

Business Innovation Strategies and Enterprise Competiveness in a Challenged Environment: Evidence from Manufacturing Firms in South Eastern Nigeria

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ABSTRACT

The study was carried out to evaluate business innovation strategies and enterprise competitiveness in a challenged environment: Evidence from manufacturing firms in South Eastern Nigeria. The study specifically, examined the effect of: business process reengineering, benchmarking and corporate Partnering on organizational growth of manufacturing firms in South Eastern Nigeria. The study used the survey approach. A population of 341 staff was used. The whole population was utilized because of the small size of the population. 277 staff returned the questionnaire and accurately filled. That gave 81 percent response rate. The validity of the instrument was tested using content analysis and the result was good. The reliability was tested using the Pearson correlation coefficient (r). It gave a reliability co-efficient of 0.76 which was also good. Data was presented and analyzed by mean score (3.0 and above agreed while below 3.0 disagreed) and standard deviation using Sprint Likert Scale. The hypotheses were analyzed using F-statistics (ANOVA) tool. The findings indicated that business process reengineering had negative effect on organizational growth, $f(n = 341) = 450.246$, $P < 0.05$, benchmarking had positive effect on organisational competitiveness of manufacturing firms in South East Nigeria, $f(n = 341) = 2.387$, $P < 0.05$ and corporate partnering had significant influence on organizational growth $f(n = 341) = 34.225$, $P < 0.05$. The study concluded reengineering enables organizations meet the needs of customers and the demands of competition and change while Bench marking has become necessary for strategic planning and operational improvement. However, governments should encourage research and development, recognize and encourage innovation and entrepreneurship.

Key words: Innovation, Benchmark, competitiveness, business process reengineering.

INTRODUCTION

Background

Today's dynamic and competitive business environment, firms are exposed to challenges with meeting the increasing market demands and expectation, handling sophisticated requirements, and technological obsolescence. Thus, innovation is seen as a means of gaining sustaining performance and growth. It has been an area of intense research (Fartash&Davoudi, 2012). AbbingIn (2010) posits that innovation strategies are that part of strategy that deals specifically with the growth of an organization through the development of new products, services, processes or business models. An innovation strategy then becomes a plan of how to use the development of new products, services, processes or business models to achieve certain objectives. Consequently, to create growth, sustain performance and develop performance in a dynamic and changing environment, innovation becomes the way (Cottam, Ensor & Band, 2001).Also, innovation is an important tool that provides opportunities to new inventions and building of new markets, when the entrepreneurs are sure about the market, they will hold longer (Kuhn &Marisck, 2010, cited in Ori and Theuri, 2016).On this note, managing innovation depends on interrelated basic objectives of competitiveness: improving product quality and the firm's entire technological quality (Pratali, 2003).However, organisations need to differentiate themselves from other players in the market. Usually, leading companies continuously use innovative strategies to create an edge over their competitors (Goksoy, Vayvay&Ergeneli, 2013). The concern for every manager has been to achieve a sustainable competitive advantage that ensures long- term survival. Because innovation is a key driver of sustained competitive advantage and sustained business growth, the management of innovation is a central concern for these firms (Igartual, Garrigos&Hevas- Oliver, 2010). Innovation is understood in the sense of new products, new technologies, new equipment acquisitions, improved management or financial methods, the improved performance of the labour force, and the improved information system. Implementing innovation ensures competitive advantage (Lucia, 2012).

Successful companies understand that to stay in the business and achieve profitability, they need to always innovate. Organisations can successfully create new products and services that delight customers and exceed market expectations if they develop functional innovation strategy that provides organizations with the framework for success. Absence of innovation increases customers' dissatisfaction as customers will patronize the organizations that have improved products and services. Advances in information and communication technology provide substantial strategic opportunities for organizations to use innovation to gain competitive advantage which involves creating a new means of producing, selling, and/ or distributing an existing product or service. Administrative innovation refers to creation of organization design that supports production, and delivery of products and services (Hellriegel, Jackson and Slocum, 1999). The major concern for managers is how to achieve a sustained competitive advantage that ensures long- term survival. Since innovation is a key driver of sustained competitive advantage and sustainable business growth, the management of innovation becomes a central concern for all firms (Igartual et al, 2010). Innovation provides a firm with the capability to capture a substantial level of market share and

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create an entirely new market opportunity that enables a firm to reap supernormal profits. The slow reaction of competitors to innovation strategies of a firm will yield competitive advantage to the firm (Lim, 2010).

Prestwood & Schumann (2002) posit that innovation is the means by which enterprises create values and wealth. Enterprises that can apply innovation strategy and then utilize that process of innovation will gain a competitive advantage and leverage the enterprises' creation of wealth. Thus, in a highly competitive business world, it is vital for companies to operate efficiently. It involves reducing costs in every area of business. Key areas where organizations can minimize costs are time, space, effort, and energy (Goksoy, Vayvay & Ergeneli, 2013). Innovation strategies can be proactive and/ or passive (Dodgson & Salter, 2008). Proactive innovation strategies are applied by firms that have strong research orientation, frontline advantage, and a technology market leadership. Their knowledge access came from various sources and take high profile risks. Radical redesign of business process that change the nature of products & services and incremental, the constant technological or process changes that lead to improved performance of products and services are the types of technological innovation used in proactive innovation strategy. The techniques required to promote organizational innovation should therefore, be situational determined. This paper assesses and describes a select group of management innovation techniques that affect enterprise competitiveness in developing West Africa economies which include reengineering, bench marking, and corporate partnering.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

Capitalist and mixed economies have always provided opportunities for firms to be Innovative in order to survive the terrain of competition. These are largely market-driven economies that allow firms as well as individuals to compete, be innovative in order to have certain advantages over others, and reap from their initiatives. Innovation has ideally resulted in competitive advantage.

