



Strategic Agility and Organizational Sustainability among Selected Manufacturing Firms in South-South, Nigeria

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Abstract

This study examined strategic agility and organizational sustainability in selected manufacturing firms in South-South, Nigeria. Specifically, the study sought to ascertain the extent to which strategic foresight boost market share, determine the degree to which human resource capability enhance firm's efficiency. The study adopted a survey research design and primary data was mainly used to obtain accurate data based on the opinion of the respondents and backed up by reviews of information from secondary sources for validation. The target population of one thousand, eight hundred and forty seven (1,847) obtained from the eighteen (18) selected manufacturing firms in South-South, Nigeria. The sample size of three hundred and twenty nine (329) respondents was derived from Slovin formula at 5% error tolerance and 95% level of confidence. To test the hypotheses of this study, the study adopted analysis of variance (ANOVA), simple regression model and Pearson Correlation Coefficient statistical tools of SPSS Version 23.0. From the result of the findings, it showed that strategic foresight significantly boost market share of selected manufacturing firms in South-South, Nigeria, human resource capability enhances firm's efficiency of selected manufacturing firms in South-South, Nigeria, information technology capability has a significant effect on value innovation of the selected manufacturing firms in South-South, Nigeria, strategic sensitivity has a significant effect on competitive advantage of the selected manufacturing firms in South-South, Nigeria, resource fluidity has a significant effect on productivity of the selected manufacturing firms in South-South, Nigeria and there is a significant relationship between collective commitment and organizational performance of the selected manufacturing firms in South-South, Nigeria. From the results of the hypotheses testing, the study concluded that strategic agility has a positive and significant effect on the sustainability of the selected manufacturing firms in South-South, Nigeria and recommended that management of the selected manufacturing firms should reconsider their strategic options, employ human resource management theories, concepts and practices, establish regular staff training on ICT, among others

Keywords: Strategy, Strategic Agility, Organizational sustainability, Manufacturing Firms & South-south

Introduction

The notion of agility was first coined in 1991 by a group of scholars from the Iacocca Institute of Lehigh University who had been requested by the American Congress to write a circumstantial report on the strategy of industrial firms in the 21st century (Iacocca 1991 & CEST, 1996 cited in

Ade, 2012). Shortly after the report, the AMEF (Agile Manufacturing Enterprise Forum) was created to encourage and spread this viewpoint throughout American firms (Nick, 2013). However, they popularized the adoption of agile manufacturing strategies as a way to ensure the competitiveness of American firms in the emerging digital and global

economy. The concept applies henceforth to a wide range of areas in the business literature. From the manufacturing literature, the concept has chronically spread through the organizational, innovation management and strategic management literature to become a very popular tool to address the issue of sustainable growth in fast changing and hypercompetitive markets (Nick, 2013).

Impact on organizations.

Therefore, firms and their operations are in a constant flux, because firms that decide to be docile in the very volatile business environment could easily be muscled out of business. Under these difficult business conditions, the ability to sense market changes and respond quickly to these changes is imperative to firm's success and a potential enabler to organization's competitiveness (Mathiassen & Pries-Heje, 2006 cited in Arokodare & Asikhia, 2020).

The term "agile" can be referred to as a descriptor of both quickness and responsiveness when faced with internal and external events or stimuli. The term agility appeared when the work environment was influenced by rapid changes and organization strategic agility and resilience ability prepares organizations for changes and restore vitality from shocks (Alavi & Abd-Wahab, 2013). Consequently, organizations amidst this situations should review their objectives, policies and respond rapidly and with the flexibility to work environment requirements. This helps with the emergence of the term strategic agility (Hosein & Yousefi, 2012). Strategic

Basically, the emergence of the concept of agility in the business environment is a direct response to the global business era of the digital age characterized by the rapid evolution and convergence of technologies, increasing pace and complexity of change, instability, political norms and customers' behaviors have shown a drastic complication and drastically increased the pace of discontinuities that have a profound agility becomes a vital factor for success and sustainability in the work environment as well as the pursuit of excellence, work processes development and then achieving superior performance (Idris & Al-Rubaie, 2013). Agile organizations are innovating new and fast ways to respond to changes through the development of the company's strategies, using technology, exploitation of human resources and improving their skills, quick meeting of customers' needs, quick entry and exit in alliances (Oyedijo, 2012), offering new services in a timely manner, take advantage of opportunities and minimize the risks in a changing work environment (Qin & Nembhard, 2015). In other words, strategic agility (SA) means that an organization can take quick, decisive, and effective actions and that it can trigger, anticipate and take advantage of the change (Doz & Kosonen, 2007 cited in Samer, 2013). Strategic agility is described as being adaptive to changes in the business context, spotting both opportunities and risks and launching new strategic initiatives rapidly and repeatedly.

Nevertheless, the Nigerian manufacturing sector has experienced

tremendous changes in recent years. The continuous dilemma of maintaining business performance, most business organization managers finding it difficult to constantly achieve targeted business performance due to the dynamic nature, open market competition, globalization characterized with the 21st-century industry and the economy as a whole has prompted the entry of many new players into this manufacturing sector. Manufacturing firms in different industries around the globe especially in the south-south Nigeria have experienced unstable performance, seemingly uncertain on strategies to employ in reacting to flexible policies and unstable performance arising from challenges in the local and international business context. The level of activities in this sector has decreased significantly over the past years and it is envisaged that this will not abate soon. Also, accomplishing strategic objectives is directly related to the performance of an organization. Furthermore, the performance of the organization is dependent on different elements within the organization and external elements as well. To analyze and evaluate performance of organizations, different fundamentals of strategic management have to be examined (Bakar, Tufail, Yusof & Virgiyanti, 2011).

However, there has been an immediate need within organizations to have agile business administrators to manages all the changes and introduce the necessary transformations competencies to survive in this competitive environment. It has become a prerequisite to use agile strategies to navigate safely through various

challenges they have to routinely face in the running of their organizations (Alshalabe, Aladwan, Orabi & Alwekhyhan, 2017). The business environment has been undergoing massive transformation due to advancement in technology and consecutive changes are being demanded by consumers globally. In all of these, there is increasing demand and pressure on the management of these manufacturing firms to deliver on shareholders' earnings and justify increasing investment in their organizations. Therefore, in order to cater their demands and to survive in the competitive business world, the only approach is to formulate and implement robust strategic agility models, hence, the need to undertake this study strategic agility and organizational sustainability of the selected manufacturing in South-South, Nigeria.

