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IMPACT OF SURVIVAL STRATEGIES ON ORGANIZATIONAL INNOVATIVENESS IN CONSTRUCTION COMPANIES IN NIGERIA

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ABSTRACT
This study investigated the relationship between survival strategies and organizational innovativeness in construction companies in Nigeria. The study had differentiation and focus strategy as dimensions of survival strategies. The cross-sectional form of the quasi-experimental research design was adopted for this work. A population of 1851 (one thousand eight hundred and fifty-one) was obtained. The Krejcie and Morgan sample size determination table was used to arrive at a sample size of 331 (three hundred and thirty-one). The questionnaire was the main instrument for data collection. Construct and convergent validity were carried out and reliability was tested using the Cronbach Alpha test. Hypotheses were tested using Pearson Moment Correlation. Findings revealed a significant relationship between the dimensions of survival strategies and organizational innovativeness. The findings further reveal a strong and positive relationship between differentiation, focus strategy, and innovativeness of construction companies thus we conclude that survival strategies significantly and proportionately predict the organizational innovativeness level of construction companies. Therefore, we recommended that construction firms should adopt survival strategies (differentiation and focus strategy) in order for them to be more innovative. Managers should encourage employees to think beyond the present situation.

KEYWORDS: ***Survival Strategies, Innovativeness, Differentiation, Focus Strategy, Leadership*.**

1. INTRODUCTION

A major contributory area to organizational success is the development of strategies for business continuity. Organizational Innovativeness in a market economy is dependent on the optimal utilization of relevant resources such as financial resources, material resources, and human resources. It is through the combination of these resources that the attainment of the goal is achieved. However, the survival of an organization is dependent on the organization's ability to adapt to change and be innovative. Survival has been the major objective of any organization be it small, medium, or large in the area of profit, people, and the planet but this has not always been the case for many insurance firms due to its volatile environment and the appropriateness of strategies to adopt for their survival. Nigeria as a country is characterized by an unstable and turbulent business environment which in turn influences the success of insurance firms and as well marred its main objective. The success rate of a growing business in Nigeria is pegged at 20% borne out of a lack of appropriate strategies for its survival

The innovation literature has tended to focus on the successful implementation of innovations and making appropriate tactical choices about when to innovate and when to delay/selectively adopt innovations (De Lancer, & Holzer, 2001). There is much to be learned, however, from innovations that fail, but they are difficult to research. A clear distinction must be made between innovations that are not fully implemented or that fail and ones that are fully implemented and accomplish their objectives in determining the effect on organizational survival. As well,

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organizations have many other objectives that include supporting employees, achieving organizational objectives and assuring the organization survives

According to Dodgson et al (2008), innovation is considered to be a vision, a concept, a strategy but also a solution. In this context, one can assume that innovation projects in order to become a fact and to achieve their purpose need an idea that helps to reach a certain aim either economic, social, or organizational. Perceived in most cases as an exclusive concept, innovation can be approached only by some companies. Innovation represents the core renewal process in any organization (Heskett, 2007). And unless businesses, notable members in the construction industry are prepared to work continuously at renewing what it offers and how it creates and delivers that offering, there is a good chance that it will not survive in today's turbulent environment. Even if firms recognize and accept the need for continuous innovation, they may find difficulties in framing an appropriate innovation agenda. With limited resources, they may risk putting scarce eggs into too few or the wrong baskets (Howells 2000). Part of the problem in managing innovation is the way people think about it. Whilst the term is in common usage, the meaning people attach to it and hence the way in which they behave can vary widely.