In the advanced developed countries, manufacturing organizations have more to grapple with innovation in order to have competitive advantage. This is because ideally, the congenial environment to do business is largely provided: ease-of-doing business, friendly policies are in place; adequacy of infrastructural provision such as good roads, quality water supply, un-interrupted electricity supply and other means of energy provision, adequate communication infrastructure, macroeconomic stability, etc.

In most West Africa developing countries like Nigeria, Liberia, Togo, Sierra Leone, etc, the operating environments are mostly not business friendly, imbued with inadequate infrastructural facilities such as power (electricity) and roads, etc. Some studies on the Nigerian manufacturing reveals that some of the firms that failed was due to their inability to align technology with productivity, promotional strategies with sales growth, creativity with access to patent right, and product redesign with brand royalty. Firms are finding it difficult to procure relevant raw materials, equipment and technology due to high exchange rates. The situation with manufacturing in developing nations need to improve, otherwise, more manufacturing concerns are bound to fail. The consequences of not addressing the highlighted problems are enormous. These will have negative implications on outputs and services, employment and the general price level of the economies

concerned. Some firms that failed at different times due to inability to adopt innovative strategies in Nigeria include Den's Cook, Tempo Flour plc, Nigerian Telecommunication Limited, etc. It has become increasingly clear that manufacturing firms should embrace innovation in order to have competitive advantage in the market place for their goods. However, the study focuses on business innovation strategies and enterprise competitiveness in a challenges environment: Evidence from manufacturing firms in South Eastern Nigeria. This paper is developed to give answers to the following questions: What are the effect of business process reengineering on the organisational growth of manufacturing firms in South Eastern Nigeria?, How does benchmarking affect organisational Competitiveness of manufacturing firms in South Eastern Nigeria? And to what extent does corporate partnering influence organisation's growth of manufacturing firms in South Eastern Nigeria.

1.3 Objectives of the study

The aim of this paper is to evaluate business innovation strategies and enterprise competitiveness in a challenged environment: Evidence from manufacturing firms in South Eastern Nigeria. The specific objectives of this to examine the effect of;

1. Business process reengineering on the organisational growth of manufacturing firms in South Eastern Nigeria
2. Benchmarking on organisational Competitiveness of manufacturing firms in South Eastern Nigeria
3. Corporate Partnering on organisation's growth of manufacturing firms in South Eastern Nigeria.

1.4 Statement of hypotheses

The following null hypotheses (Ho) will guide the study;

Ho: Business process reengineering does not have significant effect on the organisational growth of manufacturing firms in South Eastern Nigeria

Ho: Benchmarking do not have any influence on organisational Competitiveness of manufacturing firms in South Eastern Nigeria

Ho: Corporate Partnering does not have any effect on organisation's growth of manufacturing firms in South Eastern Nigeria.

2.0 REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

2.1 Conceptual Framework

2.1.1 Business Process Reengineering and Organisational Growth

Reengineering is defined as the fundamental rethinking and radical redesign of business processes to achieve dramatic improvements in performance measure, such as cost, quality, service, and speed (Hammer and Champy,1993). Therefore to remain competitive and in order not to lose market share, there is need for repositioning and reengineering of business processes. Reengineering requires an

organization to start all over on a clean sheet of paper. It is a process that involves a total reconceptualisation, rethinking, remodeling, redesigning, and restructuring of an organisation's business process to enable it meet with the demands and challenges of competition and change in the contemporary business setting. Reengineering is about cultural change and it is concerned with decisions of a strategic and often political nature. Consequently, reengineering is about changing attitudes and behavior, skill requirement, changes in culture and values and likewise the points of reference. Hammer and Champy (1993) establish that when a process is reengineered, jobs evolve from narrow and task - oriented to multi- dimensional; people who once did as they were instructed now make choices and decisions on their own; assembly-line work disappears; functional departments lose their reasons for being; managers stop acting like supervisors and behave more like coaches; workers target at customers' needs and less on their bosses; attitudes and values change in response to new incentives; practically every aspect of the organization is transformed, often beyond recognition. Also, reengineering enables organizations to meet the needs of customers and the demands of competition and change. The benefits of reengineering are identified as increased productivity, growth, employee empowerment, higher morale, lower overhead cost and improved customer service. However, reengineering could result to large scale downsizing of employees and middle managers (Ezigbo, 2006).

Ringim, Razalli& Hasan (2012) see product reengineering, process reengineering and customer reengineering as dimensions of business reengineering especially in a manufacturing firm. Process reengineering: This involves introduction of improved methods of achieving maximum optimization of firms' business processes. It inculcates seeking possibilities of minimizing operational cost, for instance, reducing wastage of resources and maximizing profit which could ensue from adoption of better technologies in a firm. Product reengineering: this places emphasis on improving existing products and development of new products to meet current market demands (Sunani, Abubakar& Saleh, 2015). It is a consistent effort in redesigning products to perform more than or develop products that would meet both intrinsic and extrinsic needs of customers such that it places the firm ahead of its competitors. Customer reengineering: this focuses on creating new markets that bring a firm closer to its existing or potential customers. It is exertion of considerable effort towards efficient satisfaction of customers which could be a way of outwitting competitors (Okwo, Onwe, Edigbo&Ezenwakwelu, 2017).

2.1.2 Benchmarking and Organisational Competitiveness

Benchmarking is the process in which an organisation identifies and selects outstanding practices and processes to adapt from organizations anywhere in the world to help the organisation improve its performance (American Productivity and Quality Center (AQPC). Additionally, Bruder and Grey (1994) define benchmarking as the process of measuring organization's performance and processes against those of best-in- class organizations in both public and private and thus use the analysis to improve service operations and cost position. Benchmarking is the process of searching for best practices, innovative ideas, and operating effective procedures to learn from others considered as best in class organizations so as to achieve excellence (Besterfield et al, 2011).