The rapid changes in the domestic and international business policies cut across different industries in developed, emerging and developing countries and this was attributed to both microeconomic and macroeconomic factors such as; industry environmental factors, task environment, natural and technological environments, social environments, economic and cultural environments, political, law and security, consumers management, marketing content and product marketing. Zafari (2017) pointed out that most firms in Nigeria have recorded unstable performance due to slow agility response to challenges of political interference, lack of transparency, regulatory uncertainty, policy instability and poor infrastructural facilities. Furthermore, the author emphasized

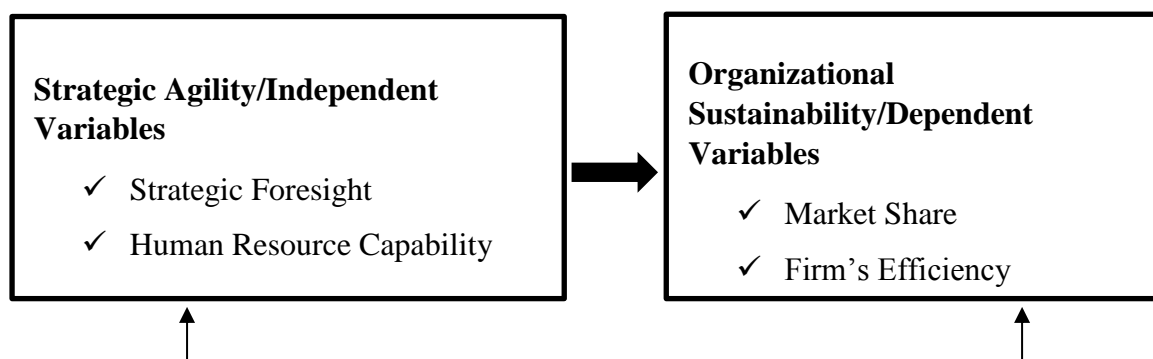
that the decline in performance of firms cut across developed, emerging and developing countries due to poor strategic agility and response to microeconomic and macroeconomic factors challenges like service industry environmental factors, task environment, natural and technological

environments, social environments, economic and cultural environments, political, law and security environments coupled with the management of marketing content and product marketing.

Literature Review

Conceptual Framework

Strategic Agility and Organizational Sustainability Framework



Source: (Researcher, 2024).

Agility

The term agility expressed in Latin as “agilitas” and translates literally as the ability to think and draw conclusions quickly (intellectual acuity). Agility, which originally has its roots in manufacturing context (Žitkienė & Deksnys, 2018), was recognized in application to business environment by practitioners and researchers in the early 1990's, when faced dynamic market conditions (Harraf, Wanasika, Tate & Talbott, 2015). Agility represents the ability of an organization to sense environmental change and respond efficiently and effectively to that change. Wilson and Doz (2011) defined agility as the capability of surviving and prospering in the competitive

environment of continuous and unpredictable change by reacting quickly and efficiently to changing markets, driven by custom designed products and services. Therefore, organizations need to be in constant research for new business opportunities and sense and being able to make fast turns in order to survive and staying on the top of the competition. In another words, Narasimhan Narasimhan, Swink and Kim (2006) deposited agility as the ability to effectively change operating states in response to uncertain and changing demands placed upon it.

Over the years an agile organization is seen as a fastest and effective organization that can react to changes, pinpoint opportunities and avoid major collisions in an increasingly

fast-paced environment (Peterson, Day, & Mannix, 2008). Thus, agility consists of three main capabilities: (1) strategic sensitivity which includes the focus of the organization's attention and the level of intensity in which the company perceives and interprets the reality of market conditions (2) collective commitment which is how company management makes quick and brave decisions without limited by organizational politics and (3) resource fluidity which is the ability to adjust business systems and relocate resources quickly according to needs and circumstances.

Agility refers broadly to the firm's ability to adapt continuously to changing and uncertain environments (Lin, Chiu & Chu, 2006), where competitive advantage is often temporary and frequent strategic moves are required (Chen, Katila, McDonald & Eisenhardt 2010). Agility is particularly important in environments characterized by highly competitive intensity. Thus, from the dynamic capability perspective, agility can be understood as a key capability of the firm in dynamic environments (Fourné, Jansen & Mom, 2014; Weber & Tarba, 2014).

Agile firms are able to create dynamic portfolios of products, services or business models in order to out manoeuvre competitors and also integrate knowledge from around the world to fuel continuous innovation which links agility to the knowledge-based view (Wilson & Doz, 2011). Conversely, agility requires the ability to make fast decisions by simultaneously considering as many alternatives as possible, agility also requires the ability to undertake fast and smooth

transformations in the configuration of the firm which can take place in different firm activities, including strategy innovation and knowledge sharing, leadership, organization, manufacturing, supply chains, information systems and human resources (Brueller, Carmeli & Drori, 2014). Agility is a characteristic that allows organizations to grow and develop in dynamic and unpredictable environments (Rick, 2007). Agility concentrates on making an openness to change, ending barriers of all kinds that obstruct the flow of work, resources, people and information and guaranteeing rapid performance of strategy on a universal scale (Brown & Eisenhardt, 2007). Agility is the aptitude of firm to develop, renovate itself, adapt, apply flexible, lively and dynamic capabilities, change quickly and succeed in a rapidly changing, uncertain, turbulent environment. Tallon and Pinsonneault (2011) conceive agility as an organizational capability to identify and react to environmental opportunities and threats with affluence, speed, and nimbleness. Nadkarni and Narayanan (2007) define agility as an ability to rapidly, deliberately change; this change involves rapid shifts in strategic actions, asset deployment, and investment strategies.

Nevertheless, agility is stated as determined, efficient distinctions in a firm's outputs, structures or processes that are recognized, planned, and implemented as a deliberate strategy to achieve competitive advantage (Tallon & Pinsonneault, 2011). For contemporary firms, agility is imperative for success as they face unprecedented time-to-market pressures, globalization and extra-ordinary competition. As

argued by Vokurka, Zank and Lund (2012) the most valuable effects of agility are being embraced and support more on the connection between agility and organization competitiveness. Also, firm's agility or the capability to perform changes in diverse competitive ways with the destruction of competition, speed and surprises' attention as a market being able to compete efficiently in the recent market atmosphere (Sambamurthy, Chakravarty & Grewal, 2003). Agility requires firms to modulate and reengineer their processes and systems to add something beyond the existing diversity or to connect to (disconnect from) other partners providing special capabilities. Agility requires response to (unexpected) input or change of input and processes to present an unexpected but desirable output (Oosterhout, 2010). Agility is a strong sense, speed, lightness and nimble and needs to creativity and innovation (Gilaninia, Shahram, Resvani & Mousa, 2011). Agility is a result of being aware to change, as a whole (identification of opportunities and challenges) in both the internal and the external environment and with proper capabilities in the use of resources to meet these changes at the right time and flexible form relevant that organization able to run it, is effectively (Braunscheidel & Suresh, 2009). Although definitions available of agility are different, but all of them emphasize on speed and flexibility as key factors for achieving results (Azar & Pishdar, 2011). The aim of agile organization is to enrich and honor customers, maintaining employees, achieve corporate survival and market share that basically have a set of capabilities to

respond appropriately to changes that occurred in the business environ

Strategic Agility

Firms that have the capability to be responsive to the changing, diverse and unpredictable demands of customers on the front end, while minimizing the back-end risks to supply disruptions can be seen as strategically agile and if a company disregards the importance of agility, the consequences can be disastrous (Lee, 2006). Strategic agility has been defined as the ability to quickly recognize and seize opportunities, change direction, and avoid collisions (McCann, 2007). Doz and Kosonen (2008) described strategic agility as learning to make fast turns and being able to transform and renew the company without losing opportunities. The authors suggested that strategic agility is enterprise's continuous ability to make real time and accurate interpretations of the environment, to reallocate resources fast in sufficient scale and to commit collectively to the objectives.