Ogunro (2014) attributes the survival and success of organizations to various factors; firstly, technology, which translates into the organization's research and development activities, technological incentives, and the level of change associated with technology. Secondly, ecological factors translate into contextual and environmental aspects such as climate issues and weather which affect farm and industrial-related businesses. Thirdly, Legal factors translate into discriminatory law, consumer law, antitrust law, employment law, safety, and health law, and finally, economic factors translate into interest rates, inflation rates, and exchange rates. Gabriel (2015) dwells extensively on the survivability of the organization as a product of its success in surmounting identified environmental challenges and seizure of opportunities. The business to this stage has proved that it is a workable entity and has enough customers and it satisfies them sufficiently with its products and services. The long-term survival of the organization and not the financial performance should indicate the success of the organization.

In the opinion of Kotler and Keller (2010), survival in a highly competitive service industry depends upon the creation of innovative products which can be marketed at reasonable prices. It is therefore not surprising that players in the construction Industry globally are coming up with new innovative products and services to brighten up their chances of survival in their various industries. Innovation, therefore, holds the key to surviving in a highly competitive industry. According to Dodgson et al (2008), innovation is considered to be a vision, a concept, a strategy but also a solution. Thornhill (2006) also explains further that innovation refers to the outcome and practice of converting knowledge and ideas into novel entities that are valued by individuals and communities. Innovation involves acting on creative ideas to make some specific and tangible difference in the domain in which the innovation occurs (Davila et al, 2006). Innovation is defined as the successful implementation of creative ideas within an organization. For a firm to grow in business and compete favorably with others, innovation is important. It can take many forms, but in every form, it tends to reduce unit costs and/or helps to expand market demand. Hauser et al (2006) revealed that a major impact of innovation is to reduce unit costs of production and distribution. Hence it reduces prices and thereby improves competitive advantage. Thus, innovation increases the comparative advantage of small countries in international trade that are rich in technological knowledge. Part of the problem in managing innovation is the way people think about it. This study, therefore, seeks to examine the effect of cost leadership and organizational success of insurance firms in Port Harcourt.

1.2 Aim/Objectives of the Study

This study aims to investigate the relationship between survival strategies on organizational innovativeness. The study however has some specific objectives:

i. To ascertain the relationship between differentiation and innovativeness.
ii. To examine the relationship between focus and innovativeness.
iii.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Differentiation

Differentiation strategy involves the development of strengths that can give a firm a differential performance advantage above other competitors. Differentiation strategy is where an organization attempts to gain a competitive advantage by increasing the perceived value of their products or services relative to the perceived value of other firms' products or services. To implement these strategies successfully, organizations need to have an accurate view of the current competitive situation to persuade customers about the features of sustainable products (Pondeville, Swaen & De Rongé, 2013).

Differentiation strategy is among the generic strategic approaches in building competitive advantage. Differentiation strategies are based on providing buyers with something different or unique, that makes the company's product or service distinct from that of its rivals. The fundamental assumption behind a differentiation strategy is that customers are willing to pay a higher price for a product that is distinct (or at least perceived as such) in some critical way. Superior value is created because the product is of higher quality, is technically superior in some way, comes with superior service, or has a unique appeal in some perceived way. In effect, differentiation builds a competitive advantage by making customers more loyal and less price-sensitive to a given firm's product. Additionally, consumers are less likely to search for other alternative products once they are satisfied (Jeff, 2009).

Through differentiation, a customer has given a reason to choose the brand and not another service or product. Although all products or services can be differentiated notal all brand differences are worthwhile or meaningful to the customers (Porter 1980; Kotler, (2000). The challenge is to establish a difference that is relevant to customers. An organization is also faced with a challenge of how many differences to promote (Aaker, 1984 cited in Tom, 2008) thus helping an organization to avoid the risks of over-positioning, under-positioning, confused positioning, and doubtful positioning. Furthermore, the success of a differentiation strategy lies in adopting a differentiation that is important to customers, distinctive, superior, affordable, and profitable.

