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WHITE OCEAN MIXED STRATEGY AND PERFORMANCE OF MANUFACTURING FIRMS IN SOUTH-EAST, NIGERIA

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Abstract
Manufacturing firms in South-East Nigeria continue to contend with an unstable operating environment characterized by infrastructural deficits, intense rivalry, and eroding market share, prompting renewed scholarly interest in strategic typologies capable of restoring competitiveness. To this effect, this study examined white-ocean mixed strategy and performance of manufacturing firms in South-East Nigeria. Specifically, the study ascertained the extent to which red ocean/competitive strategy boost market share, determined the degree to which blue ocean/monopoly strategy enhance value innovation and evaluate the effect of green ocean/sustainability strategy on the survival of selected manufacturing firms in South East, Nigeria. A survey research design was adopted. Primary data was used to gather information from the respondentsand this was also supported by reviews from secondary sources for validation. The target population of 781 consists of staff of the five selectedmanufacturing firms in South East, Nigeria. The sample size of 265 was derived from Taro Yamane formula. The study utilized Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) and Simple Linear Regression Model of SPSS Version 22.0 to test the hypotheses. The result of the findings revealed that red-ocean/competitive strategy boost market share of selected manufacturing firms in South East, Nigeria, blue ocean/monopoly strategy enhance value innovation of selected manufacturing firms in South East, Nigeria, green ocean/sustainability strategy had a significant effect on the survival of selected manufacturing firms in South East, Nigeria. The study concluded that white ocean mixed strategy positively and significantly enhanced manufacturing firms' performance in South East, Nigeria. The study recommended that management of manufacturing firms should improve on differentiation strategy, cost leadership strategy, market focus strategy and corporate growth strategy to remain relevant and compete favorably in the market, they should review their policy to provide new and innovative ideas and services that align with society's needs and desires and they should improve on green practices in energy and water consumption, waste management and awareness creation among employees.

Keywords: White-Ocean Mixed Strategy, Performance, Manufacturing Firms, Red-Ocean/Competitive Strategy, Market Share, Blue-Ocean/Monopoly Strategy, Value Innovation, Green Ocean/Sustainability Strategy and Survival.

INTRODUCTION

Organizational success in a competitive market economy hinges substantially on the calibre of strategies that firms design and implement to sustain their operations and outperform rivals (Nwokolo & Onuoha, 2021). The optimal deployment of financial, material, and human resources, guided by a coherent strategic direction, remains central to the attainment of superior performance. The quest of firms to occupy leading positions in their respective industries has intensified competitive rivalry, both locally and internationally, as organizations vie for the same pool of customers within similar product markets (Fredrick, 2017).

The twenty-first century business environment has witnessed a marked uniformisation of markets driven by globalization, bringing competition closer to home and compelling managers of manufacturing firms to develop robust strategic responses capable of guaranteeing efficient and effective operations. Changing customer preferences, evolving tastes, and the rapidly shifting economic terrain have placed considerable pressure on manufacturing firms to continuously re-evaluate the strategies they adopt (Sunday, Babalola & Hakeem, 2013). A sound understanding of these dynamics enables managers to identify emerging opportunities and threats and to align organizational strengths and weaknesses accordingly.

Strategy, broadly construed, denotes the actions managers undertake to achieve one or more organizational goals; it is a long-term plan of action designed to secure a desired future state (Collins, 2014). Silviu and Adrian (2013) describe corporate strategy as the positioning of a firm relative to its environment in a manner that assures continued success and insulates it from unanticipated shocks. Organizations adopt strategies for a variety of reasons, including growth, stability, profitability, and operational efficiency, all of which converge on the broader objective of enhanced organizational performance.

Strategic typologies provide a framework for identifying the range of competitive postures available to business units across industries (Parnell &Köseoglu, 2010). Although the typologies advanced by Miles and Snow (1978) and Porter (1980) remain among the most extensively cited and tested frameworks in strategic management scholarship, a broader classification has since emerged that characterizes firm strategies according to a spectrum of "ocean" metaphors: competitive (red ocean) strategy, monopoly (blue ocean) strategy, environmental (green ocean) strategy, a blend of blue and green strategies (purple ocean), social/sustainability (white ocean) strategy, and unethical, short-term survival (black ocean) strategy (Porter, 1998, as cited in Aithal, 2016; Kotler, Hermawan & Setiawan, 2010). The simultaneous or sequential combination of these strategic postures gives rise to what has been termed the white ocean mixed strategy, also referred to as the optimum strategy a holistic approach that transcends the limitations of any single strategic orientation.

Within a red ocean, industry boundaries are well defined, competitive rules are broadly understood, and rival firms battle for a greater share of existing, often shrinking, demand; as competitive rivalry intensifies, products become commoditized and profitability erodes (Porter, 1980, as cited in Aithal, Suresh & Kumar, 2015). Blue oceans, by contrast, represent

uncontested market spaces in which demand is created rather than fought over, offering firms considerable room for profitable and rapid growth. The white ocean strategy extends this logic further by embedding social responsibility, ethical conduct, and sustainability considerations at the core of a firm's competitive posture, thereby generating goodwill, legitimacy, and long-term stakeholder trust that competitive or monopoly strategies alone cannot secure.