Rohrbeck and Kum (2018) asserted that strategic agility enhances firm's future preparedness and powerful predictors for becoming an outperformer in the industry, for attaining superior profitability and gaining superior market capitalization growth. The author further emphasized that organizations with strategic agility character gain strategic foresight in securing future superior performance and competitive advantage. Strategic agility (SA) is defined by TabeKhoshnood and Nematizadeh (2017) as a concept consisting of two

components: responsiveness and knowledge management. They further interpret strategic agility as the ability of an organization to detect changes through the opportunities and threats existing in the business environment and to give rapid response through the recombination of resources, processes and strategies. Extensive review of the SA literature shows that an agile organization can be successful in competitive environment through the abilities of responsiveness, competence, flexibility and speed so that it achieves competitive advantage in the market (Ganguly, Nilchiani & Farr, 2009; Oyedijo, 2012). Doz and Kosonen (2008) considered SA to be a means by which organizations transform, reinvent themselves, adapt and ultimately survive. They see SA as the capacity of a firm to continuously adjust and adapt its strategic direction in a core business in order to create value for the firm. Sampath (2015) considered SA to be about being adaptive to changes in the business context, spotting opportunities, threats and risks and launching new strategic initiatives rapidly and repeatedly; while Teece, Peteraf and Leih (2016) referred to SA as the capacity of an organization to efficiently and effectively redeploy and redirect its resources to value creating and value protecting together with capturing higher-yield activities as internal and external circumstances warrant.

However, strategic agility has to do with the capacity to respond swiftly to changing situations as demonstrated by business organizations because the flexibility in the operational responses of firms to discontinuities and volatility in the business environment defines the

SA of a firm. Moreover, the ability of an organization to have the foresight to see the trend and forecast the future in order to respond appropriately defines the SA of such an organization. Also, Tende and Ekanem (2018) opine that SA is the capability of an organization to predict, anticipate and forecast trends and events in the business environment to fashion appropriate response with proactive moves. Therefore, survival is no longer guaranteed on the premise of having financial muscle or capital, but in the ability to adjust to changes in the environment and device means to stay relevant. Akhigbe and Onuoha (2019) posit that it is no longer the fittest organization that last longer, but organizations with high resilience and capacity to adjust.

Nevertheless, firms that are embedded with SA capability can successfully predict and adapt to new opportunities and threats. In line with this, Mavengere (2013) posits that SA has to do with an organization's sensitivity to or being armed with the foresight to understand and predict current happenings in the environment where the organization operates. It is the capability of a firm to identify and react to environmental opportunities and threats with affluence, speed and nimbleness (Tallon & Pinsonneault, 2011). Timely detection of changes that could constitute a threat or present an opportunity is the hallmark of SA. Hence, there is no SA without timely response to and being able to predict and prepare for change. Tabe-Khoshnood and Nematizadeh (2017) aver that SA is the ability of an organization to detect and respond fast to opportunities and threats presented

by a business environment. The response must be rapid and deliberate to qualify as a SA move. It is the ability to rapidly and deliberately change; this change involves rapid shifts in strategic actions, asset deployment and investment strategies (Nadkarni & Narayanan, 2007). Conversely, the ability of an organization to respond rapidly to change could be the difference between survival and death of a firm because organizations that respond slowly to change could easily be outmuscled by firms that deploy SA as a way of operation. Doz and Kosonen (2008) consider SA to be a means by which organizations transform, reinvent, adapt, and ultimately survive the ever-changing environment of business. Literature in SA shows that an agile organization can be successful in a competitive environment through responsiveness, competence, flexibility and speed which will guarantee their continued relevance and survival (Ganguly, Nilchiani & Farr, 2009; Oyedijo, 2012).

Strategic agility means that organizations can take fast, decisive, and effective actions to anticipate and utilize change (Doz & Kosonen, 2010). If the operating system is at the expected level of productivity, then the system must be deployed to all functions. When companies use agility as a model for placing efficiency in the short term, it is more important to seize and take advantage of opportunities in places that have the potential to develop for years to come (Looy & Van 2016). The first challenge of strategic agility is to explore all decision alternatives and the second challenge is moving from a comfort zone to discomfort (Soule, 2002). Many elements contribute to the

organization's agility strategy including the customer base, brand, core competencies, employee ability to change and infrastructure (Weill, Subramani & Broadbent, 2008). In addition, the agility strategy is able to improve the efficiency of a company's operations to turn investments into providing the right product, at the right price, and available everywhere (Soejono, Mendari & Rinamurti, 2015).

Outcomes of Strategic Agility

The main outcomes of successful agile transformation are realization of flexibility, increased speed, customer orientation, engagement, as well as facilitation of innovation. Various findings show that these outcomes are difficult to achieve with traditional methods, but it is unclear if they could have been achieved through other ways of working. It is likely that these outcomes are altogether unique to the agility.

- **Flexibility:** The outcome of flexibility can be described as an ability to respond to the dynamic environment by prioritizing what is most important, allocating resources where they are needed the most, and changing direction fast. Flexibility is primarily achieved through the agile organizational structures and processes enabled by agile management and culture. When a new opportunity is discovered, when there is a need for improvements, or when there is a problem, established firms can easily adjust to the situation through its flexible structure and processes. Flexible organizational structure of teams allows creating temporary teams without significant

changes to organizational structure. Prioritizing new projects, and allocating resources where they are needed the most, enable adjustments of strategic direction when an opportunity arises. When there is sufficient autonomy, teams are in the position to decide how problems can be solved. Following, as teams consist of different roles and expertise needed for that one specific product or project, they are in a position to find the best solutions towards that problem, without approval from top management, allowing for flexibility (Džudera & Madelen, 2020). Also, Flexibility is also achieved due to agile processes involving frequent priorities. It allows the teams to make continuous adjustments on projects, to always focus on what the team considers being the most important based on the resources and funding available. Additionally, the outcome of flexibility also makes established firms able to increase their speed when adapting to dynamic environments, thus flexibility is a necessary prerequisite for speed.

- **Speed:** The second outcome that emerges when being agile is the increased speed which describes how an established firm can make faster decisions and pursuit faster product development. Increased speed, in line with flexibility, is achieved through agile organizational structure, and agile processes adopted from agile methodologies are of significant importance for increasing effectiveness. Through autonomy, teams are in a position to make own independent decisions, which allows closer market contact and faster decision-making in organizations. Further, it management is able to change strategic direction faster as they are no long-decision paths in the

organization. Furthermore, the structure of cross-functional teams who are involved in the whole process of a project or product development, shortens the time between the conception and release of a product, also referred as time to market, because the time-consuming handovers are no longer needed. Teams, because of their structure containing different roles, are in a position to discuss, share and communicate in order to adjust or improve the products faster (Džudera & Madelen, 2020).

By pursuing the process of short planning cycles, agile teams through autonomy are able to adjust the products and priorities fast when change is needed. Accordingly, teams can pursue an idea at its simplest form, test it, find out if it is something viable and either proceed with it or reject it. Products can be continuously developed according to market demands through a minimum-viable-product (MVP) strategy, where minimal product with sufficient quality is delivered for early feedback, aiming for the resources not to be wasted. Additionally, through feedback loops built into the agile process, established firms are able to learn immediately after new knowledge and information appears. Hence, by acquiring knowledge established firms are in a position to adapt quickly to changing environment (Džudera & Madelen, 2020).