Differentiation can take different forms like branding, advertising, and features When several companies are offering trial products, they will want to identify and distinguish their particular offerings. This is what is called "branding". Nashua (2015) notes that; branding of products is necessary because marketers are acting in ways of diluting brands instead of building them. Branding provides marketing identity. It also serves to differentiate products and creates a basis for building a brand name through trust. The objective of branding is to aid target customers in identifying the branded items and to familiarize them with them, to accept them. The value of being different has been studied by many researchers of different theoretical backgrounds. Despite the heterogeneity of the context of their studies, researchers in strategic management agree that a firm may face less competition by differentiating itself from others hence good performance. (Baum & Mezias, 2012).

2.2 Focus Strategy

A focus strategy based on low cost depends on there being a buyer segment whose needs are less costly to satisfy than the rest of the market. On the other hand, a focus strategy based on differentiation depends on there being a buyer segment that demands unique product attributes. In the focus strategy, a firm targets a specific segment of the market (Porter, 1996). The firm can choose to focus on a select customer group, product range, geographical area, or service line (Martin, 1999). For example, some service firms focus solely on the service customers (Stone, 1995). Focus also is based on adopting a narrow competitive scope within an industry.

Focus aims at growing market share through operating in a niche market or markets either not attractive to or overlooked by, larger competitors. These niches arise from several factors including geography, buyer characteristics, and product specifications or requirements. A successful focus strategy (Porter, 1980) depends upon an industry segment large enough to have good growth potential but not of key importance to other major competitors. Market penetration or market development can be an important focus strategy. Midsize and large firms use focus-based strategies but only in conjunction with differentiation or cost leadership generic strategies.

The focus strategy whether anchored in a low-cost base or differentiation base attempts to attend to the needs of a particular market segment (Pearce, & Robinson, 1997). It rests on the premise that a firm can serve its narrow strategic target more effectively or efficiently than competitors who are competing more broadly. As a result, the firm achieves either differentiation from better meeting the needs of the particular target market or lower costs in serving this market or even both (Porter, 1998). This strategy targets a narrow segment of a market not served well by cost leadership or differentiation strategies and tailors its products to the needs of that specific segment to the exclusion of others (Johnson et al., 2011). It is also employed when it is not appropriate to apply the broad cost leadership or differentiation (Porter, 1985), by offering a limited range of services/products, serving specific markets only, or having special product/service for a specific type of customers (Allen & Helms, 2006; Hahn & Powers, 2004).

2.3 Innovativeness

Multiple definitions of innovativeness have been developed in previous research. An innovative firm has frequently been defined as one that adopts innovations (Attewell 1992) and, therefore, the more innovations a firm adopts, the more innovative it is. Rogers (2003) defined innovativeness as "the degree to which an individual or other unit of adoption is relatively earlier in adopting new ideas than any other member of the system." Innovativeness has been identified as a key factor influencing a firm's overall performance and growth. This is an organization-wide innovation capability structure and is the defining factor for the long-term survival of firms. In innovation and tourism literature, the word innovativeness has been frequently used, however with a blend of conceptualizations and understandings, as often as possible utilized conversely with innovation (Wang & Ahmed, 2004). Literature reveals that innovativeness is an antecedent to innovation and denotes a firm's ability to innovate (Hult, Hurley & Knight, 2004). This implies that innovativeness is a planned and viable alignment of a company while Manu (1992) posits that innovation is the means adopted by the organization in accomplishing competitive advantage. In corroborating with the above view, Menguc and Auh (2006) see innovativeness as a means to an end and not an end. They further posit that this is what differentiates innovativeness from innovation.