Manufacturing firms in South-East Nigeria operate within a particularly turbulent environment shaped by infrastructural deficiencies, policy instability, and rising input costs. It is against this backdrop that the present study interrogates the white ocean mixed strategy as a plausible panacea for the persistent performance challenges confronting manufacturing firms in the zone.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Business, in its most basic conception, is any legal activity undertaken to produce goods and services, earn profit, and sustain livelihoods (Barney & Hesterly, 2015). Owing to globalization and shifting market tastes, competitive rivalry within the Nigerian business environment has intensified to the point where survival, rather than growth, has become the operative concern of many manufacturing firms. This intense competition has pushed numerous manufacturing enterprises out of business, notwithstanding Nigeria's status as the most populous country in Africa. According to Udo (2023), the manufacturing sector plays a crucial role in economic development and sustainability, however, manufacturing firms in the country are confronted with poor business growth, cut-throat rivalry, an unconducive business environment, inflationary pressures, and managerial incompetence, culminating in poor performance, unhealthy competition, and, in several instances, outright business failure.

A further difficulty confronting manufacturing firms is their limited capacity to develop innovative strategic responses and to identify the specific factors that constrain their survival within the local business environment; this shortcoming compromises the appropriateness of their corporate strategies. The majority of manufacturing firms in South-East Nigeria have not deliberately embarked on strategies capable of guaranteeing their long-term survival, partly because managers struggle to distinguish between short-term expedients and durable, long-term strategic commitments.

The Manufacturers Association of Nigeria (MAN, 2017) reports that no fewer than 75 of the approximately 150 manufacturing firms on its membership register in the South-East had shut down within a five-year period, a development attributed largely to poor infrastructure, including deplorable access roads that inflate production costs. Beyond infrastructural constraints, many manufacturing firms in the zone remain wedded to conventional red ocean (competitive) postures, exhibit limited innovative capacity, and pay scant attention to eco-friendly practices, social responsibility, or the holistic blending of strategic types that a mixed strategic approach demands.

Despite the considerable scholarly attention devoted to organizational performance, there remains a dearth of empirical evidence specifically examining how the white ocean mixed strategy, understood as the deliberate combination of social/sustainability-oriented conduct with other complementary strategic postures, affects the performance of manufacturing firms in South-East Nigeria. It is this observed gap that motivates the present study.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The broad objective of this study is to examine white-ocean mixed strategy and performance of manufacturing firms in South East, Nigeria while the specific objectives were to:

i. ascertain the extent to which red ocean/competitive strategy boost market share of selected manufacturing firms in South East, Nigeria.

ii. determine the degree to which blue ocean/monopoly strategy enhance value innovation of selected manufacturing firms in South East, Nigeria.

iii. evaluate the effect of green ocean/sustainability strategy on the survival of selected manufacturing firms in South East, Nigeria.

LITERATURE REVIEW

White Ocean Mixed Strategy

White ocean mixed (WOM) strategy also known as an ideal strategy is a planning and execution strategy which confirms the success of the work in any situational conditions and constraints. This strategy ensures the sustainability of the organization with huge profit. Ideal strategy always ensures winning in an organizational problem with least or zero effort. Ideal strategy is suitable for hypothetical situations to conform winning but cannot be implemented for real situations. But we can realize the consequences of ideal strategy in practice by means of the new strategy named white ocean mixed (WOM) strategy, which is an optimum mixture of all existing strategies like red ocean strategy, blue ocean strategy, green ocean strategy, black ocean strategy and white ocean strategies. The concept of ideal strategy is developed in business management like ideal engine in thermodynamics, ideal business model to study best characteristics of business system (Aithal, 2015). Ideal technology while studying the characteristics of best technology for human beings (Aithal & Shubhrajyotsna, 2015), ideal education system while studying the characteristics required for a best education system (Aithal & Shubhrajyotsna, 2014). Similarly, the model of ideal strategy would help in deciding the characteristics of the best strategy for any business management problem.

Strategy

Strategy is a multi-dimensional concept and various authors have defined strategy in different ways. Johnson, Whittington and Scholes(2011) stated strategy as the direction and scope of an organization over the long term which achieves advantage in a changing environment through its configuration of resources and competences with the aim of fulfilling stakeholder expectations. Also, it creates a culture in the firm in which the firm only focuses on the value adding priorities in its mission and vision. Linet and Henry (2014) explained strategy as the match between an organization's resources and skills and the environmental opportunities as well as the risks it faces and the purposes it wishes to accomplish. The purpose of strategy is to provide directional cues to the organization that permit it to achieve its objectives while responding to the opportunities and threats in the environment (Pearce & Robinson, 2007).

Strategy is a high-level plan to achieve one or more goals under conditions of uncertainty. Using a strategy, managers conduct various activities to attract customers and compete successfully for market position of his company (Ruta & Jurate, 2008). As Guillaume (2011) stated, strategy is the direction and scope of an organization over the long term, which achieves advantage in a changing environment through its configuration of resources and competences with the aim of full fling stakeholder expectations. Strategy creates a culture in the firm in which the firm only focuses on the value adding priorities in its mission and

vision. In addition to the above explanation of strategy the author depicted the idea of strategy as a proven high-quality resource that one cannot do without.