Arif Khan and Pillania (2008) aver speed as the ability to perform the operations quickly which includes:

- Speed in introducing new products to the market
- Speed and on-time product delivery

- Speed in operation time

Organization and Agility Strategies

Recent literature claims that established firms aim to become agile in order to be able to turn strategic direction and respond faster to changing markets (Žitkienė & Deksnys, 2018). Findings confirmed that there is a need for better adaptation towards the dynamic environment, constituting the main reason behind implementation of agile ways of working and that traditional ways of working pose symptoms of established firms, such as too slow decision-making due to long decision-making paths and predetermined products leading to slow product development. This can be risky and unsuitable in a constantly changing environment, where fast adjustments towards unpredictable customer demands are crucial (Dearstyne, 2018).

Strategic Foresight Practices

- **Environmental scanning:** Environmental scanning (ES) involves the systematic and continual evaluation of key driving forces of change in the firms' external environment (Paliokaitė, Pačėsa & Sarpong, 2014). It is through the scanning process that relevant past and present data as well as future projections in the external environment are collected and collated for further analysis (Amsteus, 2011). It spans political, economic, social, technological and competitive forces interacting and impacting dynamism and change in the firm external environment (Amer, Daim & Jetter, 2013). The relevance of these forces in shaping competitive position and survival chances of firms has been

underscored by the industrial organization theory. Theory holds that these core external factors determine the achievement and sustainability of competitive advantage (Grant, 2013). Environmental scanning is suggested to be one of the most important foresight practice and capability (Vecchiato, 2015). The survey is concerned with delivering information to strategic thinkers that support the strategic planning process (Hussain, 2021). It consists of collecting data and information and working on analyzing it in order to reach the factors arising or likely to occur in the environment of organizations in order to explore new ideas to meet the challenges that they may face (Abdullah, Abd Aziz, Shamsuddin & Wahab., 2018). Al-Baroudi (2019) indicate that environmental scanning is the extent to which an organization can study and scrutinize its internal and external environment to collect information from it, and use that information as early warning signs of impending environmental changes, and then determine its future course of action. Miles et al (2016) Environmental scanning is the collection and analysis of activities related to the environments surrounding organizations to identify the main forces responsible for any future change in an attempt to build future scenarios and determine the directions that organizations will adopt. It was defined as “monitoring, evaluating, and collecting information from the external and internal environments of key individuals in the organization. The organization uses this tool to avoid strategic surprises and ensure the long-term sustainability of the organization” (Nama & Abdel-

Rahim, 2021). It can be said that the environmental survey aims for the organization to understand its internal and external environment in order to be able to respond to rapid changes and exploit the opportunities of those changes to achieve high performance in it (Shallaka & Juda, 2021). Research has suggested a positive association between environmental scanning and other desirable organizational outcomes such as ambidexterity, innovation, adaptive learning, and strategic agility (Paliokaitė, 2013; Rohrbeck and Gemünden, 2011; Sarpong, Maclean & Alexander, 2013). This foresight practice and capability enables firms to gather the necessary information in order to understand the dynamics prevailing in its industry and be in a position to promptly adapt its products or services to changing market needs. We therefore argue that, the systematic probing of drivers in the external environment will enhance SME product/service adaptiveness. Notwithstanding, scholars have questioned the reliability and accuracy of some these foresight techniques to deliver value to firms in the medium to long run (Vecchiato, 2015). They argue that the impact these foresight practices tend to diminish in the medium to long run, because factors in the external environment interact with one another over time in an unpredictable way (Eisenhardt, Furr & Bingham, 2010). Some scholars have thus suggested a moderating effect of environment dynamism on firm performance (Nyuur, 2015).

- **Planning and future visioning:** Planning and visioning involve the deployment of organizational resources and expertise for envisioning and goal-setting that support the organizational

image in the future (Paliokaitė et al., 2014). Planning and visioning eliminate randomness and informs good decisions and actions (Amsteus, 2011). Scholars have associated planning and visioning as foresight activities with good performance (Hideg et al., 2014). We therefore argue that planning and visioning will have a direct positive impact on SMEs' ability to strategically adapt their products and services to market needs. However, following the complexity theory (Stacey, 1995) and organizations resource constraints argument (Nyuur, 2015), it is likely that the value of planning and visioning on organizational performance would diminish with increase in dynamism and hostility in the external business environment. From the point of view of Miles et al (2016) future vision is the adoption of innovative methods contrary to traditional expectations, in an attempt to draw a future picture based on the visual trends of the present, because a good vision assumes the volatility of future events in an unexpected way and thus provides proactive support for the implementation of the most effective and optimal option in certain circumstances. Future vision is defined as "the ability to see future trends by conducting a survey of the dynamic factors in the past and present" (Abdelal, 2023). It also denotes prediction in order to be able to draw a picture of future events for a particular case through understanding, perception, analysis and a rational study of this case, and this requires having the ability to foresee the future in order to eventually reach the picture in which the organization should look in the future (Al-Dasouki, 2022). In the same

context, Mathani, Qudah and Thiabat (2021) see that the future vision expresses the general goal that the organization hopes to reach in the future.

- **Strategic choice:** Mustafa and Jatheer (2022) consider that the strategic choice consists of three parts: analyzing the data collected about the future, the vision formed by the stakeholders, and planning that includes future strategies to achieve the goals of the organization, which enhances the expectation of future events and raises the organization's ability to learn and innovate ahead of its competitors. The strategic choice is also expressed as planning and defining what the organization will achieve in terms of future goals by finding proactive solutions to crises resulting from a realistic and real understanding that the future is full of various options (Al-Hindawi et al., 2017). The strategic choice also refers to the organization's ability to determine its current performance and know what it wants to achieve in the future through a set of alternative courses of action that it will use to achieve its vision and goals (Nama et al., 2021).
- **Scenario building:** Scenario building is a systematic calculation and evaluation to confirm or deny the possibility of something happening in the future as defined by Miles et al. (2016) that it is the dynamic sequence of future events and their development, presenting analytical charts for any possible event, and linking details and events together to form a general picture expected in the future. A scenario is a possible or probable description of the future, accompanied by an explanation of the features of the plans that lead to this

situation in the future, based on the current situation (Nassar, 2021). Scenario building is the most used method in strategic foresight, through which multiple scenarios are developed for the proposed alternatives (Al-Ajib & Al-Najjar, 2022). Scenarios are an important tool for the decision-making process and the ability to discover the complex interaction between the drivers of change and to develop a real view of the impact of the events and trends of the organization in the present and the future (Zahraei, Kurniawan & Cheah, 2019). Building a scenario does not provide for predicting the future, but rather for investigating it, as it is considered important for using strategic foresight in directing tasks (Heifi & Muhaimid, 2022).

- **Industry dynamism:** The foresight scholarship has acknowledged the increasing dynamism and hostility of the global business environment (Sarpong et al., 2013; Vecchiato, 2015). The emergence of the internet, rapid technological changes, and the constant interaction of political, economic, social and technological factors have contributed to numerous fast-paced changes and genuine uncertainties in the business environment (Sarpong et al., 2013; Vecchiato, 2015) as underscored by the complexity theory (Amer, Daim & Jetter, 2013; Stacey, 1995). Research suggests that the dynamism of the business environment has a direct impact on firm performance (Lumpkin & Dess, 1996 cited in Richard, Ružica, & Pauline, 2015). Accordingly, more opportunities are greater in such dynamic environments and can be derived from product adaptation, new product development, and access to new markets (Rohrbeck et al., 2011).