Gestsch& Davis (1997) posit that benchmarking is a means of monitoring the processes in the organization, and thereby learn and adopt the best practices of the best - in class organizations. The benchmarking exercise design and execute tests that confirms technological systems efficiency through comparisons and final selection on customer needs (Zairi, 1992). Benchmarking is the process of comparing the strategy, products and processes of a company with those of best-in- class organizations to learn how they achieved excellence, and then plan to match and even surpass it (Omochonu and Ross, 1995). The aim of benchmarking is to achieve superiority. The best practice comparism is often used as a means of setting up achievable goals aimed at obtaining organizational superiority. Benchmarking allows the organization to define specific gaps in performance and to select the process to improve. It allows organizations to set realistic, vigorous new performance targets. By seeking to identify and learn from the best-in-class organizations and to surpass their performance, a company can embed in its culture and behaviour a strong spirit of competitiveness. However, benchmarking can easily become bogged down in performance measurement and lose sight of the real objective of performance improvement. By focusing on copying what has already been achieved can limit creativity and become a ceiling on achievement in a given field (Ezigbo, 2006).

Consequently, Rumeit (1984) posits that firms should sustain competitive advantage when competitors are deprived of key resources. Competitive advantage lies in the capability of a company to offer to customers, products and services that are superior to the products and services offered by the competitors. The higher competitiveness level compared with the competitors is measured by product's quality, affordable price to consumers, post- selling services quality, the enterprise's capability to continue to offer to the market demand and technical progress. In Michael porter's vision, the enterprise's competitive advantage assures a reduced cost, thereby, create a distinct product or service that clearly differs through its quality by the competition's offer (Lucia, 2012). There is persistent competition among firms due to such environmental and organizational factors as enhanced global and domestic competition, technological advancement, globalization and deregulation (Akman& Yilmaz, 2008). Competitive advantage is an advantage gained over competitors by offering customers greater value, either through lower prices or by providing additional benefits and services that justify similar or possibly higher prices. It can be viewed as the unique position that the firm develops in comparison with competitors (Attiany, 2014).Barone&DeCarlo (2003) posit that companies whose products are differentiated from that of competitors along attributes that are important and relevant to customers will build sustainable competitive advantages. Competitive advantage is the capacity of an organization to create a maintainance defensible position over its competitors (Li, Ragu- Nathan, Ragu- Nathan, & Rao, 2006).Tracey, Vonderembse& Lim (1999) see competitive advantage as distinct competencies that distinguish an organization from its competitors and thereby, giving the organisation an edge in the market place. Porter (2004) established that competitive advantage exists in two forms: cost advantage and differentiation advantage. Cost advantage occurs when a firm provides the same products or services as competitors, but at a lower cost while differentiation advantage occurs when a firm can provide greater value at lower cost than the competitors. Efficiency, quality, innovation, and customer responsiveness are factors that spur Competitive advantage.

2.1.3 Corporate Partnering and Organisation's Growth

As pressure on community-based organizations increase and the society is faced with more complex issues, the solution depends on cross organization partnerships. Organisations seek partnerships through combined efforts to add value. Organisations can work together toward common purposes and achieve shared results though they may have different approaches and structures. A partnership is a collaborative association between organizations, which stands to work toward shared goals. A partnership is a symbiosis relationship that enhances organisation's capacity for long-collaboration. The key components seen in most approaches to partnering are Leadership: this implies a shared leadership among respected individuals who are empowered and recognized in their organisations to provide guidance and direction. Common understanding: partners need to know each other's culture, values and organizational framework. Partners should have a clear understanding of individual members' roles and responsibilities. Successful partnerships rely on shared value, mutual understanding and an acceptance of differences (norms, attitudes and beliefs). Learning and Development: the desire to invest in partners' skills and knowledge will create opportunities to develop each other's work and enhance learning. Communication: partnership succeeds if there are effective communication at all levels within the partnership and in the partner organization.

Corporate partnering is an innovative strategy that helps firms to build complementary capabilities. These complementary capabilities are seen in mergers and acquisitions. Thus, recurrent fluctuations in economic activity which threaten corporate existence and survival: cases of company distress and failures have made corporate structural changes unavoidable. Mergers and acquisitions are terms which businessmen have adopted the world over as a survival strategy which mean fusing and integrating companies. Other terms such as consolidation, amalgamation, absorption, and take-over are often used interchangeably and in similar context with mergers and acquisitions. The term merger and acquisition though used as synonyms, have subtle differences between them. Merger is integration or union of two or more companies to become one in all possible legal ways. Mergers are usually "friendly" and they usually occur between firms of similar size. A new name may be adopted for the new firm which is formed as a result of the merger but the new venture usually reflects the name of both companies concerned. For example, the merging of Smithkline and Beecham to form Smithkline-beecham; Allied Corporation and Signal Companies to form Allied Signal; and Royal Insurance and Sun Alliance to form Royal Sun Alliance (Laninhun, 2000 cited in Ezigbo, 2011).