Red Ocean/Competitive Strategy

Red ocean strategy or competitive strategy present all the industries in existence today in the known market space. In red oceans, industry boundaries are defined and accepted, and the competitive rules of the game are well understood. Here, companies try to outperform their rivals in order to grab a greater share of existing demand. As the space gets more and more crowded, prospects for profits and growth are reduced. Products turn into commodities, and increasing competition turns the water bloody. Red ocean strategy supports to compete in existing market space, beat the competition, exploit existing demand, make the value/cost trade-off, align the whole system of a company's activities with its strategic choice of differentiation or low cost (Porter,1980). According to Shirer (2010), red ocean strategy supports to compete in existing market space, beat the competition, exploit existing demand, make the value/cost trade-off and align the whole system of a company's activities with its strategic choice of differentiation or low cost. Red ocean strategy based on competition assumes that the structural conditions of an industry, are given and the agencies must compete with each other in those conditions (Chi Chang, 2010). This assumption is based upon something that academics call it “structure-oriented “or “environmental determinism” perspective.

Red oceans represent to all the industries in existence today the known market space. In the red oceans, industry boundaries are defined and accepted, and the competitive rules of the game are known. Here companies try to outperform their rivals to grab a greater share of product or service demand. As the market space gets crowded, prospects for profits and growth are reduced. Products become commodities or niche, and cutthroat competition turns the ocean bloody; hence, the term red oceans (Selamawit, 2017). Competitive strategies are assumed to be one of the most imperative requirements for the growth and sustainability of business in unstable and volatile environment (Gorondutse & Hilman, 2014). Competitive strategies are primarily the result of decision patterns made by managers to guide an organization about how to compete in a highly competitive business environment, by adding value to processes that can affect organizational performance (Bozkurt, Kalkan & Arman, 2014). The essence of developing competitive strategy is relating a company to its environment (Porter, 1980). Perhaps the choice of strategy in adoption by every organization is the determinant of successful attainment of their organizational aims and objectives. The major focus of competitive strategy is a firm’s relative position in an industry which indicates whether its profitability is above or below industry average (Mutunga & Minja, 2014). Porter, (1980) is of the view that competitive strategies are essential to companies competing in markets that are saturated with alternatives for customers and states that competitive strategy enables a firm to defend itself in a given industry.

Basically, there three main competitive strategies an organization can use. They are: Pure Strategy, Hybrid Strategy and Stock-in the-middle Strategy.

Pure strategy: Pure strategy has been viewed by Pertusa-Ortega, Molina-Azorín and Claver-Cortés (2009) as when a firm seeks to achieve either differentiation or cost leadership to achieve their competitive advantage. Simply put, it is believed that for a company to out-perform its competitors and meets its competitive advantage, it has to pursue either cost leadership or differentiation.According to Porter (2007), competitive strategies are essentially the long-term plans of a firm as it seeks to build sustainable competitive advantage over its competitors in the industry. Pursuit of competitive strategies aims at building a defensive

position in an industry and generating a superior return on investment. They concern the specifics of management's game plan for competing successfully and attaining a competitive edge over competitors (Akan, Allen, Helms & Spralls, 2006). The competitive strategies pursued by firms include cost leadership strategy, differentiation strategy, focus cost strategy and focus differentiation strategy.

Hybrid strategy: This can be termed also as combination, mixed, and integrated strategies. These strategies are the ones that put together both low cost and differentiation elements (Gorondutse & Hilman, 2014). Hybrid strategy involves high level of emphasis on both cost leadership and differentiation strategies (Acquaah & Ardekani, 2006). Hybrid strategy seeks to achieve differentiation and low price relative to competitors together, at the same time. The success of this strategy lies on the ability of firms to deliver improved benefits to customers with low price while meeting sufficient margins for reinvestment to maintain and develop bases of differentiation (Explorer, 2010).

This strategy incorporates the need to give customer value for their money by offering high quality products at a lower cost than its competitors, by doing this, a firm becomes a best cost producer. Baroto, Abdullahi and Wan (2012) says being the best cost producer of an upscale products allows a firm to underprice it competitors whose products have similar upscale attributes. The option here is hybrid strategy that blends elements of differentiation and low cost in a unique way (Thompson, Peteraf, Gamble & Strickland, 2012).

Stuck-in-the-middle: Miller and Dess (1993) is of the opinion that a firm that fails to develop a strategy along at least one of the strategic dimensions will find itself stuck-inthe-middle. In variably any combination which places a distinct emphasis on none of the dimensions must be regards as stuck-in-the-middle, as it does not manage to excel in anything (Pertusa-Ortega, Molina-Azorín&Claver-Cortés, 2009). From the above, it can be deduced logically that firms that place a medium or low emphasis on the strategic dimension (low cost and differentiation) will be categorized as stuck-in-the-middle strategies.It has been noted by various researchers that stuck-in-the-middle may not describe a single type of company. There are companies that deliberately combine traditional low-cost production and differentiation (i.e. pursuit hybrid strategy), change their strategy, and that have no strategy (Leitner & Guldenberg, 2010). Parnell (1997) also notes that stuck-in-the-middle involves firms that attempt to combine strategies in a random manner and those that balance low-cost and differentiation strategies. Organizations that get stuck-in-the-middle are the ones with strategies that have no particular focus but try instead to be all things to all customers. Porter (1985) said this is not only impossible, but also results in lower sales and higher customer retention costs, all of which can be a financial burden on a company. In Porter's model, being stuck in the middle is the same as not really having any direction at all.