According to Press (2014), innovativeness is a noun of the word innovative. But in the case of research, Feaster (1968) claimed that innovativeness is a positive attitude toward changes and an awareness towards the need to innovate. Meanwhile, Wang and Ahmed (2004) defined innovativeness as "an organizations' overall innovative capability of introducing new products to the market, or opening up new markets, through combining strategic orientation with innovative behavior and process". On the other side of the coin, innovativeness relates to the capacity of the firm to mesh together in innovation and managers use this innovativeness to solve business problems and challenges, thus resulting in providing survival and success pace for the firm, either for current or future (Burns & Stalker, 1961; Hult, Hurley, & Knight, 2004; Hurley & Hult, 1998; Porter, 1990; Schumpeter, 1934). Hult et al. (2004) later added that innovativeness seemed to be useful in helping firms to compete with the competitors with those new or enhanced products and verify product lines, yet expanding the range of firm's activities generally. Therefore, then comes firm's innovativeness which refers to firms' "openness to new ideas as an aspect of a firm's culture" (Hurley & Hult, 1998), and the willingness of firms to adopt new ideas (Menguc & Auh, 2006; Woodside, 2005) that can be developed and launched as new products (Calantone, Cavusgil, & Zhao, 2002; Hurley & Hult, 1998; Tsai & Yang, 2013). In other words, it reflects the cultural values and beliefs of the firms which inspire their employees to be innovative (Hult & Ketchen, 2001).

McFadzean, O'Loughon, and Shaw (2005) defined innovation as a process that provides added value and novelty to the business, its suppliers, and customers through the development of new procedures, solutions, products, and services as well as new methods of commercialization. The concept of innovation was first introduced by Schumpeter (1949). Innovation was emphasized in the entrepreneurial process by describing the growth of economies as driven by changes made to the existing market structure through the introduction of new goods and services. Similarly, the entrepreneurial orientation literature describes innovativeness as efforts focused on the discovery of new opportunities and solutions (Dess & Lumpkin 2005). Thus, innovation is described in terms of individuals' creative ability who strongly believe in what they do and promote it through organization stages to arouse support for the business concept among key stakeholders, creates internal acceptance of the new idea, and represents the venture to resource allocators to ensure sufficient resources are released for development (Howell & Boies, 2004; Howell, et al., 2005; Markham, 1998).

Innovation refers to the generation and/or acceptance of new ideas, processes, products, or services (Masoomzadeh et al, 2019). Chivandi, Chinomona, and Maziriri (2017) defined innovation as a process according to which a new idea, perception, or invention is transformed or changed into a product or service, and customers do pay in exchange for that advancement or invention. Stojčić, Vojvodić, and Butigan (2019) defined innovation as a potential new combination that results in radical breaks with the past, making a substantial part of accumulated knowledge obsolete. Innovation serves as a means of developing and sustaining core competencies through the development of internal capabilities as research and development (R&D) departments and strategized research scopes and investments (Karim-Suhag et al, 2017). Innovation can be a novel service or product, a new administrative organization or structure, a new production process technology, or a new plan or program relating to organizational members. Hence, innovativeness is usually measured by the level of acceptance of innovations, even though other measures have been used by a few studies (López-Cabarcos et al, 2019) It is crucial to realize the types of innovation and their features because a specific type of innovation requires unique and sophisticated responses from an organization (Palladan, Abdulkadir & Chong, 2016).

2.5 Survival Strategies and Innovativeness

Sandada, Pooe, and Dhurup (2014) confirmed that strategic planning has a positive association and predictive relationship with the performance of SMEs. Factor analysis, correlations, and regression techniques were used in order to extract the dimensions of strategic planning and their relationships with business performance. Environmental