Dynamic and hostile business environments also tend to motivate firms to be more proactive and aggressive in search of better performance and the capture of sustainable competitive advantage (Lumpkin & Dess, 2011). Studies have argued that such dynamic environments are good and suitable for small and medium enterprises because of their entrepreneurial orientation and behavior (Nyuur, 2015). Such firms are quick to identify opportunities and have the propensity for proactive innovation (Lumpkin et al., 2011).

Human Resource Capability

In the context of growing global competition, enhancing customer demand and varying corporate settings, business organizations are required to improve their performance constantly. To deal with this environment, innovation with regard to the market offerings, operations, quality and output is helpful for business organizations (Fernando, Jabbour, & Wah, 2019). Additionally, it is recommended that in the contemporary dynamic environment, tangible resources are not as much significant for entities as organizational performance and competitiveness is important. Currently, collective resources with regard to the information technology and human are regarded highly valuable resources of the business. Information technology (IT) is considered as a key element that restructure all aspects of the business with new scales in the contemporary age of digital technology (Haseeb, Hussain, Kot, Androniceanu, & Jermisittiparsert, 2019). However, IT and HR are regarded as the elements that results in

the attainment of competitive advantage in the dynamic, complex and globalized business settings (Garg, 2014; Monday, 2015).

With the transformation of society from industrial to information, technological advancement has removed the geographical barriers of and world has become a globalized village. Businesses are availing opportunities with regard to the cost, quality, time and delivery with the help of information and communication advancement. Particularly, developments in the context of technologies results in the development of business layouts that ultimately leads to the access of new markets where they sell their products, enhance productivity of the operations, customer satisfaction and ensuring their loyalty (Boons, Montalvo, Quist, & Wagner, 2013). Moreover, it is tool and technique for businesses that enhance business access of the useful information (Dao, Langella, & Carbo, 2011). IT is defined as a technology with general purpose instead of a conservative capital investment (Wirtenberg, Lipsky, Abrams, Conway, & Slepian, 2017). In the last two decades, IT witnesses rapid and significant developments. Hence, with the increasing application of IT, it is essential to study the impact of these technologies with relation to the performance of organization. In addition, Human Resource Development (HRD) has become a key element of the business organization in the context of restructuring infrastructure, advancing business operations, increasing information, innovativeness or other organizational perspectives. In the complex business

settings, the returns curtailing from investments in HR are regarded by researches practically as well as theoretically (Chitrao, 2015). The notion is highly applicable in the current settings where emphasis is paid to the innovative and information-oriented organizations. Accordingly, HR have a central role in the better performance of organization.

Theoretical Framework

The study adopted resource-based view theory propounded by Jay Barney (1991) in his article "Firm Resources and Sustained Competitive Advantage". The RBV states that organizational resources which are valuable, rare, and difficult to duplicate and substitute are a source of competitive advantage, which can improve business performance (Barney, 1991). The RBV of organization argues that access to strategic resources in terms of agile workforce, information technology capability and business opportunity foresight by founders is an important predictor of blue ocean opportunity-based entrepreneurship, new venture growth and competitive advantage (Arokodare & Asikhia, 2020). This theory stresses the importance of agile workforce environment, business foresight and information technology capability as firm strategic resources (Zhou, Zhang, Chen, & Han, 2017). Thus, access to these strategic resources enhances the ability of the firm to detect and act upon discovered opportunities, take risks, and be proactive, thus increasing firm market share competitive advantage (Davidson & Honing, 2003).

According to Barney (1991), the RBV rests on three assumptions: that firms seek to earn above average returns; that resources are asymmetrically distributed across competing firms; and that differences in resources lead to differences in product or service characteristics that result in variations in firms' competitive advantage. The theory also assumes that individuals are inspired to make maximum use of economic resources available and rational choices that a firm makes which are shaped by economic framework (Barney, 2007). The theory goes beyond the issues of strategy implementation and analysis of organizational processes. These two issues constitute the preoccupation of most of the earlier works carried out on the strategic implications of the firm's internal environment, which eventually gave rise to strategies (Grant, 2001).

Many scholars (Kumar & Gulati, 2010; Kuncoro & Suriani, 2018) have supported the RBV that market competitive advantage requires four characteristics of resources and capabilities as determinants of the sustainability of market competitive advantage. These are durability, valuable and rare, ease of imitation, transferability and substitutability of firm resources like information technology capability (Grant, 2001). Similarly, Arokodare et al., (2020) stressed that for any firm to gain and maintain competitive advantage over its competitors, the firm must possess agile workforce environment, business environmental foresight, human resource capability, information technology capability, strategic sensitivity, resource fluidity and

collective commitment. Therefore, this study is anchored on the RBV as its underpinning theory

Methodology

In this study, a survey design was adopted to obtain accurate data based on the opinion of the respondents and the researcher used primary data to obtain information from the respondents. The researcher used mainly the primary source of data to obtain information from the respondents. The target population comprised of the staff of the eighteen (18) selected Manufacturing firms in South-South, Nigeria and the choice of these manufacturing firms was based on their size, informed reality of their operations and their duration in existence. The population of the study was 1847. The researcher adopted the Slovin (1960) formula in determining the sample size. The Slovin's formula is used to determine the sample size of 329. For the purpose of this study, the researcher adopted questionnaire designed from dependent and independent variables as the instrument for data collection.

The questionnaire was grouped in two (2) sections A and B. The section

“A” contained items that linked to the bio data of the respondents while section “B” contained questions intended to answer the research questions and the study hypotheses. The questionnaire was designed in a five (5) point Likert scale structure which consisted of closed-ended questions that would be easier for the respondents to answer because of the fixed presentation of questions and responses. Each item required the respondent to indicate the frequency of his or her various opinions under Strongly Agree (SA) =5, Agree (A) =4, Undecided (UN) =3, Disagree (D) = 2 and Strongly Disagree (SD) =1. Very Large Extent=VLE (5), Large Extent=LE (4), Undecided= UN (3), Low Extent= LOE (2) and Very Low Extent=VLOE=1. The researcher adopted both inferential and descriptive statistics to analyze the data for the study and in order to realize the objectives of the study, objectives (i) and (ii) were analyzed using Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) to ascertain the extent to which strategic foresight boost market share and determine the degree to which human resource capability enhance firm’s efficiency of selected manufacturing firms in South-South, Nigeria.