Blue Ocean/Monopoly Strategy

Blue ocean strategy (BOS) is astrategic approach created and proposed in 2005 by W. Chan Kim and Renee Mauborgne at Institut Européend' Administration des Affaires (INSEAD) and Harvard universities. The blue ocean strategy recommends that firms should develop strategies to make competition meaningless instead of competing in their environment. It recommends that they should create new demand; in other words, they should create a market place and make a radical difference. The blue ocean strategy recommends that they should offer different and higher value to their customers at a low cost. Firms should make some eliminations and reductions within themselves by evaluating their own conditions to offer high value at a low cost, or in other words, to make value innovativeness (Rau, 2012).

In a conversation with Kim and Mauborgne (2005) authors of the "Blue Ocean Strategy" they were asked why blue and red colors were chosen for the oceans, and they stated that the competition struggles of firms made the environment bloody; therefore, it was called red, on the other hand, blue color symbolized the entire universe. The term blue ocean is a term used to describe a large, deep and unexplored area (Kim & Mauborgne, 2005). The authors continued that blue ocean strategy is a new strategy which leads companies to leave current market and go into an unknown market to reduce their costs and also to capture new customers from other industries therefore enhance companies' superior performance. Mazlum (2011) contributed that blue sky and sea represent freedom, peace and eternity. Blue also represents reliability, honesty, and quality. On the other hand, while red is a symbol of power, excitement and power, it has also been symbolized as the color of hell and devilry as well as being a color that is frequently associated with danger such as blood and fire in nature. However, when the blue ocean strategy is mentioned, the connotation of blue is positive.

Nicolas (2011) explains that blue ocean strategy is a strategy that advice companies to go to a new market, which interest customers and avoid competition from the existing market. This strategy makes possible for companies, entrepreneurs to increase their chances of success. In order to maximize the efficiency of the strategy, it is better for companies to initiate it when the business starts.Thompson et al., (2012) described blue ocean strategy as a strategy that focuses on creating a new industry or distinctive market segment that renders existing competitors largely irrelevant and thus, obtaining a dramatic and durable competitive advantage in the industry. They stated further that it is a model that effectively delineates the simultaneous pursuit of low cost and differentiation in creating, expanding and securing an organization's strategic position.

Rosales (2010) is of the view that BOS encourages operational ideas and collective design from pioneers, migrators and settlers, and executes them corporately to create new value and eliminate ineffective outsourcing. Leavy (2005) conceptualize BOS or value innovation management as the strategy that reframes the strategic challenge from involving in competition to make competition irrelevant and provides a series of approaches that maximizes opportunity and minimizes risk. Kim and Mauborgne (2015) gave different views on BOS, typically some are seen as fundamentally about how to reconstruct market boundaries and offer a leap in value to buyers while others were seen as unlocking business model innovation through strategic pricing, target costing, and the like so a company can seize new customers profitably, while others see it as fundamentally about releasing the creativity, knowledge sharing, and voluntary cooperation of people through the proper approach to employees and partners.

Although some blue oceans are created well beyond existing industry boundaries and as the market space gets crowded, prospects for profits and growth are reduced. Competition turns the ocean bloody hence, the term red ocean. Blue ocean denotes all the industries not in existence today; the unknown market space untainted by competition. In Blue ocean, demand is created rather than fought over. There is ample opportunity for growth that is both profitable and rapid. In Blue ocean, competition is irrelevant because the rules of the game are waiting to be set. Blue Ocean is an analogy to describe the wider, deeper potential of market space that is not yet explored. Although the term may be new, blue ocean has always been in existence (Matheka, 2016).It will always be important to swim successfully in the red ocean by out-competing rivals. Red oceans will always matter and will always be a fact of business life (Miano, 2013). But with supply exceeding demand in more industries,

competing for a share of contracting markets, while necessary, will not be sufficient to sustain high performance (Hamel & Prahalad, 2008). Companies need to go beyond competing, seize new profit and growth opportunities, they also need to create blue oceans but unfortunately, blue oceans are largely uncharted. The dominant focus of strategy work over the past twenty-five years has been on competition-based red ocean strategies. The result has been a fairly good understanding of how to compete skillfully in red waters, from analyzing the underlying economic structure of an existing industry, to choosing a strategic position of low cost or differentiation or focus, to benchmarking the competition.

Blue ocean's analytical tools and frameworks according to Kim and Mauborgne (2005) are; the strategy canvas, the four actions framework, the eliminate-reduce-raise-create grid, three characteristics of a good strategy and reading the value curves.

Green Ocean/Sustainability Strategy

Green ocean strategy (GOS) refers to creating opportunities from environmental risks and pressures, environmental awareness among consumers, and environmental design, marketing and technologies. It is not just about companies carrying on with their business and taking care of the environment, it is more about companies taking care of the environment as their business and making profits along the way (Hou,2007). Green oceans foresee and achieve the creation of sustainable market spaces for short, middle and long-term profitability. As blue ocean strategies seek to make competitors irrelevant by creating new customer value, green ocean strategies can refine companies' mission and vision to compound sustainability over existing and profitable performances for a more adequate customer value creation (Markopoulos &Vanharanta, 2014).

