

Entrepreneurial Orientation and Corporate Vitality in the Telecommunication Sector in Port Harcourt, Rivers State

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Abstract

The paper examined the relationship between entrepreneurial orientation and corporate vitality in the telecommunication sector in Port Harcourt, Rivers State. The study adopted the cross-sectional survey design. The population consists of the four major telecommunication companies in Port Harcourt. The researcher purposively selected 120 sample subjects who were middle and senior level managers of the various firms. The test re-test technique was adopted to measure the reliability of the questionnaire instrument and validity was ensured through an expert opinion. The data obtained through the instrument were analyzed descriptively and inferentially using mean, standard deviations and Spearman Rank Correlation. The paper concludes that there is a strong relationship between entrepreneurial orientation and corporate vitality. However, based on the findings, the researcher recommended that the management of the telecommunication firms in should encourage an organizational climate that supports innovativeness and proactiveness. The management should help to enhance the employee ability to take proactive strategies for competitive advantage. An organic structure should be developed to encourage firms' timely decision making. Employees should be encouraged to show more commitment to create a customer responsive work environment

Key Words: *Entrepreneurial orientation, corporate vitality, innovativeness, proactiveness, responsiveness, resourcefulness*

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I. Introduction

Entrepreneurial orientation and value creation are core issues in the strategic entrepreneurship literature (Wiklund & Shepherd, 2005). The strategic orientation of a company is defined by its philosophy and value, which guides the company's behaviour and determination to outperform competitors. Among the strategic entrepreneurship studied thus far, have emphasized entrepreneurial orientation as providing the requisite ingredients for a firm's capacity to withstand competition or branch out into the turbulence of the climate (Akpotu & Ozioko, 2020). It gives organizational operators the focus to explore markets, execute marketing research activities that focus on both current and potential consumer needs, and how to efficiently and effectively satisfy those needs. It is based on entrepreneurship principles (Buli, 2017; Avlonitis & Salavou, 2007).

Hart (1992) noted that organizations must continue to make such efforts to adjust to changing circumstances and take advantage of current opportunities. Indeed, in a tumultuous world like this, a firm's vigour to be heavily active in entrepreneurial thought and practice to face emerging challenges and achieve desired goals has been renewed (Barringer & Bluedorn, 1999; Covin, Green & Slevin, 2006). One of the many problems facing such high-profile companies in Nigeria is accelerating their development in order to gain a competitive edge. This is due to the fact that most businesses have failed to innovate (Covin & Lumpkin, 2011). In this sense, innovation refers to a company's willingness to renew its concepts in order to generate value that previously relied on the firm's dynamic capabilities to successfully complete. Donmoyer (1985) opined that the rise in firm failure necessitates a strategic diagnosis of their capacity to operate in a volatile climate, which is easily attributed to the impact of globalization, which has heightened rivalry. Indeed, the growing number of large companies going global or pursuing business opportunities in developing countries has suffocated operating capability. This claim is supported by the fact that (Harrel & Alper, 1979; Haslinda, Raduan & Naresh, 2007) claims that under some circumstances, companies with high levels of autonomy, proactivity, and creativity outperforms those that do not (Dess, Lumpkin & Covin, 1997; Engle, Mah & Sadri, 1997; Gries & Naunde, 2010).

Organizations with an entrepreneurial focus will work with a lot of capacity to stay competitive as long as they take strategic and goal-oriented measures (Haslinda, Raduan & Naresh, 2007; Morris, Kuratko & Covin, 2008; Lyon, Lumpkin & Dess, 2000). Their hypothesis was that, in order for a firm's vitality to be achieved and

maintained, job organization operators should expect to deploy wholesomely such specific means that are capable of responding to consumer needs while also identifying new markets. Because of the similarity of products in the same market, there was less competitive pressure (Hughes & Morgan, 2007; Radipere, 2014).

Increased concern about the ability of organizations to stay competitive attracted a large body of expertise and several positions were filled. Scholars have contributed in various ways to the survival of small businesses in the face of a new wave of competition brought about by globalization, which has resulted in a rise in the number of large businesses with vast operational and administrative capital(Pett & Wolff, 2016; Ray, 2003; Zampetakis, Vekini & Moustakis, 2011) . If the point that SME's contribute to the growth of small and medium businesses is right, then their survival and sustainability should also be considered (Wiklund & Shepherd, 2005). Small businesses in developing economies have demonstrated organizational flaws, resulting in high mortality. Therefore, the researchers examined the relationship between entrepreneurial orientation and corporate vitality in the telecommunications sector.