Nevertheless, in an acquisition, a company acquires the controlling interest in the share capital of another company to assume a good measure of control (Omojafor, 1998 in Ezigbo, 2011). The identity of the acquired company is often subsumed within that of the buyer. An acquisition therefore, involves the buying over of a company by payment of cash to the shareholders of the company by another company with the acquired company still continuing its existence but as a subsidiary of the acquiring (buying) company. Examples of acquisitions are: Smithkline Beecham's acquisition of Sterling products and Union Bank of Nigeria's acquisition of Citi-Trust Merchant Bank (Ezigbo, 2011). According to Gbede (2000), the first merger and acquisition case in Nigeria was in 1959 when John Holt Plc acquired Joe Allen & Company Limited, a company that had been trading in Nigeria since 1928. This experimentation of John Holt with mergers and acquisitions witnessed Joe Allens undergoing many structural changes involving changes in name and

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modification of activities. Joe Allens now bear Allens a division of John Holt, and its main activities involve the dealing in the sale of Volkswagen and Mercedes Benz as well as land Rover Vehicles. In 1963, John Holt proceeded to buy over Haco Limited: a company incorporated in 1954 and is involved in the manufacture and sale of baby care products, toiletries, cosmetics and medicated products, and operates today as a trading division of John Holt limited. In 1969, John Holt limited bought over John Holt shipping services limited from John Holt & Company (liver-pool) to convert John Holt shipping into a Nigerian Company. The company today operates as a division of John Holt and is involved in the business of clearing and forwarding as well as sea and air freight.

John Holt's impressive outing in the area of mergers and acquisition continued when it negotiated the acquisition of Mandillas Packaging Company in a move designed to provide extra morally beneficial advantages. John Holt most likely wanted to use Mandillas packaging to complement the activities of Holt Pak, its own packaging company. Other Mergers and Acquisition activities of John Holt according to Gbede, included the acquisition of Ogbemudia farms in 1985 as well as the acquisition of West Africa Drugs company. Actually, John Holt had either merged with or acquired over fifteen different businesses so far. John Holt successfully acquired Bauchi Bottling Company in 1985 by the payment of N5,185,000 to settle Bauchi Bottling Company's outstanding indebtedness and N1,230,400 to pay off the equity share holders of the company, exhibiting a form of debt-equity swap.

Another keen participant of the merger and acquisition business is the lever Brothers of Nigeria Plc (LBN) with its acquisition of Lipton of Nigeria in 1984 and Cheseborough products in 1988. The lever Brother / Lipton merger is an example of a synergistic merger especially for the shareholders of Lipton who hither to had been holding unquoted shares. Then such shareholders can be proud owners of quoted and market respected LBN shares. The lever Brothers/Lipton merger led to the increase in net asset per share for Lipton shareholders who in the immediate post merger period have a net asset per share of N173.34 as compared to the 1983 Lipton net asset per share of N70.28 which was its largest ever. Lever Brothers of Nigeria (LBN) in the post merger period had earning per share of N61.30 which far exceeded the Lipton's earning per share peak of 20k in 1982. SCOA's aggressiveness in entering into controversial acquisitions manifested when it bought Motor Services Engineering Limited in 1986, a transaction regarded by SEC as involving temporary control until MOSEL was wound up and filed in for liquidation in March 1989 in line with SEC understanding. SCOA incorporated another company (SCOA /MOSEL) to carry on the business of MOSEL after buying its share capital of N750,000 ordinary share of N1.00 each, at a total cost of N1.5 m (that is at N2.00 per share). This was rare exhibition of financial engineering as SCOA converted a debt of N10.4 million owed to it by MOSEL into investment in the company, exhibiting a debt - equity swap exercise. SCOA has substantial holdings in Tanarewa Nigeria Limited, Vino Distillers Nigeria Limited, Nigeria Textile Manufacturing Limited, and Allied Biscuits Limited. However, SCOA's acquisitions despite the backing of sound financial engineering had witnessed a down-turn of post-merger profits and Earning per Share (EPS). AG Leventis in 1983 acquired Leventis Stores (a supermarket chain established in 1965). UTC acquired controlling interest in West African Batteries as well as down-stream acquisition of companies such as the wood processing and export industry for synergy and in the same vein so as to cope with globally increasing trade liberalisation.

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SmithKline Beecham and Sterling products Nigeria Plc also decided to merge in 1995. In fact, mergers and acquisitions had come to stay in Nigeria as most business operators have been seeing the synergistic effect of well thought-out merger (Omotayo, 2000). Mergers and acquisitions contribute to the development and growth of the economy by promoting economies of scale and also by ensuring that resources of the society are put to more careful and purposeful use by the elimination of careless and wasteful management.

According to Gbede, Mallam Umar (2009), posits that mergers and acquisitions seem to be the most available option for companies in developing economies especially during the era of dwindling foreign investment and increasing debt burden. This option (mergers and acquisitions) perhaps seems to be the cheapest alternative to business concerns bearing in mind the cost of borrowing and the fact that willing lenders are not even there during periods of uncertainty. Merger and acquisition or take-overs, although still relatively new are a valuable route to pool together the strengths and synergies in similar organisations to generate increasing business activities to sustain the fortunes of our companies. Mergers and acquisitions are possible means of saving companies with serious financial distress and providing such businesses with new management and better access to new financial resources. However, mergers and acquisitions if not handled well may easily become a wasted effort, waste of fund and a costly error on the part of the acquiring company. Similarly, mergers and acquisitions if encouraged without adequate control may have unsatisfactory consequences as it may lead to the emergence of monopolies with its attendant disadvantages. Mergers and acquisitions exercise may face tremendous opposition from organised and unionised labour where there exist fears of staff lay off due to the mergers and acquisitions. With this, the merger initiative can be destroyed (Ezigbo, 2011).