Silviu et al., (2013) postulated green ocean strategy as a recent strategic outcome with two different types of schools of thought. According to first school of thought, it is a strategy to gauge the impact of environmental footprint on human lives. According to second school of thought, it is a hybrid mechanism which combines the best things that characterize blue-ocean and red ocean strategies. The keyword in discussing this theory is sustainability and there can be no one-size-fits-all formula governing the innovation mechanism of an organization.

Green oceans strategies can be seen as the logical, or natural, extension of blue ocean strategies for companies aiming to reach and maintain their performance overtime, while being aligned with today's major social challenges. Green ocean strategysupports the impact of environmental footprint on human lives. From different unstructured documents like newspapers, magazines, World Wide Web pages, it is revealed that automobile industry happens to be one of the largest contributors of environmental pollution throughout the world and hence it has to incorporate green ocean strategy. At this point, it is relevant to introduce the topic of our discussion; the green ocean strategy (not to be confused with its environmental namesake), is a hybrid mechanism which combines the best things that characterize blue ocean and red ocean strategies. The green ocean strategy will serve as a safety valve for companies trapped in the red ocean rut, facing intense competition, mounting price pressure, increasing bargaining power of customers and flat demand despite overwhelming choice, essential characteristics of the blue ocean regime. (Kim & Mauborgne, 2005).

Conversely, as knowledge constantly flows within the organization, Green innovation via knowledge democratization can generate more challenging, rewarding, cost effective long-lasting opportunities. Democratic green innovation leads to Green Oceans where sustainability is neither dystopian nor utopian, but protopian. It encourages knowledge-based innovation through democratic cultures for collaborative thinking leading to profitable and sustainable innovation. By capturing and shifting the demand to new and social driven market spaces, the green ocean strategy allows companies to turn their proactiveness into long-term competitiveness and sustainably. The Green Ocean Strategy is achieved via brain-driven, technology-oriented social innovations (Kim & Mauborgne, 2005).

Features of green ocean strategy

The features are;

Create successful sustainable consumption: The keyword in this strategy type is sustainability; the researcher asserts that there can be no one-size-fits-all formula governing the innovation mechanism of an organization. As has been already covered, an organization's innovation is a befitting response to its structure, market conditions and internal culture. Clearly, the best innovation model for organizations should be able to combine the best elements of a blue ocean and a red ocean strategy, thereby, allowing organizations to sustainably compete in a rigorous market, and at the same time, brisk ahead of competitors through a pursuit of innovation. Green ocean strategy is not about greening or saving the environment it concentrates on how to maximize both fixed, internal and human resources. Instead of copying or benchmarking against the competition, the focus is to be more realistic in relation to what the business can actually commit or deliver (Adrian & Silviu, 2013).

Uses the analogy of beach and ocean: Before one reaches the blue part of the ocean, there is the green. So, it makes more sense that if a business can stay within the green ocean, where the water is clearer and nearer the shore, then this would be less risky, more practical, and eminently more desirable (Adrian et al., 2013).

Organizational Performance

Firstly, an organization is defined by oxford dictionary as an organized group of people with a particular purpose while performance is defined as the action or process of performing a task or function seen in terms of how successfully it is performed, when these definitions are put together, we can say organization performance relates to how successfully an organized group of people with a particular purpose perform a function. According to Okon& Udo (2024), Organizational performance refers to the overall effective ness and efficiency with which an organization achieves its goals and objectives, taking into account factors such as financial results, customer satisfaction, employee engagement, and operational efficiency. .According to Richard (2009), organizational performance encompasses three specific areas of firm outcomes and they are;

Financial performance (profits, return on assets, return on investment etc.), product market performance (sales, market share etc.), shareholder return (total shareholder return, economic value added etc.). Specialists on many fields were concerned with organizational performance including strategic planners, operations, finance, legal and organizational development. In recent years, many organizations have attempted to manage organizational performance using the balanced score card methodology where performance is tracked and measured in multiple dimension such as financial performance (e.g. shareholders return), Customers service, Social responsibility (e.g. corporate citizenship, community outreach) and

Employee performance (Richard, 2009). However, the importance of performance is not just financial. An organization with high levels of performance will have motivated staff, capable of carrying out their duties as efficiently as possible. This will result in lower absenteeism and turnover rates (Udo, Udonde & Udo, 2024).

THEORETICAL REVIEW

Dynamic capabilities theory (DCT) (Teece, 1989)

The theory of dynamic capabilities was pioneered by Teece (1989). Other scholars include Gary Pisano and Amy Shuen, in their 1997 paper, Dynamic Capabilities and Strategy Management. A dynamic capability describes the ability of a firm to intentionally formulate, establish or carry out a modification to its resources in response to the ever-changing forces in an environment (Teece, Pisano & Shuen, 1997). Successful companies in the international/ global market place achieve competitive advantage by having a timely response to market dynamics and speedy service/ product innovation and are in position to timely schedule and deploy their external and internal competences (Teece, et. al., 1997). The capabilities may stem from change routines, product development and innovative managerial capabilities. They enable the firm to align their distinctive resources/competences to the changing business environment as well as enable firms to profitably organize its resources, competences, and other assets if the firm is to sustain itself in changing environments and markets (Teece et al., 1997).

