Effect of market orientation on performance of small and medium scale enterprises in Kogi state Nigeria

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Abstract
The study examined the effect of market orientation on performance of SMEs in Kogi state Nigeria. The study adopted a survey design using a structured questionnaire which were administered to 500 randomly selected 500 SMEs in Kogi state. Data collected was analyzed using PLS-SEM. The findings of the study revealed among others that customer orientation, competitor orientation and inter-functional coordination have a significant and positive effect on performance of SMEs. By implication, the findings of this study suggested that underperformance among SMEs in Kogi state which is an issue of serious concern and subject of discussion to all citizens and other stakeholders could be ameliorated through market orientation. The present study recommended that Kogi state government through the appropriate regulatory agency SMEDAN should organize a seminars and workshop on regular basis to registered SMEs operating in the state on how to put the needs of customers over the needs of the business, integrate and ensure cooperation between the various units of their organization towards achieving the overall objective as these will improve the performance of SMEs in the state.

Keywords: customer orientation, competitor orientation, inter-functional coordination, performance, SMEs.

1. Introduction
Small and Medium-sized Enterprises (SMEs) is very crucial to the Nigerian economy because the sector provides an effective means of stimulating indigenous enterprises, enhancing greater employment opportunities, promoting the use of local raw materials and aiding the development of local technology (Ismail 2018). Most countries of the world have attained industrial advancement through the process of SMEs, their existences have been regarded as effective way of development in most countries of Africa, Asia, and Latin America (Ismail, 2018). Hence, the government of such countries used the idea to stimulate industrialization, increase employment and reduce the level of poverty in their economy. SMEs are usually regarded as the engine of socio-economic transformation and economic development

especially in the developing countries like Nigeria (Osalor, 2012).
SMEs are integral part of innovation and growth in a dynamic economy; thus, they have a vital role in terms of contributing to GDP and employment generation (Egbesola, 2017). In 2017 Statistician-General of the Federation stated that SMEs presented a vital platform for boosting technical, technological and entrepreneurial capacities among critical segments of the populace (Ibru, 2018). He further stated that SMEs also offered opportunities to drive jobs and wealth creation as well as income re-distribution within the society. However, SMEs in Nigeria have not performed creditably well and hence have not played the expected vital roles in the economic growth and development of Nigeria because year in year out, government at federal, state and local level make an effort

in support of entrepreneurship development, but still the contributions of SMEs to economic development is low (Ismail 2018; Gbandi & Amissah, 2014). It is worrisome that despite the incentives, favorable policies, regulations and preferential support by government aimed at improving SMEs, the sub-sector has performed below expectation in Nigeria (Ndumanya, 2018).

Likewise, the non-performance of SMEs in Kogi state is an issue of serious concern and subject of discussion to all citizens and other stakeholders (Ibru, 2018). The report of SMENDAN Kogi state office (2021) indicated that the collapse of SMEs in the state resulted to unemployment, loss of market and inevitably affects entrepreneurship and the entire Kogi state economy. Several empirical studies (Ndumanya, 2018; Zafar & Mustafa 2017; Lejarraga, & Oberhofer, 2015; Slater & Narver, 2012) suggested that poor contribution of SMEs to the development of the country and it underperformance could be addressed through market. Beneke et al. (2016), viewed market orientation as three dimensions' construct comprising: customer orientation, competitor orientation and inter-functional coordination. Nonetheless, no published study examined the effect of market orientation on performance of small and medium scale business in Kogi stae. Hence, the present study aims at examine the effect of market orientation on performance of small and medium scale enterprises in Kogi state Nigeria.

The expected outcome of this will be significant to SMEs owners/managers. The study will contribute to the SMEs by giving the overall outcome on the examination of market orientation to performance relationship. The present state of SMEs activities and contribution to the gross domestic product and the overall economy will clearly identify. SMEs, owners/managers stand a chance in benefiting from the study findings, as the possible factors predicting their performance will be pointed, which in turn help them in assessing the strength and weakness. Also, the study will serve as a guide to SME owners on what is important to their overall performance.