II. Literature Review

The core concepts making-up the subject matter of the study are reviewed in this section to show their relationships. The review began with the concept of entrepreneurial orientation and corporate vitality.

2.1 Entrepreneurial Orientation

Entrepreneurial orientation is a mindset or a collection of behaviours geared toward generating value to generate additional wealth. It has to do with capturing opportunities for effective organizational success through innovation and proactiveness(Ottih, 2016; Rauch, Wiklund, Lumpkin & Frese, 2009; Morris et al., 2008). Individuals and organizations with an entrepreneurial orientation have the capacity and willingness to detect, act, and mobilize quickly in response to a judgmental decision made in the face of uncertainty about a potential profit opportunity(Haung, Wang, Chen & Yien, 2011; Gupta & Mirchandani, 2018; George, 2006). It encompasses a company's entire creativity, learning, renewal, and venturing activities. A pattern of thinking and behaving about business and opportunities that takes advantage of uncertainty is known as an entrepreneurial mindset. Entrepreneurial orientation is important because it helps to identify risks and failure of the business in the uncertain and unpredictable nature of the entrepreneurial process. Goldman and Branigan (2003) argued that the contemporary market environment is characterized by aggregate danger, reduced forecasting capability, and fluid industry boundaries, and that, as a result, an entrepreneurial mentality is needed to unlearn conventional management principles in order to avoid failure. With this mindset, companies are more likely to construct an ecosystem that allows them to withstand the uncertainty, uncertainties, and inconsistencies through strategies and entrepreneurial alertness(Gries, Naude, 2010).

Entrepreneurial companies invent and innovate by generating new resources or acquiring and combining existing resources utilizing special techniques(Fatoki, 2012; Covin et al., 2006; Covin & Lumpkin, 2011). Being entrepreneurial entails the ability to take advantage of charitable situations while still surviving hostile environments. This entrepreneurial mentality helps in the promotion of ingenuity in existing businesses by releasing innovative and useful ideas that are obtained and nurtured in a promising setting (Cools & Van denBroeck, 2008; Buli, 2017).

Guth and Ginsberg (1990) argued that entrepreneurial dominant logic forces an organization and its employees to constantly explore and sieve knowledge for new product ideas. Entrepreneurs can successfully handle a variety of problems and irregularities that are inherent in developing novel opportunities by implementing process improvements that aid higher profitability, as well as speed in decision-making(Antoncic & Hisrich, 2003). With this mentality, entrepreneurs can successfully handle a variety of problems and irregularities that are inherent in developing novel opportunities.

The entrepreneurial orientation is one that encourages change and creativity while also understanding and cultivating the skills needed to make those changes. Ottih, (2016) outlined several features of the entrepreneurial orientation. Such characteristics include: passionately seeking new opportunities, pursuing opportunities with the utmost discipline, pursuing only the best opportunities and firmly tying their approach with project selection, emphasizing execution, literally adaptive execution when the best way to leverage it arises, and using the energies of everyone in their domain(Abosede & Onkoya, 2013; Covin, 2011; 2008; 2006).

Entrepreneurial orientation to various assertions is about imagination, innovation, and taking risks that lead to organizational wealth creation and performance. Managers with this attitude are able to make confident decisions in the face of uncertainty (Ottih, 2016; Gaglio & Katz, 2001; George, 2006). Varieties of terms have been used interchangeably to describe the degree to which individuals or businesses are entrepreneurial (Fatoki, 2012). Such terms are entrepreneurial mindset, entrepreneurial orientation and corporate entrepreneurship. The literature on entrepreneurship employs a wide range of terminology to describe these concepts, including versatility, innovativeness, and action-orientation, goal-orientation and optimism, new organization

development, and renewal (Gries, et al., 2010; Gagne & Decci, 2005). However, in this literature, features such as creativity, proactiveness, and risk-taking are often used in descriptions of this term. Despite the fact that the elements of the meanings are the same, they were described in different ways.