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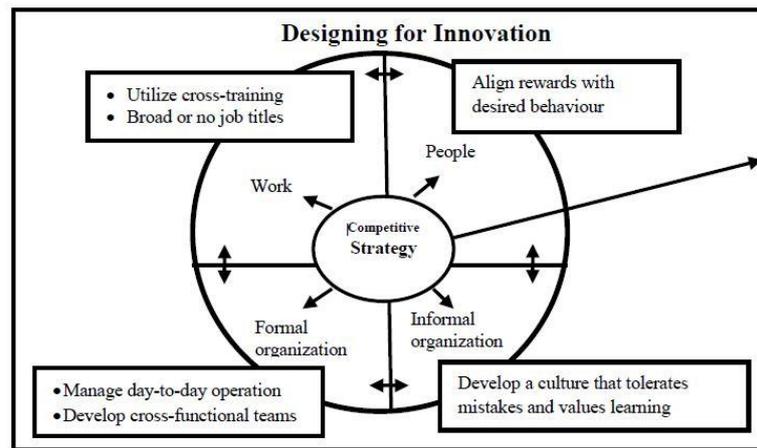
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2.1.4 Designing for Innovation

Top management is responsible for decisions that affect the nature of innovation within the firm. Such decisions involve: the sources of new revenue the firm will pursue in the next five years; the appropriate mix or portfolio of innovation projects; whether the firm will be a technology leader or follower; the type of innovation the firm will do in-house versus partner or outsource. Each of these decisions mentioned above affect the configuration of formal organization, work, people, and informal organization that supports them most effectively. Innovation enhances any competitive strategy that has been articulated. Innovation can enhance a firm's day-to-day operations, increase the rate at which employees generate ideas for new products and services, and facilitate quick and efficient commercialization of new products.

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Designing for Innovation

Source: Nadler, D. A., and Tushman, M. L. (1989). Organizational frame bending: Principles for managing reorientation. *The Academy of Management Executive*, 3(3) 194-204.

In designing an organization it is necessary to ensure that the four essential elements of the firm are aligned with its competitive strategy. Alignment shows that each element consistently supports the competitive strategy and mutually reinforces other elements (Porter, 1996). For example, a firm that wants to differentiate itself from competitors by regularly improving its product line needs to align all elements to support this capability. The four elements identified should be designed to encourage all employees to generate ideas for product and process improvement and for new products and services. The formal organization focuses on the design of an organization to manage day-to-day operations as well as the design of cross-functional product development teams, which are temporary structures that are established to design and develop new products and services. The remaining three elements, work, people, and the informal organization should be designed to facilitate operation of both of these types of formal organization structures (Nadler and Tushman, 1997).

Formal Structure: In designing for innovation, no structure is optimal for all firms; it depends on the firm's strategy and products. Firstly, reduce hierarchical levels by broadening the responsibility of employees at each level. Flat structures enhance communication flow. Consequently, share information evenly to all employees and create forums for problem solving. Align reward and incentives to desired behaviour. These can be tangible in form of monetary bonuses or non-tangible in form of empowerment, promotion and recognition. Day-to-day operations in the formal organization should be customer focus and structured to receive orders from customers, and produce and deliver products and services that boost customers' satisfaction (Nadler and Tushman, 1997).

Work: Activities that add value to a firm's products and services refer to work. Work should be designed so that employees both grow in their jobs and, at the same time, facilitate accomplishment of organisational goals. Jobs need to be challenging (exposing employees to a broad variety of duties and jobs) that offers them the opportunity to think and be creative, coming up with new ideas, or better ways of doing the same job. **Cross-functional Teams:** The establishment of cross-functional teams brings together people from different specialties to solve a particular problem or for product development. The mix of different knowledge, skills and abilities enhances idea generation among

the team. It is relevant to give the team members a general title to imply broad and shared responsibilities. Feedback control allows team members learn from their mistakes and improve their performance.

People: It is necessary that employees are trained and fit to perform their tasks. It is important that employees see the need for interrelatedness of their tasks on the tasks of others. Managers should ensure that employees understand and appreciate what other people do. If not, there could be unnecessary conflicts and inefficiencies (Susman and Dean, 1992).

Informal Organisation: Culture is the most important component of the informal organization. Organisational culture refers to norms, values and beliefs that are shared within an organization. An innovation- supportive culture values creativity and cooperation (Nadler and Tushman, 1997).

2.2 Theoretical Framework

Innovation Diffusion Theory

Innovation diffusion theory is a theory that describes how technology and new ideas spread. This theory was initiated by E.M. Rogers: an American communication theorist and sociologist. He posits that diffusion is the process in which new idea is shared in a social system. Rogers posits that the spread of new ideas depend on communication channel, time, innovation and social system. This theory was anchored on knowledge management which involves identification of intellectual assets, creating new knowledge for competitive advantage within the organization, providing large sums of corporate information, sharing of knowledge, and technology.

2.3 Empirical Review

Masood, Sadia, Muhammed and Saman (2013) did a study on effects of innovation types on performance of manufacturing firms in Pakistan. The objective of the study was to assess the relationships among four types of innovation (product, process, marketing and organizational innovation) and for different dimensions of organizational performance (innovative, production, market and financial). Survey design was adopted. Data were analyzed and the hypothesis tested by spearman rank order correlation on SPSS. The study revealed that the adoption of product, process, marketing and organizational innovations result to positive effect on different aspects of the firms' performance and create a distinctive product which allows the firms gain competitive advantage in their respective industries. The study suggested that all business organizations should have a broad knowledge of innovation types and their competitive environment and then, take advantage of the opportunities that exist therein.

Ibidunni, Iyiola and Ayodotum (2014) conducted a study on product innovation, as a survival strategy for small and medium enterprises (SMEs) in Nigeria: A case study of PRODOCs Foods Nigeria Limited. The objectives were to assess the extent of the relationship between product innovation and survival of SMEs, determine if changes in taste and preference of consumers necessitate product innovation, and ascertain whether product innovation increases sales volume of SMEs. Survey design was adopted.

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Spearman rank correlation coefficient was used to test the hypotheses at 5% level of significance. Findings revealed that, there was a positive significant relationship between product innovation and survival of SME's, also that changes in taste and preference of consumers necessitate product innovation, More so, product innovation improves sales volume of SME's. The study suggested that adequate finance, public policy framework and conducive environment, should be developed by the Nigerian government to support and encourage the Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs).