2. Literature Review
Small and Medium Scale Enterprise (SMEs)

The term SMEs tends to be defined based upon the number of employees. Gomezelj and Smolcic (2016) stated that, this measure is readily due to the required reporting rules established by government agencies regulating payroll systems and the determination of income tax deductions. In Nigeria, governments formulate policies aimed at facilitating and empowering the growth and development of the Small-scale enterprises due to their contribution to the Nigeria economy like alleviating poverty, employment generation, enhance human development, and improve social welfare of the people (Aceleanu, Traşca, & Şerban, 2014). In some developing countries like Nigeria, small-scale enterprise is the center source of income, a breeding ground for entrepreneurs and a provider of employment (Kanu, 2015). For Nigeria as a nation, the contribution of Small-Scale Enterprises should not be underrated at this critical time of socio-economic and political development of the nation, especially if government must deliver dividend to the citizenry (Aceleanu et al., 2014). Small and medium scale enterprise vary a great deal in terms of size, revenues, and regulatory authorization, both within a country and from country to country (Muisyo, Alala & Musiega, 2014).

Small scale enterprise consists of the driving force of industrial growth and development of the economy and this is mainly due to their great driving force in ensuring diversification and growth of industrial production as well as the achievement of the basic objectives of developments (Madurapperuma et al.,

2016). Small businesses account for a greater percentage of all businesses in virtually every economy and generate the majority of private sector employment and output (Abiola & Asiweh, 2012). The important role played by Small scale enterprises as catalysts for overall economic performance is widely accepted and documented (Ngerebo, & Masa, 2012). According to the World Bank (2016), Small scale enterprises play a pivotal role towards sustainable development. Hence, the strategy to focus on supporting SMEs will uplift the economies of developing countries including Nigeria (Madurapperuma et al., 2016).

Market Orientation
Market orientation is a firm's philosophy to discover and fulfill customer's needs. Kohli, Jaworski and Kumar (2009) explained that market orientation is a set of specific activities and behaviors. Hunt and Morgan (1995) viewed market orientation as a resource and a basis for decision making. Past literature showed that empirical studies on market orientation started during early 1990s and has been known as an important business approach for SMEs as well as for large businesses. Kotler, Armstrong and Cunningham (2005) have explored that market-oriented firms always tend to stay close to their customers to discover and meet their needs and create value for the firms in terms of profitability and market share. Market-oriented businesses seek the ways to develop superior solutions to express potential needs of customers (Kohli & Jaworski, 2009). Market orientation became an interesting topic for the researchers over the past decades as it signifies the best marketing practices (Jimenez-Zarco et al., 2011).

Dimensions of Market Orientation
According to Slater and Narver (2012) cultural aspect of market orientation consists of three dimensions, that is,

customer orientation, competitor orientation, and inter-functional coordination. Each of these three dimensions, are used to achieve enhanced performance and long-term profitability.

Customer Orientation
Customer orientation is considered as the essential element of marketing and market orientation (Slater & Narver, 2012). Customer orientation refers to the ability of the firm to create greater value for the customers to serve them better and to focus on how to improve the supply chain network (Tan et al., 2014). Customer orientation comprised of a set of beliefs that the customer should be given priority in the organization (Deshpande & Webster Jr, 1989). Also, all the strategies should be developed in such a way that they deliver superior value to customers. It refers to the sufficient understanding of one's target buyers (Slater & Slater, 2012).
Gatignon and Xuereb (1997) evaluated that customer orientation is the ability and a source of motivation to identify and respond to customer's needs and wants based on the collected information from them. Previous studies showed that customer orientation contributes positively and significantly to firm performance (Narver, Slater & Maclachlan, 2004). In fact, customer orientation is a significant tool used to distinguish SMEs from large firms, as there exist a close communication between top management and the customers in SMEs.

