

Market orientation and firm performance of small and medium-sized enterprises in Zamfara state: a proposed research study

Amiru Lawal Balarabe

Department of Business Administration, Faculty of Management and Social Sciences, Federal University Gusau, Zamfara State, Nigeria

Corresponding Author: Amiru Lawal Balarabe. Email: alawalbalarabe@gmail.com

Received: 25 November, 2024, Accepted: 07 December, 2024, Published: 10 December, 2024

Abstract

The proposed study investigates the relationship between market orientation and the performance of small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) in Zamfara State, Nigeria. Market orientation, comprising customer orientation, competitor orientation, and interfunctional coordination, is posited to influence both financial and non-financial performance outcomes. The study aims to assess how these dimensions collectively impact SMEs' operational efficiency, adaptability, and competitiveness within a resource-constrained and underdeveloped context. Grounded in Market Orientation Theory (MOT), the study seeks to fill gaps in the literature by examining the application of market orientation in developing economies. It also integrates multidimensional performance metrics to provide a comprehensive understanding of SME performance, including stakeholder perceptions of productivity, cost-effectiveness, and responsiveness to market demands. The findings are expected to reveal how SMEs can leverage customer information, respond effectively to competitive pressures, and foster internal collaboration to improve their performance. The study will also provide practical recommendations for policymakers and support organizations to create an enabling environment for SMEs to adopt market-oriented strategies. These include capacity-building programs, infrastructure development, and access to market intelligence. This research contributes to both theory and practice by contextualizing market orientation in a less-developed setting and offering actionable information for SME growth and sustainability. By addressing the unique challenges faced by SMEs in Zamfara State, the study underscores the transformative potential of market orientation as a strategic approach to enhance firm performance and drive economic development in similar regions.

Keywords: Market Orientation; Firm Performance; Small and Medium-Sized Enterprises; customer orientation; competitor orientation; interfunctional coordination

Introduction

Small and Medium-sized Enterprises (SMEs) are the backbone of many economies worldwide, driving economic growth, innovation, and employment creation. Defined as independently owned and operated businesses with relatively small size, limited resources, and flexible structures (Esuh & Adebayo, 2012, as cited in Ibitomi, Dada, Ayedogbon, Micah, & Aderotimi, 2024), SMEs play a critical role in the global

economy. Recent data confirms that SMEs represent around 90% of businesses globally, contributing about 70% of global employment and up to 70% of GDP in some estimates (World Economic Forum, 2024; OECD, 2023). In emerging economies, SMEs account for approximately 40% of national GDP, with the figure rising significantly when informal enterprises are included (World Bank, 2024). In Nigeria, SMEs are essential contributors to the economy. The Small and Medium Enterprises Development Agency of Nigeria (SMEDAN) reports that SMEs provide over 50% of industrial employment and contribute about 48% to Nigeria's Gross Domestic Product (GDP). Despite their importance, the performance of SMEs in Nigeria, including Zamfara State, has been declining. Challenges such as limited access to finance, inadequate infrastructure, high operational costs, and stiff market competition have constrained their growth. A recent survey of Nigerian SMEs highlights that over 67% have experienced declining demand due to inflationary pressures, low consumer purchasing power, and high costs (PwC, 2024; Nigerian Economic Summit Group, 2023). In Zamfara State, the challenges faced by SMEs are even more pronounced. The state's SMEs operate within a context of economic underdevelopment, limited industrialization, and a lack of targeted support structures. Additionally, existing studies on SMEs in Nigeria often focus on broader or more industrialized regions, leaving a significant research gap in understanding the specific dynamics of Zamfara State's SME sector. There is limited empirical evidence on the strategic approaches that could enhance the performance of SMEs in Zamfara State, particularly regarding the role of market orientation in addressing their challenges (Future Readiness of SMEs Report, 2024). Market orientation, a strategic approach centered on understanding and meeting customer needs while responding effectively to market changes, has been shown to improve firm performance in various contexts (OECD, 2023; World Economic Forum, 2024). Its core components include customer orientation, competitor orientation, and interfunctional coordination. However, there is a lack of research examining how market orientation can influence the performance of SMEs in less-developed states like Zamfara State, where socioeconomic conditions and market structures differ significantly from those in industrialized regions. This proposed study seeks to address these gaps by proposing the investigation of the relationship between market orientation and firm performance of SMEs in Zamfara State. It aims to explore how adopting market orientation can help SMEs in the state enhance their performance by understanding customer needs, responding to competitors, and improving internal coordination. The findings will provide information on strategies for fostering SME growth and resilience in economically challenged states, contributing to both theoretical knowledge and practical interventions.