Results and Discussions

Rate and Return of Questionnaire

Table 4.1: Return of questionnaire

| Selected Manufacturing Firms | Questionnaire Distributed | % | Questionnaire Retrieved | % | Questionnaire Lost | % |
|---|---------------------------|-----|-------------------------|-----|--------------------|-----|
| Champion Breweries Plc | 29 | 8.8 | 24 | 7.3 | 5 | 1.5 |
| Kings Flour Mill Limited | 21 | 6.4 | 17 | 5.2 | 4 | 1.2 |
| Jubilee Syringe Manufacturing Company Limited | 16 | 4.9 | 14 | 4.3 | 2 | 0.6 |
| Alphastar Paints Industries Limited | 15 | 4.5 | 13 | 4.0 | 2 | 0.6 |

| | | | | | | |
|--|------------|------------|------------|-------------|-----------|-------------|
| Bayelsa Plastic Industry Limited | 15 | 4.5 | 14 | 4.3 | 1 | 0.3 |
| Senalux Paint | 14 | 4.2 | 11 | 3.3 | 3 | 0.9 |
| Omni-Errands Manufacturing Limited | 19 | 5.8 | 15 | 4.6 | 4 | 1.2 |
| Combination Industries Limited | 25 | 7.6 | 19 | 5.8 | 6 | 1.8 |
| Excel Plastic Industry Limited | 15 | 4.5 | 11 | 3.5 | 4 | 1.2 |
| Anudu Plastics Nigeria Limited | 14 | 4.3 | 11 | 3.3 | 3 | 0.9 |
| Olite Manufacturing Company Limited | 19 | 5.8 | 14 | 4.2 | 5 | 1.5 |
| Beta Glass Plc | 20 | 6.1 | 16 | 4.9 | 4 | 1.2 |
| Okomu Oil Palm | 22 | 6.7 | 18 | 5.5 | 4 | 1.2 |
| Integrated Rubber Products Nigeria Plc | 20 | 6.1 | 17 | 5.2 | 3 | 0.9 |
| Presco Plc | 19 | 5.8 | 15 | 4.5 | 4 | 1.2 |
| Hidoz Filtration and Equipment Company Limited | 17 | 5.2 | 13 | 4.0 | 4 | 1.2 |
| Hopeup Integrated Industries Limited | 15 | 4.5 | 12 | 3.6 | 3 | 0.9 |
| Demcok Paints Limited | 14 | 4.3 | 10 | 3.0 | 4 | 1.2 |
| Total | 329 | 100 | 264 | 80.5 | 65 | 19.5 |

Source; Field Survey, 2024

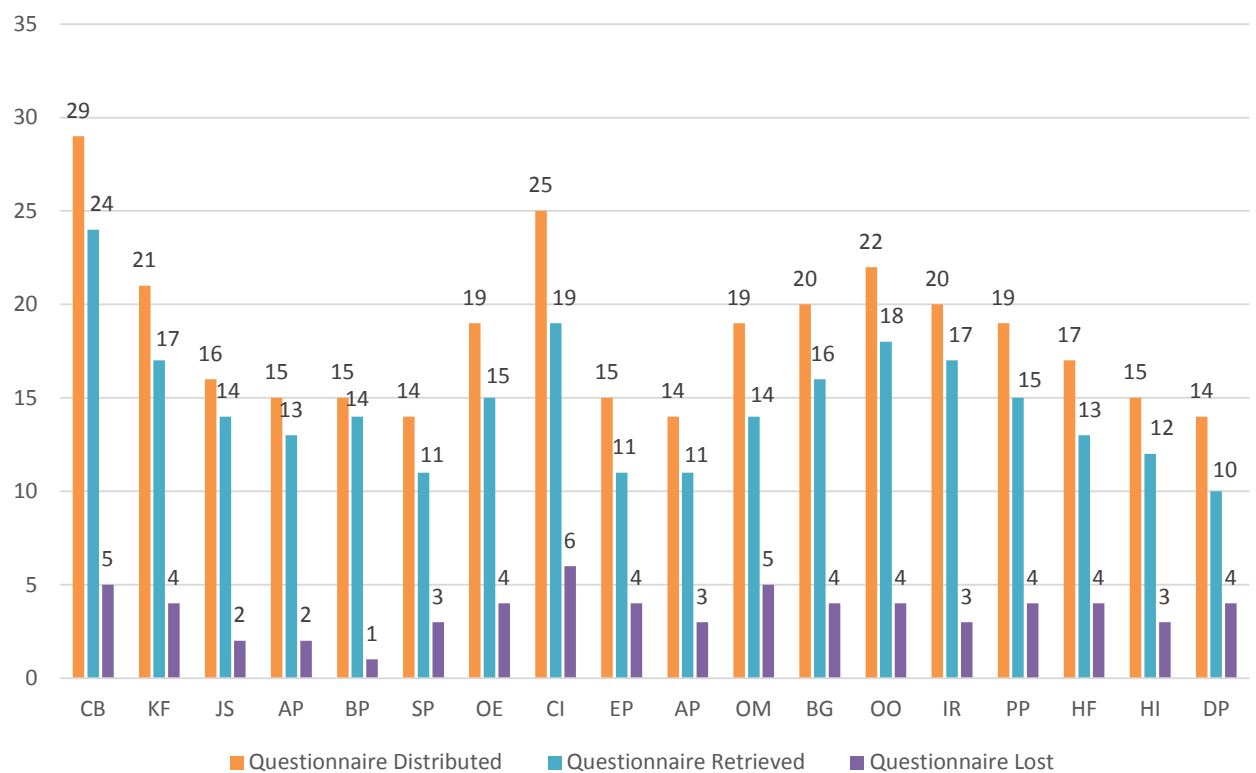


Figure 4.1: Analysis of the rate of questionnaire distributed, retrieved and lost

Table 4.1 and figure 4.1 revealed that a total of three hundred and twenty nine (329) copies of the questionnaire were distributed to the various manufacturing firms in South-South, Nigeria. Out of this number, sixty five (65) copies of questionnaire were

lost/wrongly filled with percentage ratio of 19.5% while two hundred and sixty (264) copies of questionnaire were correctly filled and returned with percentage ratio of 80.5% and this formed the basis of the study.

Table 4.2: Respondents' distribution by Gender Status

| Gender Status | Frequency | Percentage (%) |
|---------------|------------|----------------|
| Male | 145 | 54.9 |
| Female | 119 | 45.1 |
| Total | 264 | 100 |

Source; Field Survey, 2024

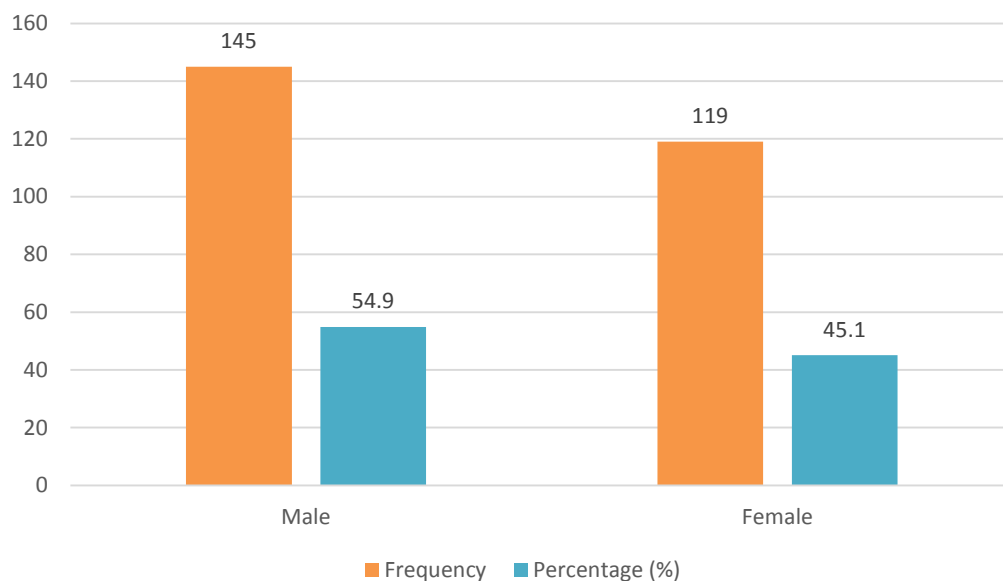


Figure 4.2: Analysis of respondents' distribution by Gender Status

Table 4.2 and figure 4.2 revealed that majority 145 with percentage ratio of 54.9% were male respondents while 119 with 45.1% were female respondents. This shows that the

difference in gender distribution is not much. Hence, male respondents constitute the study more than female.