2.2 Corporate Vitality Defined

The definition of corporate vitality offers a potentially informative way to understand how businesses operate and how they can adapt to the problems they face in their environments (Akpotu & Konyefa, 2018; Gagne & Decci, 2005). It is concerned with organizations possessing the properties and qualities that will allow them to perform well in the future. This means that healthy companies are those that are prepared for long-term sustainability rather than those that produce immediate results.

Clark, 1967 (cited in Bruhn and Chesney, 1994) described "a healthy organization" as "one in which the individuals and groups that threaten it achieve homeostasis or equilibrium in their ability to develop." To put it another way, a successful organization has a culture that encourages trust, openness, and commitment, as well as continuous learning and development, with everyone working together to achieve organizational goals. Understanding and handling a diverse collection of components is critical to an organization's wellbeing. Each has a distinct position to play, and none of them can be overlooked. Since they all have an impact on their performance, corporate vitality is a feature of comprehending and managing a complex and intertwined collection of variables (Akpotu & Ozioko, 2020).

In practical terms, an organization's health can be described as a combination of the current state of the organization and its risk factors for the future, i.e. the effort the organization is putting in to achieve a desired future. The metrics of organizational vitality, such as responsiveness, communication adequacy, power equalization, morale, cohesiveness, adaptability, resource utilization, and problem-solving adequacy, are all included in this system of current and desired future health. Two streams of thought have flowed into the idea as a result of numerous research conducted in this field. Other scholars who subscribe to this paradigm argue that there are other relevant determinants of corporate vitality that go beyond the person. Cultural, interpersonal, and emotional influences, they contend, are among them (Agbeibor, 2006). Nonetheless, work in this perspective is defined by a singular emphasis on individual wellbeing as the primary objective, rather than a dynamic approach to health.

III. Methodology

The design in any research study is the guideline that ensures the attainment of the research objectives (Baridam, 2008). The study adopted the cross-sectional survey design. The population consists of the four major telecommunication companies in Port Harcourt, Rivers State. The researcher purposively selected 120 sample subjects who were middle and senior level managers of the various firms. The Crombach-alpha technique was adopted to measure the reliability of the questionnaire instrument and validity was ensured through an expert opinion. The data obtained through the survey instrument was analyzed descriptively and inferentially using mean, standard deviations and Spearman Rank Correlation with the aid of the Statistical Package Social Sciences (SPSS) software.

Test of Hypotheses

The following two hypotheses were formulated between innovativeness and the measures of corporate vitality such as resourcefulness and responsiveness.

Ho1: there is no relationship between innovativeness and resourcefulness.

Ho2: there is no relationship between innovativeness and responsiveness.

Table 1: Showed the result between innovations and corporate vitality measures

		Innovativeness	Resourcefulness	Responsiveness
Innovativeness	Spearman Rho	1.00	.718	.816
	Sig (2 tailed)		.000	.042
	N	105	105	.105
Resourcefulness	Rho	.718	1.00	
	Sig (tailed)	.000		
	N	105	105	105
Responsiveness	Rho	.616	.148	1.00
	Sig (2 tailed)	.042	.012	
	N	105	105	105

Source: Research Data, 2021 from SPSS Version 20

From these outcomes, the hypotheses Ho1 and Ho2 showed a strong positive and significant relationship between innovativeness as a dimension of entrepreneurial orientation and the measures of corporate vitality.

Test of hypotheses

The following hypotheses were formulated between proactiveness and the measures of corporate vitality such as resourcefulness and responsiveness.

Ho3: there is no significant relationship between proactiveness and resourcefulness

Ho4: there is no significant relationship between proactiveness and responsiveness

Table 2: Showed the Outcome between Proactiveness and Corporate Vitality measures

		Proactiveness	Resourcefulness	Responsiveness
Proactiveness	Spearman Rho	1.00	.810	.716
	Sig (2 tailed)		.000	.042
	N	105	105	105
Resourcefulness	Rho	.712**	1.00	
	Sig (tailed)	.088		
	N	105	105	105
Responsiveness	Rho	.810**	.148*	1.00
	Sig (2 tailed)	.000	.012	
	N	105	105	105

Source: Research Data, 2021 from SPSS Version 20

Table 2 showed the result of the test conducted between proactiveness and the measures of corporate vitality. From the outcomes, the result indicated a strong positive and significant relationship between proactiveness as a dimension of entrepreneurial orientation.