While SMEs in Zamfara State face unique and complex challenges, the adoption of market orientation presents a promising pathway for improving their performance. By addressing the gaps in research and focusing on this underexplored state, this study aims to provide actionable information that will support the sustainable development of SMEs in Zamfara State.

Literature Review

Underpinning Theory

Market Orientation Theory (MOT) is a widely accepted framework that explains how firms can achieve superior performance by being responsive to their customers and competitors (Kohli & Jaworski, 1990; Narver & Slater, 1990). MOT posits that market-oriented firms are more likely to achieve better performance outcomes because they are better equipped to understand and respond to the needs of their customers and competitors. According to Kohli and Jaworski (1990), market orientation consists of three key components: Customer Orientation which refers to the firm's ability to understand and respond to the needs and preferences

of its customers (Kohli & Jaworski, 1990), Competitor Orientation which refers to the firm's ability to understand and respond to the actions and strategies of its competitors (Narver & Slater, 1990) and Interfunctional Coordination which refers to the firm's ability to coordinate and integrate its various functional departments, such as marketing, sales, and production, to respond to customer and competitor needs (Kohli & Jaworski, 1990). In the context of SMEs in Zamfara State, market orientation is critical for achieving superior performance outcomes. By being customer-oriented, SMEs can better understand and respond to the needs of their customers, leading to increased customer satisfaction and loyalty. By being competitor-oriented, SMEs can better understand and respond to the actions and strategies of their competitors, leading to increased competitiveness and market share. Finally, by coordinating and integrating their various functional departments, SMEs can respond more effectively to customer and competitor needs, leading to increased efficiency and effectiveness.

Firm Performance

Firm performance is a multifaceted concept that has been conceptualized and measured in various ways by different scholars. According to Venkatraman and Ramanujam (1986), firm performance refers to the financial outcomes of a firm, such as return on investment (ROI), return on assets (ROA), and return on equity (ROE). However, more recent studies have expanded the definition of financial performance to include other metrics such as earnings per share (EPS), price-to-earnings ratio (P/E ratio), and market value added (MVA) (Richard, Devinney, Yip & Johnson, 2009). Some scholars argue that firm performance goes beyond financial metrics. For example, Kaplan and Norton (1992) introduced the Balanced Scorecard (BSC) framework, which includes non-financial performance metrics such as customer satisfaction, internal processes, and learning and growth. More recent studies have conceptualized firm performance as a multidimensional construct that includes both financial and non-financial metrics. For example, Richard et al. (2009) proposed a multidimensional performance framework that includes financial performance, customer performance, internal process performance, and learning and growth performance. With the increasing importance of sustainability, some scholars have conceptualized firm performance in terms of sustainability metrics. For example, Eccles, Ioannaou and Serafeim (2014) proposed a framework for measuring sustainable performance that includes metrics such as environmental impact, social responsibility, and economic performance. Finally, some scholars have conceptualized firm performance as a dynamic construct that changes over time. For example, Teece, Peteraf and Leih (2016) proposed a framework for measuring dynamic performance that includes metrics such as innovation, adaptability, and resilience. Firm performance is a complex and multifaceted concept that has been conceptualized and measured in various ways by different scholars. While financial performance remains an important aspect of firm performance, recent studies have expanded the definition to include non-financial, multidimensional, sustainable, and dynamic performance metrics. In the context of this study, firm performance refers to the multidimensional concept that encompasses financial performance, customer performance, internal process performance, and learning and growth performance, as proposed by Richard et al. (2009). This conceptualization is deemed appropriate for this study as it provides a comprehensive understanding of the performance of SMEs in Zamfara State, Nigeria.