Table 4.3: Respondents' distribution by Age range

| Age Range | Frequency | Percentage (%) |
|--------------------|------------|----------------|
| Below- 20 years | 41 | 15.5 |
| 21-30 years | 68 | 25.8 |
| 31-40 years | 102 | 38.6 |
| 41 years and above | 53 | 20.1 |
| Total | 264 | 100 |

Source: Field Survey, 2024

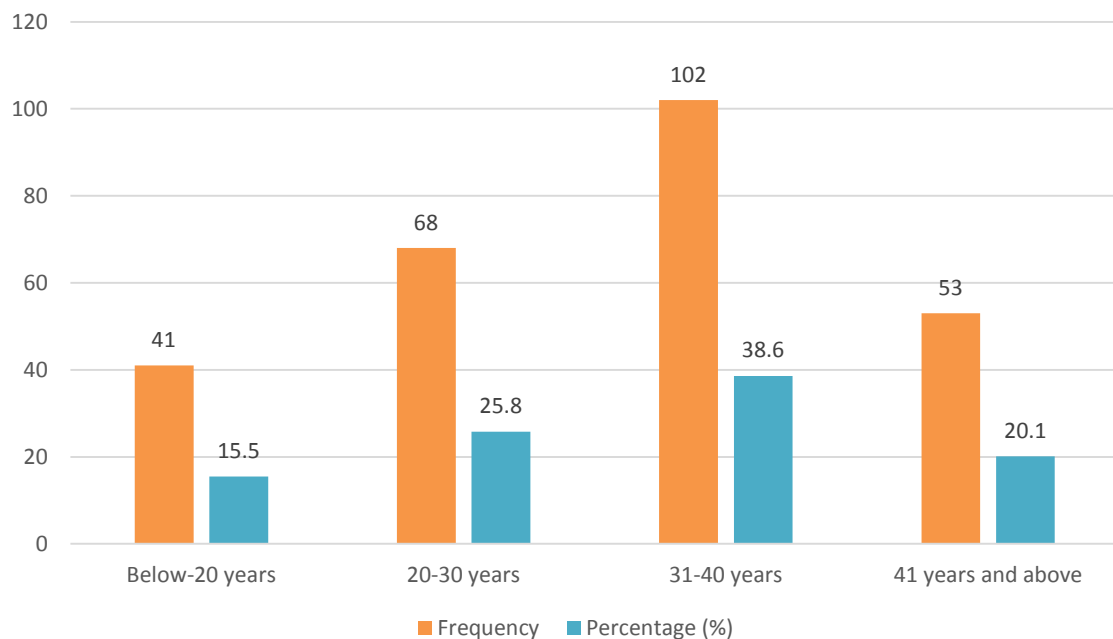
**Figure 4.3: Analysis of respondents' distribution by age range**

Table 4.3 and figure 4.3 revealed that majority 102 respondents with percentage ratio of 38.6% were between the age range of 31-40 years, 68 respondents with percentage ratio of 25.8% were between the age range of 20-30 years, 53 respondents with

percentage ratio of 20.1% were between the age range of 41 years and above while 41 respondents with percentage ratio of 15.5% were between the age range of below-20 years. This showed that majority of the respondent were matured in age and in experience.

Table 4.4: Respondents' distribution by Marital Status

| Marital Status | Frequency | Percentage (%) |
|----------------|------------|----------------|
| Single | 93 | 35.2 |
| Married | 124 | 5.0 |
| Others | 47 | 17.8 |
| Total | 264 | 100 |

Source: Field Survey, 2024

Ascertain the extent to which strategic foresight boost market share of selected manufacturing firms in South-South, Nigeria

N=264

| Responses | VLE 5 | LE 4 | UN 3 | LOE 2 | VLOE 1 | TOTAL | MEAN | Std. Dev. |
|---|----------|---------|---------|----------|-----------|-------|------|-----------|
| Integrative capabilities such as; dissemination, replication, and preservation of external knowledge within the organization are crucial for visible organizational success | 133 | 101 | 16 | 7 | 7 | 1138 | 4.3 | .903 |
| Regular environmental scanning support organizational performance | 132 | 102 | 13 | 8 | 9 | 1132 | 4.3 | .948 |
| Firms' long-term ability to confront the forces of competition enhances organizational sustainability | 142 | 97 | 11 | 6 | 8 | 1151 | 4.4 | .904 |
| Firms' ability to identify and efficiently adjust to continual change in their business and in the preferences of their customers boosts organizational profitability | 122 | 91 | 26 | 15 | 10 | 1092 | 4.1 | .724 |

Source: Field Survey, 2024

Decision Rule

If Mean < 3.5, the extent is not high or the respondents do not agree

If Mean ≥ 3.5, the extent is high or the respondents agree

Table above showed extent to which strategic foresight boost market share. Majority of the respondents with the highest mean scores of 4.4, 4.3, 4.3 and 4.1 respectively strongly agreed that

firms' long-term ability to confront the forces of competition enhances organizational sustainability, integrative capabilities such as; dissemination, replication, and preservation of external knowledge within the organization are crucial for visible organizational success, regular environmental scanning support organizational performance and firms' ability to identify and efficiently adjust to continual change in their business and in the preferences of their customers boosts organizational profitability. Therefore, since the mean of all the responses is ≥ 3.5 this shows that strategic foresight boost market share of selected manufacturing firms in South-South, Nigeria.

Determine the degree to which human resource capability enhance firm's efficiency of selected manufacturing firms in South-South, Nigeria

N=264

| Responses | VLE 5 | LE 4 | UN 3 | LOE 2 | VLOE 1 | TOTAL | MEAN | Std. Dev. |
|--|----------|---------|---------|----------|-----------|-------|------|-----------|
| Human resources (HR) capabilities,competences, skills and strategic resources are the key drivers for a long-term competitiveness | 132 | 94 | 18 | 11 | 9 | 1121 | 4.3 | .992 |
| Effective employee's recruitment, performance assessment, reward management, task design, information flow and others facilitate businesses to sustain their competitive advantage | 129 | 103 | 16 | 9 | 7 | 1130 | 4.3 | .921 |
| Allocation, carrying and sharing information among the human resources of an organization enhances organizational performance | 131 | 104 | 12 | 9 | 8 | 1133 | 4.3 | .932 |
| Firms' ability to manage both tangible and intangible resources for undertaking specific task induce performance enhancement | 136 | 99 | 13 | 7 | 9 | 1138 | 4.3 | .940 |

Source: Field Survey, 2024

Table above showed degree to which human resource capability enhance firm's efficiency. Majority of the respondents with the highest mean scores of 4.3, 4.3, 4.3 and 4.3 respectively strongly agreed that firms' ability to manage both tangible and intangible resources for undertaking specific task induce performance enhancement, allocation, carrying and sharing information among the human resources of an organization enhances organizational performance, effective employee's recruitment, performance assessment, reward management, task

design, information flow and others facilitate businesses to sustain their competitive advantage and human resources (HR) capabilities, competences, skills and strategic resources are the key drivers for a long-term competitiveness. Therefore, since the mean of all the responses is ≥ 3.5 , this shows human resource capability enhance firm's efficiency of selected manufacturing firms in South-South, Nigeria.