IV. Discussion of Findings

Innovativeness is closely linked to corporate vitality. There is abundant evidence in the literature stressing innovativeness as a fantastic organizational activity for achieving a competitive advantage (Akpotu & Konyefa, 2018; Wiklund & Shepherd, 2005). As a general rule, activities aimed at ensuring an organization's place in its community through the acquisition of new work processes, as well as attracting and maintaining new markets, are referred to as innovation (Zampetakis, et al., 2011). Essentially, innovation is a strategic initiative that creates a connection between company resources, consumer and business demands, and technical possibilities in order to cut off those that do not have a specific strategic aim(Hart, 1992; Gupta et al., 2018).

Simply put, innovativeness is a goal-directed organizational action taken by companies seeking to reengineer their corporate vitality or maintain their current vigor for growth (Akpotu & Ozioko, 2020). The firm recognizes the method status advanced in innovation practices based on the descriptive results on the dimension. In this vein, the progress of innovation depends on the proper coordination and teamwork of all practical activities needed to see it through(Gries & Naunde, 2010). It's a difficult discipline that necessitates real-time planning and incorporation of various skills and resources. To be effective, it will require strong and committed management support as well as the mobilization of a wide range of resources.

These characteristics, rather than creativity, characterize what an effective innovation process entails for the company. The researcher proposed that an organization that fosters innovation has consciously directed its mind toward optimistic and practical outcomes. It will encourage resource gathering as well as fair resource sharing and allocation. In a similar way, innovation ensures the acquisition of skills and the improvement of the capabilities required to oversee concept development and implementation (Akpotu & Konyefa, 2018; Covin, et al., 2011; Buli, 2017).

Ottih (2016) has also considered the conceptual primacy of spurring many workplace activities that make entrepreneurship a competitive organization action within the entrepreneurship construct. The fact that there is statistical significance between the entrepreneurial mindset's innovativeness dimension and operational measures of corporate vitality has evolved a new analytical position on innovativeness and validating the measure once more (Akpotu et al., 2020). When discussing the basics of corporate venturing in transitional economies (Hage, 1980), listed the ability of managers to stay focused on the target as a key success factor. The empirical outcome of its relationship with the predictor variable also validates this calculation (innovativeness component).

Proactivity is linked to indicators of a company's health: The conceptual latitude of entrepreneurship has traditionally thrown up proactiveness as one of its strategic components, drawing attention to the need for our analytical role in relation to corporate health, which is also significant in the organizational development literature.

Person or organizational proactiveness refers to actions taken ahead of time to prepare for a potential situation. It enables the organization to anticipate situations or events in the environment through its employees and take proactive measures to engulf them, particularly where the outcomes might be inefficient in relation to the organization's overall goals. It provides companies with the ability to find opportunities and perhaps take action to become market leaders, and the work process on this provides the firm with a competitive advantage over rivals.

The descriptive review of the study's findings reveals a clear characterization of proactiveness as an entrepreneurial factor that activates high-level performance readiness. When Ray (2003) studied 125 organizations in a Chinese industrial environment, he labeled those with constructive cultures as "best class." The author argued that proactivity is a "mystical" organizational strategy that results in goods within their portfolio resulting from a high level of creative activities and a willingness to take risks in mobilizing resources to ensure quality service delivery in terms of multi-product offer and value added. Overall, it was determined that having an entrepreneurial mentality is a proactive organizational solution to maintaining a reliable resource.

V. Conclusion/ Recommendations

Entrepreneurial orientation stimulates innovativeness, proactiveness and encourages opportunity seeking behaviour that results in organizational wealth creation and success. The paper concludes that there is a strong relationship between entrepreneurial orientation and corporate vitality. However, based on this result, the researcher recommended that the management of the telecommunication firms should encourage an organizational climate that supports innovativeness. This can be achieved through knowledge sharing mechanisms and well coordinated effort that support all stages of implementation of novel ideas. An in-depth understanding of the environment is stressed for operators in the sector as this will ensure that they take critical cognizance of factors that may impede planned action. Again, this will help to enhance managerial ability to take proactive strategies for competitive advantage. An organic structure should be developed to encourage firms' timely decision making. Employees should be encouraged to show more commitment to creating a customer-responsive work environment.

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