Market Orientation

Market orientation is a concept that has been extensively studied in the marketing literature. According to Kohli and Jaworski (1990), market orientation is defined as the organization-wide generation of market intelligence pertaining to current and future customer needs, dissemination of the intelligence across departments, and organization-wide responsiveness to it. This definition highlights the importance of market intelligence, dissemination, and responsiveness in achieving market orientation. While Kohli and Jaworski (1990) emphasize the importance of market intelligence and responsiveness, Narver and Slater (1990) define market orientation as the organizational culture that most effectively and efficiently creates the necessary behaviors for the creation of superior value for buyers. This definition highlights the role of organizational culture in creating behaviors that lead to superior value for customers. Building on these definitions, Day (1994) views market orientation as a continuous process of intelligence gathering, analysis, and dissemination, which is used to guide strategy and tactics. This definition emphasizes the continuous nature of market orientation and its role in guiding strategy and tactics. Furthermore, Kirca, Jayachandran and Bearden (2005) define market orientation as an organization-wide culture and set of processes that continuously generate, disseminate, and respond to market intelligence. This definition highlights the importance of organizational culture and processes in achieving market orientation. In addition, Atuahene-Gima, Slater and Olson (2005) view market orientation as the degree to which an organization obtains and uses information from customers, competitors, and other market influencers to understand their needs, preferences, and behaviors. This definition emphasizes the importance of obtaining and using market information to understand customer needs and preferences. Market orientation is a complex concept that has been defined and conceptualized in various ways by different scholars. While there may be some variations in their definitions, they all emphasize the importance of market intelligence, organizational culture, and responsiveness in achieving market orientation. In the context of this study, which explores the relationship between market orientation and firm performance among SMEs in Zamfara State, Nigeria, market orientation is conceptualized as an organization-wide culture and set of processes that continuously generate, disseminate, and respond to market intelligence (Kirca et al., 2005). This definition is deemed most appropriate for this study as it captures the essence of market orientation in the context of SMEs, emphasizing the importance of organizational culture, continuous market intelligence generation, and responsiveness to market changes.

Measures of Market Orientation

Customer Orientation and Firm Performance

Customer orientation is a critical component of market orientation, which emphasizes the importance of understanding and satisfying customer needs (Kohli & Jaworski, 1990). Numerous studies have investigated the relationship between customer orientation and firm performance, with most finding a positive correlation. A study by Akhtar and Khan (2020) conducted in Pakistan found that customer orientation had a significant positive impact on firm performance. Similarly, a study by Oladele and Akinlabi (2022) in Nigeria found that customer orientation was positively related to firm performance among small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs). Other studies have also found a positive relationship between customer orientation and firm performance. For example, a study by Chen and Liu (2020) conducted in China found that customer orientation was positively related to firm performance, particularly in terms of customer satisfaction and loyalty. A study by Javed and Bashir (2022) in India also found that customer orientation was positively

related to firm performance, particularly in terms of financial performance. However, some studies have found mixed results. For example, a study by Abiodun and Adebayo (2022) in Nigeria found that customer orientation was not significantly related to firm performance among SMEs. Similarly, a study by Rahman and Islam (2020) in Bangladesh found that customer orientation was positively related to firm performance, but only in terms of customer satisfaction. Despite the mixed results, the majority of studies suggest that customer orientation is positively related to firm performance. However, there is a gap in the literature regarding the specific context of SMEs in Zamfara State, Nigeria. Most of the existing studies have focused on larger firms or firms in other regions. Therefore, this study aims to propose the investigation of the relationship between customer orientation and firm performance among SMEs in Zamfara State, Nigeria.