Adeyeyetolulope (2014) did a study on the impact of technological innovation on organizational performance in Nestle foods Nigeria. The objective of the study was to determine the relationship between strategic planning capabilities on organizational performance in the manufacturing industry. Survey design was adopted. The hypothesis was tested by spearman rank correlation coefficient with the aid of Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS). The finding revealed that strategic planning and marketing capacity independently and jointly influence organizational performance variables (resource availability, staff quality, productivity, sales revenue, financial strength, public image and goodwill). The study suggested that there is need for organizations to adopt technological advancement that would ensure competitiveness in the market.

Ezenwakwelu and Ikon (2014), conducted a study on empirical analysis on innovation and its implication for entrepreneurship development in Nigeria. The specific objectives were to assess the nature of the relationship between innovation and entrepreneurship development, ascertain the extent of the relationship between creativity and innovation, ascertain the measure of the relationship between innovation and competitive advantage, and ascertain the measures of innovation outputs in Nigeria. The study adopted the survey design and data were collected from the entrepreneurs/CEOs in Anambra and Enugu states. The hypotheses were tested with Pearson product moment correlation coefficient and chi square using SPSS. The findings revealed that there is a positive relationship between innovation and entrepreneurship development; there is a significant relationship between creativity and innovation; there is also a significant positive relationship between innovation and competitive advantage and innovation outputs can be measured in terms of technology transfer, labour productivity and shareholder's return. The study suggested that government should invest in education, as innovation and entrepreneurship require an intelligent and creative workforce. And also government should minimize barriers and simplify procedures that boost innovation and entrepreneurship.

3.0 METHODOLOGY

3.1 Research Design

The study adopted survey research design. Survey Research is defined as the process of conducting research using surveys that researchers send to survey respondents. The data collected from surveys is then statistically analyzed to draw meaningful research conclusions.

3.2 Sources of Data

The researcher adopted two types of data collection methods. They are primary data collection and secondary data collection. The primary data required for this study will be collected through the use of a structured questionnaire. The questionnaire contains possible range of responses. The

respondents are expected to fill in their choice of options. Only one option is acceptable in any response category.

3.3 Population of the Research Instrument

The entire two (2) federal and five (5) state colleges of education and three (3) National Teachers Institute study centers in South East, Nigeria. A population of 341 staff was used.

3.4 Sample Size and Sampling Technique

The whole population of 341 was utilized because of the small size of the population and a research assistance helped in collecting of the data.

3.5 Method of Data Collection

Data for the study were collected through the use of questionnaire. Items to be included in the questionnaire.

3.6 Description of Research Instrument

The questionnaire dealt with the respondents demography ie data, gender, age, educational level, among other things. In order to develop confidence in the respondents, the questionnaire was accompanied by an introductory letter which explained in details the purpose of the study and an assurance to the respondents that their anonymity is guaranteed.

3.7 Model Specification

The models were developed according to the hypotheses:

Business process reengineering does not have significant effect on the organisational growth of manufacturing firms in South Eastern Nigeria.

$$BPE = \beta_0 + \beta_1PEF + \beta_2MTE + \beta_3JIMP + \beta_4LRIMP + \varepsilon$$

Where

BPE = Business Process Engineering

OPT = productivity of the organization.

PEF = Performance

MTE = Task execution of it monitored by the used of business

JIMP = Job implementation

LRIMP = Low rate of implementation

Benchmarking do not have any influence on organisational Competitiveness of manufacturing firms in South Eastern Nigeria

$$BMK = \beta_0 + \beta_1SOP + \beta_2MPO + \beta_3ACHS + \beta_4SCA + \varepsilon$$

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Where

- BMK = Benchmarking
- SOP = Selects outstanding practices
- MOP = Measuring organization's performance
- MPO = Monitoring the processes in the organization, and thereby le
- ACHS = Achieve Superiority
- SCA = Sustain competitive advantage when competitors

Corporate Partnering does not have any effect on organisation’s growth of manufacturing firms in South Eastern Nigeria.

$$COPP = \beta_0 + \beta_1 BCC + \beta_2 BSCI + \beta_3 SCB + \varepsilon$$

COPP

BCC, SYR, BSCI, LDL, SCB

Where

- COPP = Corporate Partnering
- BCC = build complementary capabilities
- SYR = symbiosis relationship
- BSCI = build sustainable corporate image
- LDL = lifts firms out of dissolution or liquidation
- SCB = Corporate partnering helps to build strong capital base for organisations

4.0 Data Presentation Analysis

4.1 Likert Scale Analysis

Table 4.1: Effect of business process reengineering on the organisational growth of manufacturing firms in South Eastern Nigeria.

		5	4	3	2	1	∑FX	-	SD	Decis
		SA	A	N	DA	S		X		ion
1	Business process reengineering enhances the productivity of the organization.	100	636	96	84	24	940	3.4	1.10	Agre
		20	159	32	42	24	277			e
2	Business process reengineering	700	336	51	40	16	1143	4.1	1.17	Agre

1	increases job performance.	140	84	17	20	16	277			e
3	Implementation of job is made easy with business process reengineering.	445	344	99	48	45	981	3.5	1.43	Agree
4	Task execution of it monitored by the used of business process reengineering.	670	176	99	92	20	1057	3.8	1.38	Agree
5	There is low rate of implementation of business process engineering by organizations in South East Nigeria.	500	544	81	2	13	1140	4.1	.94	Agree
Total Grand mean and standard deviation								3.8	1.204	

Source: Field Survey, 2021

The table 4.1, agreed that business process reengineering enhances the productivity of the organization with mean score of 3.4 and standard deviation of 1.10, Business process reengineering increases job performance with mean score of 4.1 and standard deviation of 1.17, Implementation of job is made easy with business process reengineering with mean score of 3.5 and standard deviation of 1.43, It was agreed that task execution of it monitored by the used of business process reengineering with mean score of 3.8 and 1.38, There is low rate of implementation of business process engineering by organizations in South East Nigeria. with a mean score of 4.1 and standard deviation of .94.

