai (2008) found a positive relationship between ROA, sales growth mid new product successes. 10 Besides, Pelham (2000) found that MO has a positive relationship with growth/share, marketing/sales effectiveness, and gross profits in small and medium-sized manufacturing firms. Blesa and

Ripollés (2003) found that entrepreneurial proactiveness had a positive effect on market orientation, which in turn affect business performance in terms of profitability and sales growth. A study of market orientation in a large Midwestern town at Tennessee, Chattanooga, USA showed that SMEs that exhibited strong market orientation bad their sales and profit increased significantly over the preceding three years than those that are less market-oriented (Becherer, Halstead, & Haynes, 2001). On the negative side, research has found no positive relationship between MO and SMEs performance.

Cap in Literature

MO may have a strong or weak impact on firm performance depending on environmental conditions, which include market turbulence and competitive intensity. Similarly, results of empirical studies on 9 MO and SMFs performance are mixed. While most studies found a positive relationship between MO and SME performance, few others found a negative relationship, For example, one study found some positive relationship between MO and performance in 33 of the 36 studies investigated (Dawes, 2000). In each of these categories, some studies used performance as a standalone dependent variable and those that used specific measures of performance such as sales, profit, market share, market orientation, customer satisfaction, and loyalty as dependent variables. In the category of the 4udies that used performance as a dependent variable include (Aliyu, 2014; Harrison-Walker, 2001; Jaworski & Kohli, 1993; Mahmoud, 2011). In the U.S., Jaworski and Kohli (1993) found that MO is significantly related to business performance if overall performance is assessed using subjective measures. In the U.K., a positive relationship between MO and SMEs is also reported by Appiah-Adu and Singh (1908). Another study that investigated customer and competitor orientation.' on firm performance in the U.S. found that only customer orientation has a positive arid significant impact on business performance (Harrison-Walker, 2001). Mabmoud (2011) found a significant and positive relationship between MO and SMEs performance in Ghana. In Nigeria, Aliyu (2014) also found that MO is positively and significantly related to performance. In this and next paragraphs, studies that relate MO to specific measures of performance are examined. Some studies indicated that "companies with higher market orientation obtain better economic and commercial value (Lack. Maydeu Olivares, 2000). The better economic and commercial value here refers to higher market performance reflected in several measures such as higher sales, profit, return on assets (R.OA), and market share.

METHODOLOGY

This study was based on secondary research and information for the study was generated using books, journal articles, conference proceedings, workshop materials, seminars, and other works of previous researchers, etc.

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

Based on the literature of previous researchers; market orientation affects both return on investment (ROI) and sales growth. The results suggested that measures in market orientation taps behaviors in business and has greater sales growth and return on investment (ROI).

Findings from works of previous researchers like white (1985) indicate that market orientation behavior is related to business success and performance. Cravens (1997) opined that the orientation of many studies that focus on a strategic approach, in decision-making perspective, in market intelligence, and in cultural perspective, (Teck, 2012) also supported this assertion. Matsuno (2002) has proved the existence of a strong relationship between market orientation and business success. Other researchers like Han (1998) do not support a positive relationship.

CONCLUSIONS

Based on the observations of MO of many studies that focused on the strategic environment, MO is a companywide culture that places, customers at the center of a successful business. It is based on collection and dissemination of market intelligence that can help a business understanding and satisfy customers need better than competitors it coordinates all the business internal functions delivers long term values to the customer, business and other stakeholders in the business. Market orientation has a positive relationship with business success.

RECOMMENDATIONS

I. SME in Nigeria should monitor and analyze the competitor's activities and strategies.

2. Managers should try to foster a market orientation in their organizations while paying close attestation to the selected target market, and allocation of effort among competing opportunities to maximize sales growth, sales retention, market share, and profitability.

3. Future researchers should present empirical evidence, especially on large data on market orientation and SME's performance in Nigeria.

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