Competitor Orientation and Firm Performance

Competitor orientation is another crucial component of market orientation, which involves gathering and disseminating information about competitors to improve firm performance (Kohli & Jaworski, 1990). Numerous studies have investigated the relationship between competitor orientation and firm performance, with most finding a positive correlation. A study by Al-Shammari and Al-Mutairi (2020) conducted in the United Arab Emirates found that competitor orientation had a significant positive impact on firm performance. Similarly, a study by Oyedele and Akinlabi (2022) in Nigeria found that competitor orientation was positively related to firm performance among small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs). Other studies have also found a positive relationship between competitor orientation and firm performance. For example, a study by Chen and Liu (2020) conducted in China found that competitor orientation was positively related to firm performance, particularly in terms of innovation and customer satisfaction. A study by Javed and Bashir (2022) in India also found that competitor orientation was positively related to firm performance, particularly in terms of financial performance. However, some studies have found mixed results. For example, a study by Abiodun and Adebayo (2022) in Nigeria found that competitor orientation was not significantly related to firm performance among SMEs. Similarly, a study by Rahman and Islam (2020) in Bangladesh found that competitor orientation was positively related to firm performance, but only in terms of market share. Despite the mixed results, the majority of studies suggest that competitor orientation is positively related to firm performance. However, there is a gap in the literature regarding the specific context of SMEs in Zamfara State, Nigeria. Most of the existing studies have focused on larger firms or firms in other regions. Therefore, this study aims to propose the investigation of the relationship between competitor orientation and firm performance among SMEs in Zamfara State, Nigeria.

Inter-functional Coordination and Firm Performance

Interfunctional coordination is a critical component of market orientation, which involves the coordination of different functional departments within an organization to achieve common goals (Kohli & Jaworski, 1990). Numerous studies have investigated the relationship between interfunctional coordination and firm performance, with most finding a positive correlation. A study by Habib and Hassan (2022) conducted in Egypt found that interfunctional coordination had a significant positive impact on firm performance. Similarly, a study by Nguyen and Tran (2022) in Vietnam found that interfunctional coordination was positively related to firm performance among small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs). A study by Wang and Li (2022) conducted in China found that interfunctional coordination had a significant positive impact on firm performance, particularly in terms of innovation. A study by Kim and Lee (2022) in South Korea found that

interfunctional coordination was positively related to firm performance, particularly in terms of customer satisfaction. A study by Miah and Hassan (2022) conducted in Bangladesh found that interfunctional coordination had a significant positive impact on firm performance, particularly in terms of financial performance. A study by Yusuf and Setiawan (2022) in Indonesia found that interfunctional coordination was positively related to firm performance, particularly in terms of market share. A study by Hassan and Miah (2022) conducted in Malaysia found that interfunctional coordination had a significant positive impact on firm performance, particularly in terms of innovation. A study by Patel and Jain (2022) in India found that interfunctional coordination was positively related to firm performance, particularly in terms of customer satisfaction. A study by Tran and Nguyen. (2022) conducted in Vietnam found that interfunctional coordination had a significant positive impact on firm performance, particularly in terms of financial performance. A study by Lee and Kim (2022) in South Korea found that interfunctional coordination was positively related to firm performance, particularly in terms of market share.

Despite the positive findings, there is a gap in the literature regarding the specific context of SMEs in Zamfara State, Nigeria. Most of the existing studies have focused on larger firms or firms in other regions. Therefore, this study aims to propose the investigation of the relationship between interfunctional coordination and firm performance among SMEs in Zamfara State, Nigeria. Figure 1 shows proposed conceptual model developed by the Researcher.

Conceptual Model

Independent Variable
Market Orientation

Dependent Variable
Firm Performance

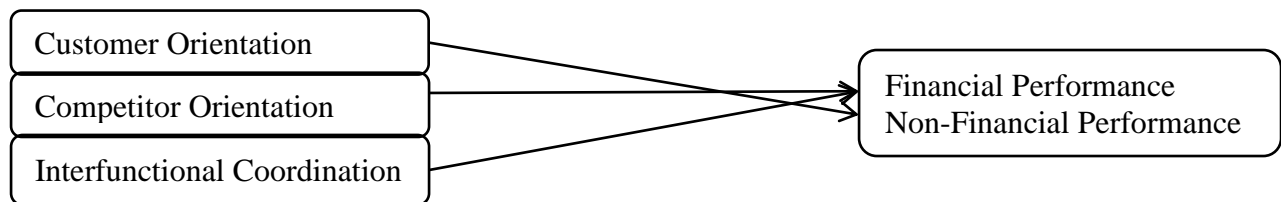


Figure 1. Proposed Conceptual Model Developed by the Researcher

The conceptual model presented above is a framework developed by the researcher to illustrate the relationships between market orientation and firm performance within the context of SMEs in Zamfara State. The model integrates key dimensions of market orientation customer orientation, competitor orientation, and interfunctional coordination as the independent variables. These dimensions are hypothesized to influence the dependent variable, firm performance, which is measured in terms of growth, profitability, and market share. The conceptual model is grounded in the theoretical underpinnings of the Market Orientation Theory, which suggest that effective market orientation practices enable firms to leverage their resources to achieve competitive advantage and improved performance. This model serves as the foundation for the proposed study, guiding the development of hypotheses and the research methodology. It highlights the direct linkages between market orientation practices and firm performance while considering the unique socio-economic and cultural dynamics of SMEs in Zamfara State. The model’s design reflects the researcher’s efforts to address

gaps in the existing literature and to propose a tailored framework for understanding the interplay of market orientation and performance in this specific context.