Table 4.2: Responses on effect of benchmarking on organisational Competitiveness of manufacturing firms in South Eastern Nigeria

	5	4	3	2	1	$\sum FX$	-	SD	Decis	
	SA	A	N	DA	SD		X		ion	
1	Organisations identifies and selects outstanding practices and processes to adapt from organizations anywhere in the world to help the organisation improve its performance	880	252	30	24	16	1202	4.3	1.12	Agree
2	Benchmarking helps in measuring organization's performance and processes against those of best-in-class organizations in both public and private and thus use the analysis to improve service operations and cost position	465	344	111	36	16	972	3.5	1.41	Agree

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3	It a means of monitoring the processes in the organization, and thereby learn and adopt the best practices of the best - in class organizations	620 124	332 83	90 30	58 29	11 11	1111 277	4.0	1.16	Agree
4	Benchmarking helps to achieve superiority	595 119	376 94	93 31	34 17	16 16	1114 277	4.0	1.15	Agree
5	It helps to sustain competitive advantage when competitors are deprived of key resources	660 132	376 94	72 24	24 12	15 15	1147 277	4.1	1.10	Agree
Total grand mean and standard deviation								4.0	1.19	

Source: Field Survey, 2021

The table 4.2, agreed that Organisations identifies and selects outstanding practices and processes to adapt from organizations anywhere in the world to help the organisation improve its performance with mean score of 4.3 and standard deviation of 1.12, Benchmarking helps in measuring organization's performance and processes against those of best-in- class organizations in both public and private and thus use the analysis to improve service operations and cost position with mean score of 3.5 and standard deviation of 1.41, It a means of monitoring the processes in the organization, and thereby learn and adopt the best practices of the best - in class organizations with mean score of 4.0 and standard deviation of 1.16, Benchmarking helps to achieve superiority with mean score of 4.0 and 1.12, It helps to sustain competitive advantage when competitors are deprived of key resources with a mean score of 4.1 and standard deviation of 1.10.

Table 4.3: Responses on effect of corporate partnering on organisation's growth of manufacturing firms in South Eastern Nigeria.

		5 SA	4 A	3 N	2 DA	1 SD	$\sum FX$	- X	SD	Decisi on
1	Corporate partnering helps firms to build complementary capabilities	760 152	376 94	36 12	22 11	8 8	1202 277	4.3	.95	Agree
2	It is a partnership is a symbiosis relationship that enhances organisation's capacity for long- collaboration	755 151	392 98	24 6	12 6	16 16	1199 277	4.3	1.04	Agree
3	Corporate partnering helps to build sustainable corporate image	610 122	424 106	36 12	36 18	19 19	1125 277	4.1	1.17	Agree
4.	It lifts firms out of dissolution or liquidation	400 80	468 117	66 22	102 34	24 24	1060 277	3.8	1.08	Agree

5	Corporate partnering helps to build strong capital base for organisations	625	292	96	26	34	1073	3.9	1.36	Agree	
		125	73	32	13	34	277				
Total grand mean and standard deviation								4.08	1.12		

Source: Field Survey, 2021

The table 4.3, it was agreed that Corporate partnering helps firms to build complementary capabilities with mean score of 4.3 and standard deviation of .95, It is a partnership is a symbiosis relationship that enhances organisation's capacity for long- collaboration with mean score of 4.3 and standard deviation of 1.04, Corporate partnering helps to build sustainable corporate image with mean score of 4.1 and standard deviation of 1.17, It lifts firms out of dissolution or liquidation with mean score of 3.8 and 1.08, Corporate partnering helps to build strong capital base for organisations with a mean score of 3.9 and standard deviation of 1.36.

4.2 Test of Hypotheses

Hypothesis One

Business process reengineering does not have significant effect on the organisational growth of manufacturing firms in South Eastern Nigeria.

Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.701 ^a	.491	.482	.62600

a. Predictors: (Constant), OPT, PEF, MTE, JIMP, LRIMP

ANOVA^a

Model		Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	102.645	5	20.529	2.387	.000 ^b
	Residual	106.198	271	.392		
	Total	208.843	276			

a. Dependent Variable: BPE

b. Predictors: (Constant), OPT, PEF, MTE, JIMP, LRIMP.

Where

BPE = Business Process Engineering

OPT = productivity of the organization.

PEF = Performance

MTE = Task execution of it monitored by the used of business

JIMP = Job implementation

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LRIMP = Low rate of implementation

The R² {R-Squared} which measures the overall goodness of fit of the entire regression, shows the value as .491 and adjusted to .482. This means that R² accounts for 49.1 percent approximately 49 percent. This indicates that the independent variables accounts for about 49 percent of the variation in the dependent variable. Which shows goodness of fit? From the result, f-calculated {2.387} is less than the f-tabulated {2.7858}, that is, f-cal < f-tab. Hence, we reject the null hypothesis {H0} and accept alternative hypothesis which means that the overall estimate has a good fit which also implies that our independent variables are simultaneously insignificant. We now concluded from the analysis that Business process reengineering has significant effect on the organisational growth of manufacturing firms in South Eastern Nigeria.