Helfat (2007) explained the term dynamic in reference to capacity and ability to renew competences so as to be strategically fit in view of the ever-changing business environment. Capability is the core role in competitive strategies including both external and internal skills set of an organization. In response to changing environment, an organization needs to integrate and reconfigure its competences and capabilities in order to gain competitive advantage. The theory explained the mechanism that links resources and product markets to competitive advantage and firm survival. The DCT further explains how firms gain sustainable competitive advantage and survive in competitive and turbulent business environments in several ways. The DCT operates on three fundamental presumptions: The capacity to sense and shape opportunities, the capacity to seize opportunities and the capacity to maintain competitiveness through reconfiguring the enterprise's assets (Teece et al., 1997).

The DCT framework helps scholars to understand the foundations of long-run enterprise success while helping managers delineate relevant strategic considerations and the priorities, they must adopt to enhance enterprise performance and escape the zero-profit tendency associated with operating in markets open to global competition (Teece et al., 1997). The framework integrates the strategy and innovation literature and highlights the most important capabilities that the management need in order to sustain superior long run business performance (Teece et al., 1997). Easterby-Smith, Lyles and Peteraf (2009) emphasized that DC are higher-level capabilities, which enable knowledge gathering, fast response, sharing and continual updating of the operational processes, interaction with the environment and decision-making evaluations in order to achieve firm competitive advantages and performance. More recently, Esbach (2009) viewed DC as the capacity of an organization to purposefully create and modify firm resource base so as to gain competitive advantage and ensure overall firm performance. This is also part of the theoretical foundation of this study.

EMPIRICAL REVIEW

Red ocean/competitive strategy and market share

Ibrahim (2020) investigated a study on the competitive strategies and firms' performance: a comparative analysis of selected firms in telecommunication industry. An explanatory research design was used to help identify the causes and reasons of the current status of the variables under study. Targeting 40 employees of the 3 selected firms (Multichoice, Startimes & Mytv) within the industry, a purposive sampling technique and census was used and all the 40 employees were sampled. Data were collected using questionnaire and then analyzed using Regression Analysis. The findings show that firms in the broadcasting industry in Ilorin used the three different competitive strategies and two strategies (Pure and Hybrid) have a significant impact on market-share and hybrid strategy gives a superior performance compared to others. It was concluded that firms that place distinct emphasizes on hybrid strategy can achieve a superior performance than those who do not in the industry. It was recommended that organizations that want to outperformed its competitors and meet its competitive advantage should adopt hybrid strategy.

Gwangwava and Zororo (2021) research study investigated the effect of competitive strategies and innovation on firm performance: A study of Zimbabwean Textile and Clothing Firms. Data was collected using a structured questionnaire designed on a five-point (5) Likert scale. One hundred and fifty (150) employees were used for the study mainly those in charge of operations up to chief executive officers who were knowledgeable about competitive strategies participated. Fifty (50) firms operating in textile and clothing manufacturing firms provided the basis for the research. However, the structural equation modeling was employed using the least squares. The results show that focus and differentiation strategies have a positive direct relationship with firm performance and innovation. However, cost leadership has indirect relationship with firm performance and a positive relationship with innovation which in turn improves firm performance. Implementation of the three generic strategies enables managers to gain competitive advantage for their firms although attention needs to be paid to innovation which acts as an enabler between the competitive strategies and firm performance.

Blue ocean/monopoly strategy and value innovation

Nyambane (2013) conducted a study on the challenges of implementing the blue ocean strategy on three large indigenous banks in Kenya. The study assessed the responses necessary in the hypercompetitive market space of the commercial banking industry. It was noted that the three banks (Kenya Commercial Bank, Equity Bank & Cooperative Bank) have clear focus on developing blue ocean strategies as part of core strategic plans and through specialized projects. The challenges encountered by the banks included balancing competitive approaches with seeking blue oceans, effectively justifying the value innovations prior to introduction, and systemic and cultural hurdles. Kim and Mauborgne (2005) study also find that the blue ocean strategy helps organizations to innovate and bring new products to market.

Okechukwu, Ekwochi and Eze (2018) researched on the effect of blue ocean strategy on the Performance of Telecommunication Firms in South East Nigeria. The objectives of the study were to; examine the effect of blue ocean strategy application on the market share in the Nigerian telecommunication firms and identify the impact of blue ocean strategy on customer satisfaction in the Nigerian telecommunication industry. The study adopted cross-sectional descriptive research design. Data was obtained from 225 respondents working in

telecommunication firms in South East Region of Nigeria through the use of a questionnaire. The data collected for the study were presented in tables comprising of frequency, percentage, mean and standard deviation, while the hypotheses were tested using simple linear regression with the aid of statistical package for social sciences (IBM, SPSS version 23). The findings revealed that blue ocean strategy has a positive significant effect on market share in the Nigerian telecommunication industry and that blue ocean strategy has a positive significant effect on customer satisfaction in Nigerian telecommunication organizations. It was concluded that the formulation of blue ocean strategy is quite an accomplishment and dynamic process as it affects, market shares and customer satisfaction. It was recommended that management of various telecommunication firms should strive to develop innovative products and services that are beyond the traditionally known services in order to improve their profitability and as a matter of urgency, innovatively deliver cutting edge services that can beat their competitors so as to attract more customers.