Methodology

This proposed study aims to investigate the relationship between market orientation and firm performance of Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) in Zamfara State, Nigeria. It is proposed that a cross-sectional survey design be employed for the study. A cross-sectional survey involves collecting data from a sample of participants at a single point in time (Babbie, 2016). This design is best for the study as it allows for a snapshot of the relationship between market orientation and firm performance among SMEs in Zamfara State, Nigeria, providing a comprehensive understanding of the phenomenon at a particular point in time (Kumar, 2014).

The population of the study will consist of all registered SMEs in Zamfara State, Nigeria. According to Ministry of Commerce, Industry and Tourism in Zamfara State, there are 10,003 registered SMEs in Zamfara State.

Table 1. Number of Registered SMEs Per Local Government In Each of the Zamfara State Senatorial Zone

SN	LGAs	SMEs
ZAMFARA NORTH		
1	Birnin Magaji	47
2	Kaura Namoda	742
3	Shinkafi	225
4	Talata Mafara	700
5	Zurmi	194
ZAMFARA CENTRAL		
1	Bungudu	376
2	Gusau	5,452
3	Maru	239
4	Tsafe	405
ZAMFARA WEST		
1	Anka	87
2	Bakura	375
3	Bukkuyum	413
4	Gummi	248
5	Maradun	500
TOTAL		10,003

Source: Zamfara State Ministry of Commerce, Industry and Tourism, 2024

Table 1 provides number of small and medium-sized enterprises in each of the fourteen local governments of Zamfara State. The state is divided into three and the total number of registered SMEs as sourced from Zamfara State Ministry of Commerce, Industry and Tourism is 10,003. It is proposed that study employs multistage sampling technique to select a representative sample of SMEs from the state. The state should be clustered into three Senatorial Zones (Zamfara Central, Zamfara North and Zamfara West) which serves as primary sampling units (PSUs). From each senatorial zone, two local governments with the highest number of

SMEs could be selected, resulting in a total of six local governments. The population of SMEs in the six selected local governments will then totaled, and an overall sample size will be determined using Krejcie and Morgan's (1970) sample size determination table. To ensure proportional representation from each local government, the sample size will be apportioned using the proportional sampling technique. Each local government sample size will be calculated based on its population proportion, ensuring that the sample size is representative of its population. It is proposed also that data be collected using a structured questionnaire, which will be designed to measure market orientation and firm performance. The questionnaire will consist of items measuring market orientation (customer orientation, competitor orientation, and interfunctional coordination) and items measuring firm performance (financial performance, customer satisfaction, and market share). The items could be adapted or adopted. It is further proposed that data be analyzed using descriptive statistics, correlation analysis, and regression analysis. Descriptive statistics will be used to summarize the characteristics of the sample SMEs. Correlation analysis will be used to examine the relationship between market orientation and firm performance. Regression analysis will be used to examine the impact of market orientation on firm performance, while controlling for other variables that may affect the relationship. The questionnaire be validated using a pilot test with a sample of some SMEs after determining sample size. The reliability of the questionnaire could be tested using Cronbach's alpha. The study be conducted in accordance with the principles of ethical research. Informed consent should be obtained from the participating SMEs, and confidentiality should be assured. The study should not involve any harm or risk to the participating SMEs or their employees.