Hypothesis Two

Benchmarking do not have any influence on organisational Competitiveness of manufacturing firms in South Eastern Nigeria

Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.945 ^a	.893	.891	.29426

a. Predictors: (Constant), SOP, MOP, MPO, ACHS, SCA

ANOVA^a

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	194.934	5	38.987	450.246	.000 ^b
	Residual	23.466	271	.087		
	Total	218.399	276			

a. Dependent Variable: BMK

b. Predictors: (Constant), SOP, MOP, MPO, ACHS, SCA

Where

BMK = Benchmarking

SOP = Selects outstanding practices

MOP = Measuring organization's performance

MPO = Monitoring the processes in the organization, and thereby le

ACHS = Achieve Superiority

SCA = Sustain competitive advantage when competitors

The R^2 {R-Squared} which measures the overall goodness of fit of the entire regression, shows the value as .893 and adjusted to .891. This means that R^2 accounts for 89.3 percent approximately 89 percent. This indicates that the independent variables accounts for about 99 percent of the variation in the dependent variable. Which shows goodness of fit? From the result, f-calculated {2.387} is greater that the f-tabulated {2.7858}, that is, $f_{cal} > f_{tab}$. Hence, we reject the null hypothesis {H0} and accept Alternative hypothesis which means that the overall estimate has a good fit which also implies that our independent variables are simultaneously significant. We now concluded from the analysis that benchmarking influences organisational Competitiveness of manufacturing firms in South Eastern Nigeria.

Hypothesis 3.

Corporate Partnering does not have any effect on organisation’s growth of manufacturing firms in South Eastern Nigeria.

Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.757 ^a	.732	.719	.66283

Predictors: (Constant).BCC, SYR, BSCI, LDL, SCB

ANOVA^a

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	90.220	6	15.037	34.225	.000 ^b
	Residual	118.623	270	.439		
	Total	208.843	276			

a. Dependent Variable: COPP

b. Predictors: (Constant): BCC, SYR, BSCI, LDL, SCB

Where

COPP = Corporate Partnering

BCC = build complementary capabilities

SYR = symbiosis relationship

BSCI = build sustainable corporate image

LDL = lifts firms out of dissolution or liquidation

SCB = Corporate partnering helps to build strong capital base for organisations

The R^2 {R-Squared} which measures the overall goodness of fit of the entire regression, shows the value as .732 and adjusted to .719. This means that R^2 accounts for 73.2 percent approximately 73

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percent. This indicates that the independent variables accounts for about 73 percent of the variation in the dependent variable. Which shows goodness of fit. From the result, F-calculated {34.225} is greater that the F-tabulated {2.7858}, that is, $F_{cal} > F_{tab}$. Hence, we reject the null hypothesis {H0} and accept Alternative hypothesis which means that the overall estimate has a good fit which also implies that our independent variables are simultaneously significant. We now concluded from the analysis that corporate partnering has significant effect on organisation's growth of manufacturing firms in South Eastern Nigeria.

4.3 Discussion of Findings

From the result, f-calculated {450.246} is greater that the f-tabulated {2.7858}, that is, $f_{cal} > f_{tab}$ which also implies that Business process reengineering has significant effect on the organisational growth of manufacturing firms in South Eastern Nigeria. This supports the findings of Masood, Sadia, Muhammed and Saman (2013) did a study on effects of innovation types on performance of manufacturing firms in Pakistan. The study suggested that all business organizations should have a broad knowledge of innovation types and their competitive environment and then, take advantage of the opportunities that exist therein.

From hypothesis two the result showed that F-calculated {2.387} is greater that the F-tabulated {2.7858}, that is, $F_{cal} > F_{tab}$ which also implies that our independent variables are simultaneously significant. We now concluded from the analysis that benchmarking influences organisational competitiveness of manufacturing firms in South Eastern Nigeria. This is in agreement with the studies of Ibidunni, Iyiola and Ayodotum (2014) on product innovation, as a survival strategy for small and medium enterprises (SMEs) in Nigeria: A case study of PRODOCs Foods Nigeria Limited.

Adeyeyetolulope (2014) did a study on the impact of technological innovation on organizational performance in Nestle foods Nigeria. The objective of the study was to determine the relationship between strategic planning capabilities on organizational performance in the manufacturing industry, this supported the result, F-calculated {34.225} is greater that the F-tabulated {2.7858}, that is, $F_{cal} > F_{tab}$ which implied that corporate partnering has significant effect on organisation's growth of manufacturing firms in South Eastern Nigeria.

5.0 Summary of Findings, Conclusion and Recommendations

5.1 Summary of Findings

Having carried out extensive study on business innovation strategies and enterprise competitiveness in a challenged environment: evidence from manufacturing firms in South Eastern Nigeria.

- 1) The study observed that business process reengineering has significant effect on the organisational growth of manufacturing firms in South Eastern Nigeria,
- 2) It was also observed that benchmarking affects organisational Competitiveness of manufacturing firms in South Eastern Nigeria,
- 3) The study further shows that corporate partnering has significant effect on organisation's growth.

5.2 Conclusion

In the organizational context, innovation relates to efficiency, productivity, quality, competitiveness, and market share. Consequently, innovation is the source of providing remarkable growth, and enhanced end results. Companies cannot grow by reengineering and cost reduction alone but with innovation. Reengineering enables organizations meet the needs of customers and the demands of competition and change while Bench marking has become necessary for strategic planning and operational improvement. Additionally, Benchmarking helps firms collect both quantitative and qualitative information required to identify gap and provide means to improve performance, achieve superior results and promote competitive advantage. Thus, corporate partnering is an innovative strategy that helps firms to build complementary capabilities.

5.3 Recommendations

Based on the findings above,

- 1) The study recommends that governments in developing West Africa economies should encourage research and development, recognize and encourage innovation and entrepreneurship.
- 2) And also the governments should provide the enabling environment for businesses in the Eastern part of Nigeria to develop to innovative capabilities for competitive advantage.
- 3) It is also recommended that top management should invest in research and development, as this will stimulate innovation and better product offerings and in order to sustain competitive advantage, firms should focus on product innovation first before any other type of innovation.

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