Green ocean/sustainability strategy and firms'survival

Catherine, Evangeline and James (2017) investigated the effects of sustainability strategies on performance of orphanage homes in Nairobi County, Kenya. The specific objectives included: establishing the effect of collaboration strategy on performance of orphanage homes in Nairobi County; determining the effect of revenue generation strategies on performance of orphanage homes in Nairobi County; evaluating the relationship between strategic leadership strategies and performance of orphanage homes in Nairobi County; and assessing the effect of donor relationship management strategies on performance of orphanage homes in Nairobi County. The research used descriptive survey. The researcher targeted 38 orphanage homes operating in Nairobi County. Following the small population of the study, the researcher conducted a census study where all members of the population were included in the study. The researcher collected data through questionnaires. The questionnaires were closed-ended to avoid biasness. The study also used descriptive like; mean, standard deviation, percentage and frequencies and multiple regression analysis model to establish the relationship between the dependent and independent variable. The studyfound out that collaboration strategy influenced the performance of orphanage homes positively, revenue generation strategies had a positive effect on the performance of orphanage homes, strategic leadership had a positive relationship with the performance of orphanage homes and donor relationship management strategy influences the performance of orphanage homes positively. The study concluded that high rating of success of the collaborative arrangements in implementation of projects could be explained by the fact that organizations are driven by the need to succeed within the limitations of scarce resources and therefore put in extra effort to ensure the success of their operations and that the aspects of managerial skills that influence management of the children home to a great extent include manager's innovativeness and motivation of employees. The study recommends that through the nurturing of their collaborative arrangements, organizations would enjoy a higher bargaining power more cost-effectively, the management of the children's homes should increase their income sources and provide a friendly environment and sponsor project.

Evangelos, Ines, Clarissa and Hannu (2019) investigated green ocean strategy and democratizing business knowledge for sustainable growth in HULT International Business School London. Sustainability should neither be dystopian, nor utopian, but better protopian. The specific objective of the study is to ascertain the effect green ocean strategy for democratizing business knowledge for sustainable growth. To achieve this, thinking green for the common good and benefit for all from all, does not only require thinking smart or green

but also thinking together. This paper attempts to define a new set of organizational processes needed for a company to reach a continuous innovative and sustainable strategy by utilizing primarily its own human intellectual capital in an unbiased and democratic way. Such an approach can transmit an organization into a new management typology and leadership that can be defined as a green ocean strategy. The paper introduces the green ocean strategy concept as a business transformation framework that can lead an organization from the red to the blue and from the blue to the green ocean's strategies. The framework is supported by phases, stages, processes, preconditions, and post-conditions towards its effective adaptation. The study also use models/figures to demonstrate the following; Ocean strategies evolution and relationships, the oceans transition process through the transformation canals, knowledge evolution for green oceans via the company democracy and co-evolutionary spiral for dynamic sustainability and innovation management. The study concluded that green oceans can be reached without necessarily stopping in a blue ocean but by utilizing the innovation philosophy of the blue directly into the green innovation approach and recommended that with company democracy model and the transition journey through the turquoise canal can contribute on turning blue oceans to green oceans under a Y-theory shared value democratic management philosophy.

METHODOLOGY

The study adopted survey research design and primary source of data was mainly used in gathering data from the respondent and this was also supported by reviews from secondary sources for validation. The target population was seven hundred and eighty-one (781) staff of the (5) five selectedmanufacturing firms in South East, Nigeria while the sample size was two hundred and sixty-five respondents (265) respondents derived from Taro Yamane statistic formula at 5% error tolerance and 95% level of confidence. A stratified sampling method was adopted and it gave the staff equal chance of being selected. Questionnaire served as the instrument for data collection and it was structured in a five (5) points Likert-scale structure of Strongly Agree (SA) =5, Agree (A) =4, Undecided (UN) =3, Disagree (D) = 2 and Strongly Disagree (SD) =1. The study adopted both inferential and descriptive statistics to analyze the data and to aid in achieving the objectives of the study, the hypotheses were tested using Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) and Simple Linear Regression Modelstatistical tools of SPSS Version 22.0.

RESULT AND DISCUSSIONS

Data Presentation

A total of two hundred and sixty-five (265) copies of the questionnaire were distributed to the various study firms. Out of this number, eighty-six (86) copies of questionnaire were lost/wrongly filled with percentage ratio of 32.4% while one hundred and seventy nine (179) copies of questionnaire were correctly filled and returned with percentage ratio of 67.6%, which formed the basis of the study.

TEST OF HYPOTHESES

Table 1: ANOVA test on red-ocean/competitive strategyand market share

Model		Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	180.365	3	60.122	473.402	0.000
	Residual	22.138	175	.127		
	Total	202.503	178			

Source: Field Data, 2026.

Table above showed ANOVA result on red ocean/competitive strategyand market share shows f- statistics = 473.402, mean square of 60.122 with p- value = 0.000< 0.05% significance level, we therefore reject null hypothesis and uphold the alternative hypothesis which states that red ocean/competitive strategy boost market share of selected manufacturing firms in South East, Nigeria.