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scanning, business mission and vision, the formality of strategic plans, evaluation, and control, informing sourcing, strategy implementation incentives, employee participation, and time horizons emerged as strategic planning dimensions. Data were analyzed from 200 usable questionnaires that were distributed to SME owners and managers. Serah (2013) examined strategic planning practices by firms in the telecommunication sector in Kenya. The study employed a descriptive research design on a sample of five representative firms in the sector. Using a semi-structured questionnaire, the study acquired data from the research respondents which was analyzed both quantitatively and qualitatively. The study found that various strategic planning practices are applied in all the firms and are used as a guide to the departmental roles within the firms. The firms‟ strategic practices were found to be specific to the area of operations with each area having some unique strategic practices such as marketing, financial management, human resource management, public relations, and procurement. The study found these strategic practices to be highly effective in meeting the firms‟ objectives. Also, the strategic management practices were found to be affected by a few challenges that were observed to be avoidable if concrete measures are observed at the strategy conception level. Akinyele and Fasogbon, (2007) examined the impact of strategic planning on organizational performance and survival. The effectiveness of strategic planning can be measured in terms of the extent to which it influences organizational performance, which affects its survival rate. The main objective of this study is to re-evaluate the planning-performance relationship in an organization and determine the extent to which strategic planning affects performance in an organization, of which First Bank of Nigeria, Plc (FBN) will be used as a case study. Based on the above objective, relevant literature was thoroughly reviewed and three hypotheses were formulated and tested in this study. A survey technique was used with the administration of questionnaires to 100 respondents (of which 80 was retrieved) comprising of both the senior and junior staff in various First bank branches in Lagos metropolis. The data collected were analyzed using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS). Also, T-Test and Chi-square statistical methods were used in testing the hypotheses using the SPSS. The three hypotheses were confirmed. For testing for the reliability of the instrument, 'The Split-Half Technique' from SPSS was used. This study implies that Strategic planning enhances better organizational performance, which in the long run has an impact on its survival, and that strategic planning intensity is determined by managerial, environmental, and organizational factors.

3. METHODOLOGY

A survey design was adopted for its descriptive nature, causal relations, and power to draw inferences from particular to general through the use of statistical control and appropriate test statistic. Specifically, an explanatory and cross-sectional survey through the use of a self-reported questionnaire was adopted; the choice of this design was informed by the nature of the phenomena of interest. For instance, change is best investigated in a given context defined as conditions and participants. The explanatory survey measures antecedent factors that cause change (cause-and-effect); thereby, leading to the building and/or validating theories as well as predicting and controlling the phenomena under investigation. The cross-sectional study measures the snapshot of opinions of management and subordinate staff of the construction industry in Nigeria. The population represents the entire set of cases from where the sampling units are drawn - it is the total of the units of analysis that conforms to the laid-down standards. More specifically, we focused on staff in firms located in Port-Harcourt (Rivers State), Uyo (Akwa Ibom State), and Yenegoa (Bayelsa state). The choice of these three cities and states was informed by proximity. A preliminary investigation shows that a total of 45 construction companies exist in the three states studied. One thousand, eight hundred and fifty-one (1851) management and subordinate staff are in the (9) selected firms. The firms were selected on the basis that they employ over 500 employees. The determination of the sample size was done using the Krejcie and Morgan (1970) table and the result was 331. This study generates primary data by carefully constructing data collection instruments needed to obtain valid, relevant, and standardized information from the subjects. Questionnaire instruments were used; the choice is based on their simplicity, cost-effectiveness, higher reliability, more objectivity. Pearson's Product Moment Correlation Coefficient was used to analyze the data obtained from the questionnaire.

4. ANALYSIS OF THE RESULTS

A total of 331 (100%) questionnaire copies were distributed based on the adopted sample size, and 326 (98%) copies were retrieved successfully from the target organizations however, after collation and the error assessment of the retrieved copies, only 291 (88%) copies were considered admissible in the study. It was observed that 35 copies had issues with some sections which were either blank or were even missing from the questionnaire.

Table 4.1 Relationship between dimensions of survival strategies and organizational innovativeness

		Differentiation	Focus Strategy	Innovativeness
Differentiation	Pearson Correlation	1	.982**	.988**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000	.000
	N	291	291	291
Focus Strategy	Pearson Correlation	.982**	1	.983**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000		.000
	N	291	291	291
Innovativeness	Pearson Correlation	.988**	.983**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	
	N	291	291	291

SPSS output, Version 25

The result from the analysis of the relationship between the dimensions of survival strategy and organizational innovativeness is stated as follows:

i. The relationship between differentiation and innovativeness has a correlation coefficient of rho = 0.988 at a P = 0.000. The null hypothesis is rejected based on the evidence of significant associations between the variables.
ii. The relationship between focus strategy and innovativeness has a correlation coefficient of rho = 0.982 at a P = 0.000. The null hypothesis is rejected based on the evidence of significant associations between the variable