Competitor Orientation
According to Dawes (2000), competitor orientation is the strongest dimension of market orientation affecting the organizational performance. It refers to the understanding of short-term strengths and weakness and long-term capabilities and strategies of both the key current and potential competitors. Competitor orientation provides the firm timely and

accurate information about its current and emerging competitors.

Inter-functional Coordination
A new approach of inter-functional coordination is developed within the concept of market orientation. Inter-functional coordination is the coordination of all departments and functional areas of the business utilizing customer and other market information to create superior value for

customers (Narver & Slater, 2012). According to Siguaw et al., (1994). The implementation of market orientation is essential for the success of the business. The front-line employees play a crucial role in performance of an organization. Inter functional coordination refers to integration and harmonizing different functional departments to produce superior products and services for customers (Narver & Slater, 2012).
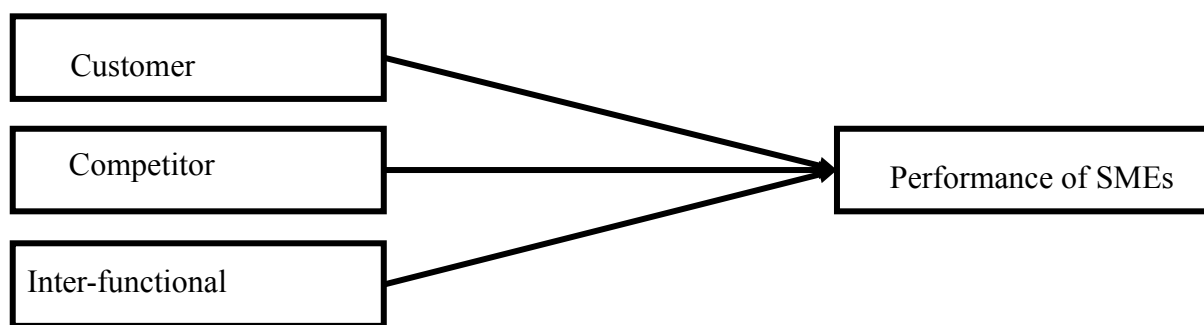

Figure 1: Research Framework

A framework of this study that indicates the relationship between market orientation dimensions (i.e., customer orientation, competitor orientation, and inter-functional coordination) and performance of SMEs is developed based on Resource Based View (RBV) (see Figure 1). The RBV theory is proposed by Wernerfelt (1984). The central idea of the theory is that strategic capabilities are a pool of internal resources that create competitive advantage. Market orientations are considered as the capabilities that create the competitive edge and superior performance (Slater & Narver, 2012). Hence, RBV theory is appropriate in explaining the relationship between market orientation and performance of SMEs. The following hypotheses are formulated to guide the study:

H_1: There is a significant relationship between customer orientation and performance of small and medium scale enterprises.

H_2: There is a significant relationship between competitor orientation and performance of small and medium scale enterprises.

H_3: There is a significant relationship between inter-functional coordination and performance of small and medium scale enterprises.

3. Methodology
This study used a survey research design. A survey method is used when a study is trying to assess thoughts, feelings, and opinions about a given situation by collecting primary data from the respondents (Fisher, 2010). The survey method allows the researcher to gather quantitative data and analyze it using descriptive and inferential statistics. Then, possible reasons for particular relationships between variables can be suggested and models of these relationships can be produced (Saunders, Lewis, & Thornhill, 2017). Additionally, survey research using questionnaires compared to observation,

secondary data and interview is inexpensive and easy, especially when collecting data from a large sample. Therefore, a survey method using questionnaire as the instrument for data collection is found to be more appropriate for this study.