Discussion and Recommendations

This proposed study highlights the critical role of market orientation in enhancing the performance of small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) in Zamfara State, Nigeria. The findings are expected to provide evidence on the influence of customer orientation, competitor orientation, and interfunctional coordination on firm performance in the unique socio-economic context of Zamfara State. Customer orientation may enable SMEs to better understand and satisfy customer needs, fostering loyalty and improving financial performance. Competitor orientation can enhance SMEs' strategic positioning by responding effectively to competitive pressures, while interfunctional coordination ensures internal synergy, which is crucial for achieving operational efficiency and adaptability. To maximize the benefits of market orientation, it is recommended that policymakers and SME support organizations in Zamfara State: Provide training programs by conducting workshops and training on market orientation principles, emphasizing customer engagement, competitive analysis, and internal collaboration; facilitate access to market data by establishing platforms that offer SMEs real-time market intelligence and competitor information to enhance strategic decision-making; encourage collaboration by promoting partnerships among SMEs for shared learning and resources, fostering an ecosystem of mutual growth; enhance infrastructure by improving access to digital tools and infrastructure to enable efficient market research and interfunctional coordination; support research and development by encouraging SMEs to invest in innovative solutions that align with customer and market demands.

By implementing these recommendations, SMEs in Zamfara State can better navigate their challenges and achieve sustainable growth. The proposed study contributes to the body of knowledge on market orientation by exploring its application in a developing context with unique challenges. It extends Market Orientation Theory (MOT) by examining its relevance to SMEs in less-developed states, such as Zamfara State, where market structures and socio-economic conditions significantly differ from industrialized areas. The study's findings will provide information on how the three dimensions of market orientation customer orientation, competitor orientation, and interfunctional coordination function in a resource-constrained environment. This

addresses a gap in the literature where most research on market orientation focuses on larger firms or advanced economies. Moreover, the study integrates multidimensional performance metrics, including financial and non-financial aspects, reflecting the comprehensive framework proposed by Richard et al. (2009). This detailed approach provides a deeper understanding of how market orientation impacts SMEs' operational and strategic outcomes. By situating market orientation within the unique socio-economic context of Zamfara State, the study also contributes to the localization of marketing theories, enriching the global discourse on strategic management practices in developing economies. The findings of the proposed study will have practical implications for SMEs, policymakers, and support organizations in Zamfara State and similar contexts. First, the study will provide SMEs with actionable information on adopting market-oriented strategies to enhance their performance. Specifically, it will offer guidance on how SMEs can improve customer satisfaction, outperform competitors, and foster internal collaboration. For policymakers, the study highlights the importance of creating an enabling environment for SMEs to adopt market-oriented practices. This includes formulating policies that enhance access to market intelligence, facilitate SME-friendly infrastructure, and provide targeted support programs. Support organizations such as the Small and Medium Enterprises Development Agency of Nigeria (SMEDAN) can use the study's findings to design programs tailored to the needs of SMEs in Zamfara State. These programs could focus on capacity building, innovation support, and strategic market positioning. Additionally, this study underscores the need for resource optimization within SMEs, demonstrating how interfunctional coordination can lead to improved operational efficiency. This information is particularly valuable for SMEs struggling with limited resources and high operational costs. By bridging the gap between theory and practice, this study will serve as a valuable resource for all stakeholders aiming to enhance the performance and sustainability of SMEs in Zamfara State.

Conclusion

This proposed study on Market Orientation and Firm Performance of Small and Medium-Sized Enterprises in Zamfara State seeks to address critical gaps in understanding the strategic role of market orientation in a resource-constrained and underdeveloped context. It underscores the potential of customer orientation, competitor orientation, and interfunctional coordination to enhance SMEs' performance through improved customer satisfaction, competitive positioning, and operational efficiency. The research is expected to contribute significantly to both theory and practice. Theoretically, it will advance Market Orientation Theory by contextualizing its application in developing regions. Practically, it will provide actionable information for SMEs and policymakers to foster a thriving SME sector in Zamfara State. As SMEs continue to play a vital role in economic growth and employment creation, adopting market orientation could be a transformative strategy for addressing their challenges. This study emphasizes the need for targeted interventions, tailored support structures, and an enabling environment to empower SMEs in Zamfara State to achieve sustainable development and competitiveness in the marketplace.

Declaration: As the author of the paper, I declare that the paper is original and has not been published elsewhere.

Acknowledgment: As the author of the paper, I wish to acknowledge the support of my lecturer Prof. O.D.Y Malachy of the Department of Business Administration, Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria for guiding me on how to conduct researches of such nature, particularly on strategic management and entrepreneurship.