The result from the tests suggests that differentiation and focus strategies significantly and positively contribute towards outcomes of organizational innovativeness. This is as the results reveal that related actions or practices of differentiation and focus strategies enhance features such as innovativeness. Based on the evidence all hypothetical statements about the relationship between differentiation and the measures of organizational innovativeness are rejected. In line with the facts and results generated in this study, it is affirmed that survival strategies such as differentiation and focus strategy, are crucial to the well-being and survival of construction firms. The related findings of this study reveal that:

i. differentiation contributes significantly and positively toward outcomes of organizational innovativeness
ii. Focus strategy contributes significantly and positively toward outcomes of organizational innovativeness.

The finding on the relationship between differentiation and organizational innovativeness established differentiation as a significant antecedent of innovativeness outcomes. This finding corroborates previous research which has shown that several organizations view the differentiation strategy as a more important and distinct means to achieve competitive advantage in contrast to other strategies (Baines, & Langfield-Smith, 2003). Dirisu, Oluwole, and Ibidunni (2013) 'innovativeness and competitiveness are at the heart of a firm's performance in competitive markets.' Such features imply having low costs, differentiation advantage, or a successful focus strategy. Key to the success of the differentiation strategy is that the "price premium exceeds the extra costs incurred in being unique" (Kamau, 2013). A successful differentiation strategy is often backed up with many costly activities such as product design, research, and marketing expenditures (Kamau, 2013). To be effective, differentiators must choose attributes to differentiate that are different from the competitors. While the cost leadership strategy is limited to one singular approach, firms using a differentiation can choose to select from several attributes that are of value to buyers (Kamau, 2013). As low-cost leaders, differentiators also pursue to cover larger parts of the market but tend to have lesser relative market shares than the cost leaders.

The relationship between focus strategy and organizational innovativeness is observed to be significant and also positive. From the evidence presented, one could that a firm that follows the focus strategy does not necessarily charge the lowest prices in the industry, instead, it charges low prices relative to other firms that compete within the target market (Fathali, 2016). On the other hand, firms that compete based on uniqueness and target a specific market niche are following a differentiation focus strategy (Tanwar, 2013). According to the results of a study carried out by Pulaj et al. (2015), a focused strategy aimed at securing a competitive edge based on either low cost or differentiation becomes increasingly attractive as some critical conditions are met. Some of the conditions include: - a big enough target market niche to be profitable and one that offers good growth potential.

5. CONCLUSION

This study examined the association between survival strategies and organizational innovativeness of construction companies in Nigeria. As a survey, the study adopted a quantitative methodological stance, emphasizing more on the summarizing and generalization of observations, with participants selected from a sampling frame established based on their involvement within the industry and the specified context of the investigation.

The study affirms that differentiation as a dimension of survival strategies is a significant antecedent of organizational innovativeness. This is based on the observation that the evidence of differentiation significantly impacts the innovativeness of construction organizations in Nigeria.

The study concludes that focus strategy as a dimension of survival strategies is a significant antecedent of organizational innovativeness. This follows the evidence that related behavior which translates as focus strategy significantly impacts the innovativeness of construction organizations in Nigeria.

6. RECOMMENDATIONS

The recommendations put forward herein are based on the evidence and conclusions of the study. The use of the differentiation strategy by the construction firms in Nigeria should be such that identifies or builds on existing services or products of other competitor organizations or identifies the latent satisfaction gaps in the market, distinguishing itself from its rivals through the organization's approach toward addressing such. The development of the focus strategy by the construction firms in Nigeria should emphasize on the organization’s strong points, competencies, and its development of features or attributes that serve its goal and objective of reinforcing its position and placement within the context of its market or industry.

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