The population of the study comprised 1,245 registered small-scale business operating in Kogi state (CAC, Gazette 2021). The sample size for this study comprised 377 SMEs operating in Kogi states of Nigeria. The sample was statistically determined using GPower which is statistical software for power analysis and sample size calculation (Faul, Erdfelder, Lang, & Buchner, 2017). This statistical test commonly used in the social and behavioral sciences (Faul et al., 2017). Hence it was appropriate for this study. Statistical evidence revealed that 377 SMEs are enough to represent the entire population of this study. The sample was increased 500 to avoid non-response problem and sample size error (Salkind, 2018).

The study adapted measurements from the existing studies related to this study, this was done because Sekaran and Bougie (2016) recommended that a researcher can adopt or adapt measurement from the existing studies relevant to the current research. The study has two (2) constructs; The performance measures were adapted from the study of Lin, Lee, Chang, and Ting, (2008) and it is made up of 6 indicators. Market orientation has three dimensions (i.e., customer orientation, competitor orientation and inter-functional coordination) all their indicators were adapted from Slater and Narver (2012). Customer orientation has 6items, competitor orientation has 5 items and inter-functional coordination has 5 items. In this study, Likert scale was adopted for all the items, the respondents were asked to indicate their responses to each question on a five-point scale. Krosnick and Fabrigar (1997) opined that a scale between five and seven points is more reliable than higher or lower scales and a scale with no midpoint may increase the measurement error.

The face and content validity of the instrument were carried out in this study. To ascertain this, the researcher gave the copies of the questionnaire to three experts in the field of research. This is in line with the suggestion of Baykul (2000) that face and content validity of the instrument are established by experts' judgment. In order to ensure goodness of the measures of the adapted items, reliability tests were carried out on the data collected from the pilot and main study. The items adapted to measure constructs must be in agreement and actually measuring the constructs that is to be measured. Reliability measures the consistency of the adapted measurement in measuring the constructs (Hair et al., 2017). Reliability relates to the extent to which particular items adapted in a study will yield the same results on different occasions (Greener, 2008). Like in several studies of PLS-SEM, Cronbach's alpha and composite reliability were used in testing the reliability in order to determine the internal consistency of the measurement scale adapted in this study. To ensure the reliability of instrument of this study, the pilot test was conducted with 70 registered small-scale business operating in Plateu state. The state is outside the study area but the respondents have similar characteristics with the sample of this study. The 70 students satisfied the recommended pilot test range from 25- 75 (Converse & Presser, 2008). Finally, due to the small sample size of the study, Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) through Partial Least Squares (Smart PLS 3.3.3.) was used to analyze the data collected as suggested by Ringle, Da Silva, and Bido (2015).

4. Results and Discussion
4.1 Results
Goodness of measurements
This study established the construct validity using the two-step approach recommended

by Hair, Black, Babin and Anderson (2017). Firstly, the convergent validity was assessed by this study, followed by the assessment of discriminant validity. Loading, average variance extracted (AVE) and reliability were used to assess the convergent validity while discriminant validity was assess using Fornell-Larcker criterion (see, table 1 & 2). The construct validity is established if the loading is above 0.7, average variance extracted above 0.5, composite reliability (CR) and Cronbach alpha above 0.7 (Hair et al., 2017). Based on the results documented in table 1 the construct validity has been established in this study.

Furthermore, the study established discriminant validity using the square root of AVE of each latent construct (Hair et al., 2017). Therefore, in this study, discriminant validity was assessed by comparing the square root of the AVE for each construct with the correlations presented in the correlation matrix. Table 1 showed the results of Fornell-Larcker Criterion assessment with the square root of AVE of each construct. The square root of AVE in bold is greater than its correlation with any other constructs. Hence, it is concluded that discriminant validity of the constructs has been established (Hair et al., 2017).