Test of Hypotheses

H0₁: Strategic foresight cannot significantly boost market share of selected manufacturing firms in South-South, Nigeria

Table 4.13: ANOVA test on strategic foresight and market share

| Model | | Sum of Squares | Df | Mean Square | F | Sig. |
|-------|------------|----------------|-----|-------------|---------|------|
| 1 | Regression | 216.611 | 3 | 72.204 | 2777.08 | .001 |
| | Residual | 6.647 | 260 | .026 | | |
| | Total | 223.258 | 263 | | | |

Source: Field Data, 2024

Table above showed ANOVA result on strategic foresight and market share shows f- statistics = 2777.08, mean square of 72.204 with p- value = $0.001 < 0.05\%$ significance level, we therefore reject null hypothesis and

uphold the alternative hypothesis which states that strategic foresight significantly boost market share of selected manufacturing firms in South-South, Nigeria.

H0₂: Human resource capability at low degree enhance firm's efficiency of selected manufacturing firms in South-South, Nigeria

Table 4.14: ANOVA test on human resource capability and firm's efficiency

| Model | | Sum of Squares | Df | Mean Square | F | Sig. |
|-------|------------|----------------|-----|-------------|--------|------|
| 1 | Regression | 105.204 | 2 | 52.602 | 773.56 | .000 |
| | Residual | 17.826 | 261 | .068 | | |
| | Total | 123.03 | 263 | | | |

Source: Field Data, 2024

Table above showed ANOVA result on human resource capability and firm's efficiency shows f- statistics = 773.56, mean square of 52.602 with p- value = $0.000 < 0.05\%$ significance level, we therefore reject null hypothesis and

uphold the alternative hypothesis which states that human resource capability enhances firm's efficiency of selected manufacturing firms in South-South, Nigeria.

Discussion of Results

This study examined strategic agility and organizational sustainability in selected manufacturing firms in South-South, Nigeria. From the

descriptive analyses, it was revealed that a total of three hundred and twenty nine (329) copies of the questionnaire were distributed and out of this number, sixty

five (65) copies of questionnaire were lost/wrongly filled with percentage ratio of 19.5% while two hundred and sixty (264) copies of questionnaire were correctly filled and returned with percentage ratio of 80.5% and this formed the basis of the study.

ANOVA result on hypothesis one showed that strategic foresight significantly boost market share of selected manufacturing firms in South-South, Nigeria. The study also showed that majority of the respondents with the highest mean scores of 4.4, 4.3, 4.3 and 4.1 respectively strongly agreed that firms' long-term ability to confront the forces of competition enhances organizational sustainability, integrative capabilities such as; dissemination, replication, and preservation of external knowledge within the organization are crucial for visible organizational success, regular environmental scanning support organizational performance and firms' ability to identify and efficiently adjust to continual change in their business and in the preferences of their customers boosts organizational profitability. This finding is in line with the findings of Abdulfattah and Chima (2023) on the relationship between strategic foresight and competitiveness of small and medium-sized businesses in Rivers State, Nigeria.

The findings showed that strategic foresight dimensions (Integration capability and environmental scanning capability) have a significant relationship with measures of (cost leadership and organizational responsiveness). It was concluded that strategic foresight is necessary in enhancing competitive advantage of firms and the study recommended that organizations use

strategic foresight to be competitive. The study was also supported by the findings of Rotimi and Chima (2023) on the relationship between strategic insight and firm's agility of SMEs in Abia State. The results generated by all the hypotheses demonstrated that there exists a significant and positive connection between the variables under research and recommended that SMEs' management should practice strategic foresight to be able to adapt, absorb change, and maintain their competitive advantage and profitability.

ANOVA result on hypothesis two showed that human resource capability enhances firm's efficiency of selected manufacturing firms in South-South, Nigeria. The study further revealed that majority of the respondents with the highest mean scores of 4.3, 4.3, 4.3 and 4.3 respectively strongly agreed that firms' ability to manage both tangible and intangible resources for undertaking specific task induce performance enhancement, allocation, carrying and sharing information among the human resources of an organization enhances organizational performance, effective employee's recruitment, performance assessment, reward management, task design, information flow and others facilitate businesses to sustain their competitive advantage and human resources (HR) capabilities, competences, skills and strategic resources are the key drivers for a long-term competitiveness. This study correlates with the study conducted by Farid, Marlina, Desmintari and Purbudi (2020) on the effect of human resource capability and technology on organizational performance: moderating role of organizational culture. The

findings of the study revealed that the human resource capabilities, technology significantly and positively influence the organizational performance and the study recommended that human resource capabilities like training and development, skills, innovation with the help of adoption of latest technology that can enhance the organizational performance.

The study of Huan-Ming, Mao-Jen and You-Shyang (2014) on the effects of human resource capability and internal customer satisfaction on organizational effectiveness indicates that human resource capability and customer satisfaction had a positive and significant effect on organizational effectiveness and recommended that for any organization to be a trustworthy company in its domain area, they should provide excellent services to customers and to achieve this goal, its HR capability with valuable, rare, irreplaceable, and difficult to imitate in essence, is crucial for creating sustainable competitive advantages and should not be neglected.

Conclusion

This study was carried out with a core objective to examine strategic agility and organizational sustainability in selected manufacturing firms in South-South, Nigeria. Based on the research objective and statistical evidences. Strategic agility which is the firms' ability to quickly recognize and seize opportunities, change direction and avoid collisions. It is also about firms learning to make fast turns and being able to transform and renew the company without losing opportunities. However, based on the observations

and empirical evidence, this research observed that all the proxies of strategic agility used in this study were directly linked to the sustainability of the selected manufacturing firms.

Therefore, from the statistical evidence the study results showed that strategic foresight significantly boost market share, human resource capability enhances firm's efficiency, information technology capability has a significant effect on value innovation, strategic sensitivity has a significant effect on competitive advantage, resource fluidity has a significant effect on productivity and a significant relationship existed between collective commitment and organizational performance of the selected manufacturing firms in South-South, Nigeria. Based on the above finding, this study concludes that strategic agility has a positive and significant effect on the sustainability of the selected manufacturing firms in South-South, Nigeria.

Recommendations

- Management of the selected manufacturing firms should regularly reconsider their strategic options in terms of choosing alternatives in a way based on innovation and continuous learning in order to improve the opportunities of competitive firms and provide the best services to satisfy customers. In addition, the study recommends reconsidering awareness of their strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats of their organization in the dynamic environment as well as preparing them for environmental change.

- Management of the selected manufacturing firms should continuously employ human resource management theories, concepts and practices for the progress and development of their organizations and nations. They should plan, staff, organize, control and lead their human resources in the most appropriate manner. The firms should also hire the right employee, placed them on the right job and motivate their employee to work efficiently and effectively. Likewise, motivating the employees to innovate and adopt new technology timely can bring a constructive changes and huge positive impact on the sustainability of the selected manufacturing firms.

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