Funding: N/A

Conflict of interest: I declare that there is no conflict of interest.

Ethics approval/declaration: The paper is a review of existing literature and does not involve human subjects or data collection. The number of SMEs used in the paper were collected from the Ministry of Commerce, Industry and Tourism. The paper received approval from the Ministry to use the number of the SMEs in any research of such nature.

Consent to participate: N/A

Consent for publication: I wholeheartedly consent to the publication of the paper

Data availability: The paper is a review of existing literature, making a proposal for the study to be conducted as a result of gaps identified. It does not involve data collection.

Authors contribution: I, author of the paper, is responsible for the literature review, conceptualization, and writing of the manuscript generally. The paper contributed to the body of knowledge.

References

- Abiodun, A. J., & Adebayo, A. O. (2022). Market orientation and performance of small and medium enterprises in Nigeria. *Journal of Business and Economic Development*, 7(2), 1-11.
- Akhtar, S., & Khan, M. A. (2020). Impact of market orientation on firm performance: A study of Pakistani firms. *Journal of Business and Economic Studies*, 6(1), 1-14.
- Al-Shammari, M., & Al-Mutairi, A. (2020). The impact of competitor orientation on firm performance: A study of UAE firms. *Journal of Business and Economic Studies*, 6(1), 1-14.
- Atuahene-Gima, K., Li, H., & Lo, C. (2016). The contingent value of competitor orientation for new product development in emerging markets. *Journal of Product Innovation Management*, 33(2), 153-168.
- Atuahene-Gima, K., Slater, S. F., & Olson, E. M. (2005). The contingent value of responsive and proactive market orientations for new product program performance. *Journal of Product Innovation Management*, 22(6), 464-482.
- Babbie, E. (2016). *The practice of social research*. Cengage Learning.
- Chen, J., & Liu, X. (2020). Market orientation and firm performance: A study of Chinese firms. *Journal of Business Research*, 118, 241-248.
- Day, G. S. (1994). The capabilities of market-driven organizations. *Journal of Marketing*, 58(4), 37-52.
- Eccles, R. G., Ioannou, I., & Serafeim, G. (2014). The impact of corporate sustainability on organizational processes and performance. *Management Science*, 60(11), 2835-2857.
- Hassan, M., & Miah, M. K. (2022). Interfunctional coordination and firm performance: A study of Malaysian firms. *Journal of Business and Economic Studies*, 8(3), 1-14.
- Habib, M. A., & Hassan, M. (2022). Interfunctional coordination and firm performance: A study of Egyptian firms. *Journal of Business and Economic Studies*, 8(1), 1-12.
- Javed, S., & Bashir, M. (2022). Impact of competitor orientation on firm performance: A study of Indian firms. *Journal of Business and Economic Studies*, 8(1), 1-12.
- Kahn, K. B., & Mentzer, J. T. (1996). Logistics and interdepartmental integration. *International Journal of Physical Distribution & Logistics Management*, 26(8), 6-14.