Table 1: Discriminant Validity of Constructs

	PER	CO	COMO	IFC
PER	**0.908**			
CO	0.505	**0.773**		
COMO	0.73	0.512	**0.879**	
IFC	0.572	0.684	0.604	**0.752**

PER= Performance, CO = Customer Orientation, COMO = Competitor Orientation, IFC = Inter-functional Coordination

Table 2: Result of CFA for Measurement Model

| Constructs	Items	Loadings	Alpha	CR	AVE
Performance	PER1	0.763	0.846	0.886	0.566
	PER2	0.848			
	PER3	0.774			
	PER4	0.751			
	PER5	0.674			
	PER6	0.695			
Customer Orientation	CO1	0.738	0.865	0.899	0.597
	CO2	0.748			
	CO3	0.727			
	CO4	0.802			
	CO5	0.822			
	CO6	0.797			
Competitor Orientation	COMO1	0.877	0.947	0.959	0.824
	COMO2	0.932			
	COMO3	0.925			
	COMO4	0.907			
	COMO5	0.898			
Inter-functional Coordination	IFC1	0.884	0.925	0.944	0.773
	IFC2	0.929			
	IFC3	0.924			
	IFC4	0.908			
	IFC5	0.737			
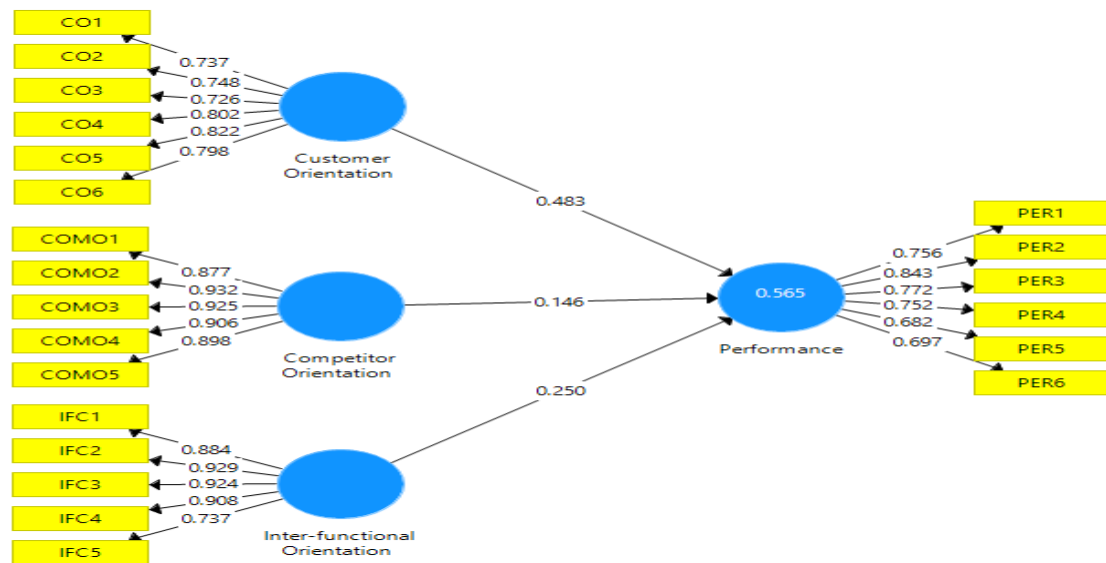
Figure 2: Measurement Model

Table 3 and Figure 2 shows the result generated with the help of Smart PLS 3.3.3. The results indicate the p-value, t-value, coefficient value. Based on p-value and t-value the hypothesis decision has been made. The result was obtained from the bootstrapping procedure with 5000 sampling iterations for 500 cases as recommended by Hair et al. (2017). The statistical evidence documented in table 3 revealed that the relationship between customer orientation and performance of SMEs was significant and positive (β = 0.146, $t = 9.163$, $p<0.05$). This suggests that the hypothesized relationship between the two constructs was supported. Similarly, the relationship between competitor orientation and performance of SMEs was positive and significant (β =0.483, $t = 2.037$, $p<0.05$). The hypothesis 2 was supported. Again, inter-functional coordination has confirmed to have a significant and positive relationship with SMEs performance (β =0.250, $t = 3.183$, $p<0.05$). The hypothesized relationship between the two constructs was supported.