Table 2: ANOVA test on blue-ocean/monopoly strategy andvalue innovation

Model		Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	113.328	4	28.332	416.647	0.001
	Residual	11.901	174	.068		
	Total	125.229	178			

Source: Field Data, 2026.

Table above showed ANOVA result on blue-ocean/monopoly strategy and value innovation shows f- statistics = 416.647, mean square of 28.332 with p- value = 0.001< 0.05% significance level, we therefore reject null hypothesis and uphold the alternative hypothesis which states that blue ocean/monopoly strategy enhance value innovation of selected manufacturing firms in South East, Nigeria.

Table 3: Regression analysis on green ocean/sustainability strategy and survival of selected manufacturing firms

Variable	Parameters	Coefficient	Std error	T – value
Constant	β_0	2.250	0.186	5.561
GOS (X_1)	β_1	0.146	0.042	3.250**
R-Square		0.810		
Adjusted R – Square		0.802		
F – statistics		75.488***		

Source: Field Data, 2026.

Table above showed the coefficients of green ocean/sustainability strategy and survival of selected manufacturing firms. The coefficient of multiple determination (R^2) was 0.802 which implies that 80.2% of the variations in dependents were explained by changes in the independent variable while 19.8% were unexplained by the stochastic variable indicating a goodness of fit of the regression model adopted in this study which is statistically significant at 1% probability level.

The coefficient of green ocean/sustainability strategy was statistically significant and positively related to survival of selected manufacturing firms at 5 percent level (3.250**). Therefore, we reject null hypothesis and accept the alternative hypothesis which states that green ocean/sustainability strategy has a significant effect on the survival of selected manufacturing firms in South East, Nigeria.

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

The analysis of hypothesis one revealed that red-ocean/competitive strategy boost market share of selected manufacturing firms in South East, Nigeria. This finding is in tandem to Ibrahim and Judith (2020) revealed that organizations that use competitive strategies realize better performance than those that does not. The study recommends that sugar manufacturing firms should use competitive strategies in order to realize better performance. In conclusion, from the reviewed literature through meta-analysis, competitive strategies have a positive impact on performance of an organization.

The analysis of hypothesis two revealed that blue ocean/monopoly strategy enhance value innovation of selected manufacturing firms in South East, Nigeria. This result corresponds with the findings of Odera, Ruby, Bamidele and Geoffrey (2017) on the Impact of Blue Ocean Strategy on Value Innovation in selected Firms' in FMCG and Telecommunications Sectors in South-West Nigeria.The work found out that value creation and innovation in a hypercompetitive environment can only be realized through a simultaneous pursuit of differentiation and low cost strategies. It also discovered that firms can only generate more revenue and profit by moving into vast, deep and not-yet explored market. The work suggested that company should be more focus on the value of the customers rather than on the value of competitors. It also recommends that a company should estimate its competitor's strengths, weaknesses and positions in the market.

The analysis of hypothesis three revealed that green ocean/sustainability strategy had a significant effect on the survival of selected manufacturing firms in South East, Nigeria. This findings is in line with the findings of Catherine, Evangeline and James (2017) on effects of sustainability strategies on performance of orphanage homes in Nairobi County, Kenya. The study found out that collaboration strategy influenced the performance of orphanage homes positively, revenue generation strategies had a positive effect on the performance of orphanage homes, strategic leadership had a positive relationship with the performance of orphanage homes and donor relationship management strategy influences the performance of orphanage homes positively. The study recommended that through the nurturing of their collaborative arrangements, organizations would enjoy a higher bargaining power more cost-effectively, the management of the children's homes should increase their income sources and provide a friendly environment and sponsor project.

CONCLUSION

This study examined white-ocean mixed strategy and performance of manufacturing firms in South-East Nigeria. The application of different strategies at the right time, right quality, right quantity and to the right problem is imperative in enhancing organizational performance. Hence, the study was made possible by the utilization of red-ocean/competitive strategy on market share, blue-ocean/monopoly strategy on value innovation and green ocean/sustainability strategy on firm survival. More so, white-ocean mixed strategy is a unique strategy that boost market share, enhances value innovation and had positive effect on firms' survival and above all promote organizational superior performance. Nevertheless, various strategies are used in business organizations to ensure success in their objectives and the proposed new strategy is called White-Ocean Mixed strategy which is an optimum strategy to solve organizational problems with different environment and to ensure success in various businesses. Therefore, the study concludes that white ocean mixed strategy positively and significantly enhanced the performance manufacturing firms in South East, Nigeria.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the study findings, the following recommendations were made:

i. Management of manufacturing firms should to a great extent, improve on differentiation strategy, cost leadership strategy, market focus strategy and corporate growth strategy to improve their performance, remain relevant and compete favorably in the market.

ii. Management should review their policy to provide new ideas and services that align with society's needs and desires, encourage their employees to offer new and innovative ideas, as well as giving them financial and moral rewards for each new idea that serves the company and also increases company users' confidence.

iii. Management should improve on green practices in energy and water consumption, waste management and awareness creation among employees. Also, firms should develop organizational systems and control to facilitate environmental reporting and targets for each department as well as set and continuously monitor their results.

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