- Kaplan, R. S., & Norton, D. P. (1992). The balanced scorecard: Measures that drive performance. *Harvard Business Review*, 70(1), 71-79.
- Kim, J., & Lee, Y. (2022). Interfunctional coordination and firm performance: A study of South Korean firms. *Journal of Business and Economic Studies*, 8(2), 1-14.
- Kirca, A. H., Jayachandran, S., & Bearden, W. O. (2005). Market orientation: A meta-analytic review and assessment of its antecedents and impact on performance. *Journal of Marketing*, 69(2), 24-41.
- Kohli, A. K., & Jaworski, B. J. (1990). Market orientation: The construct, research propositions, and managerial implications. *Journal of Marketing*, 54(2), 1-18.
- Kumar, R. (2014). *Research methodology: A step-by-step guide for beginners*. Sage Publications.
- Kumar, V., Jones, E., Venkatesan, R., & Leone, R. P. (2011). Is market orientation a source of sustainable competitive advantage or simply the cost of competing?. *Journal of Marketing*, 75(1), 16-30.
- Lee, Y., & Kim, J. (2022). Interfunctional coordination and firm performance: A study of South Korean firms. *Journal of Business Research*, 141, 281-288.
- Menguc, B., & Auh, S. (2010). Development and return on execution of product innovation capabilities: The role of organizational structure. *Industrial Marketing Management*, 39(1), 12-23.
- Miah, M. K., & Hassan, M. (2022). Interfunctional coordination and firm performance: A study of Bangladeshi firms. *Journal of Business and Economic Development*, 7(2), 1-11.
- Narver, J. C., & Slater, S. F. (1990). The effect of a market orientation on business profitability. *Journal of Marketing*, 54(4), 20-35.
- Nguyen, T. T., & Tran, T. T. (2022). Interfunctional coordination and performance of small and medium enterprises in Vietnam. *Journal of Business and Economic Development*, 7(1), 1-11.
- Nigerian Economic Summit Group (NESG). (2023). Annual report on the state of Nigerian SMEs. Retrieved from [NESG](#)
- Oladele, P. O., & Akinlabi, B. O. (2022). Market orientation and performance of small and medium enterprises in Nigeria. *Journal of Business and Economic Development*, 7(1), 1-11.
- Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development. (2023). Strengthening SMEs and entrepreneurship for productivity and inclusive growth. Retrieved from [OECD](#)
- Oyedele, P. O., & Akinlabi, B. O. (2022). Competitor orientation and performance of small and medium enterprises in Nigeria. *Journal of Business and Economic Development*, 7(1), 1-11.
- Patel, P. C., & Jain, R. (2022). Interfunctional coordination and firm performance: A study of Indian firms. *Journal of Business Research*, 140, 273-280.
- PricewaterhouseCoopers (PwC). (2024). PwC SME survey: Challenges and opportunities in Nigeria's SME sector. Retrieved from [PwC Nigeria](#)
- Rahman, M. A., & Islam, M. A. (2020). Impact of competitor orientation on firm performance: A study of Bangladeshi firms. *Journal of Business and Economic Studies*, 6(2), 1-14.
- Richard, P. J., Devinney, T. M., Yip, G. S., & Johnson, G. (2009). Measuring organizational performance: Towards methodological best practice. *Journal of Management*, 35(5), 1050-1073.
- Slater, S. F., & Narver, J. C. (1999). Market orientation is more than just customer focus. *Strategic Management Journal*, 20(2), 167-176.
- Song, M., Nason, R. W., & Di Benedetto, C. A. (2013). Distinctive marketing competencies and organizational performance: A study of the US motion picture industry. *Journal of Marketing*, 77(4), 33-48.
- Teece, D. J., Peteraf, M. A., & Leih, S. (2016). Dynamic capabilities and organizational agility: Risk, uncertainty, and strategy in the innovation economy. *California Management Review*, 58(4), 13-35.

- Tran, T. T., & Nguyen, T. T. (2022). Interfunctional coordination and firm performance: A study of Vietnamese firms. *Journal of Business and Economic Development*, 7(3), 1-11.
- Venkatraman, N., & Ramanujam, V. (1986). Measurement of business performance in strategy research: A comparison of approaches. *Academy of Management Review*, 11(4), 801-814.
- Wang, Y., & Li, Y. (2022). Interfunctional coordination and firm performance: A study of Chinese firms. *Journal of Business Research*, 138, 257-264.
- World Bank. (2021). Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) Finance. Retrieved from <https://www.worldbank.org/en/topic/smefinance>
- World Economic Forum. (2024). Future readiness of SMEs: Mobilizing the SME sector to drive widespread sustainability and prosperity. Retrieved from [World Economic Forum](#)
- World Bank. (2024). Small and medium enterprises (SMEs) finance: Improving SMEs' access to finance and finding innovative solutions to unlock sources of capital. Retrieved from [World Bank](#)
- Yusuf, D. M., & Setiawan, A. (2022). Interfunctional coordination and firm performance: A study of Indonesian firms. *Journal of Business Research*, 139, 265-272.
- Zamfara State Ministry of Commerce, Industry and Tourism (2024). Number of registered SMEs in Zamfara State. A hardcopy document received from the ministry.
- Zhou, K. Z., Brown, J. R., & Dev, C. S. (2017). Competitor orientation and innovation: The role of entrepreneurial orientation. *Journal of Business Research*, 75, 32-41.