Table 3: Hypothesis Testing

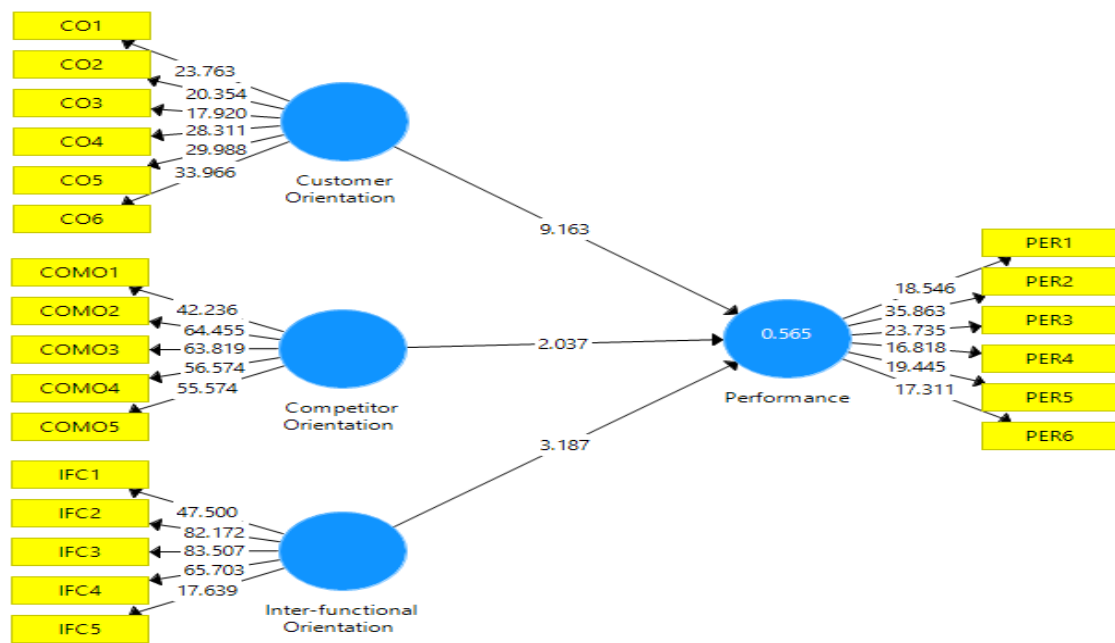| Hypotheses	Std. Beta	T value	P value	Decision
CO-> PER	0.146	9.163	0.000	Supported
COMO-> PER	0.483	2.037	0.004	Supported
IFC-> PER	0.250	3.183	0.002	Supported

Figure 3: Structural Model

4.2 Discussion

Findings of this study revealed that the relationship between customer orientation and performance of SMEs was significant and positive. The finding is consistent with Nabil (2021) in the context of Saudi Arabia who reported that consumer orientation had a substantial positive influence on the success of SMEs in Saudi Arabia. In a related study, Domi et al. (2020) confirmed that customer orientation has a direct positive impact not only on performance but also on both innovativeness and innovation behavior. Similar findings were also reported by Hassen and Singh (2020); Bamfo and Kraa (2019); Neneh (2018) that customer orientation positively and significantly predict firms' performance. The study also proved that there is a significant positive relationship between competitor orientation and performance of SMEs. The findings concurred with arguments in the existing literature, such as the study conducted by Chaudhary et al. (2022) in the context of India, revealed that competitor orientation has positive but non-significant relationship with small firms' performance. In another study by Bamfo

and Kraa (2019) in the context of Ghana which indicated that competitor orientation positively predicts performance but relationship is not significant. Nevertheless, a contrary finding was reported in the study of Nabil (2021) in the context of Saudi Arabia that competitor orientation had a substantial positive influence on the success of SMEs in Saudi Arabia.

In addition, the findings of this study revealed that the relationship between inter-functional coordination and performance of SMEs was significant and positive. This is in line with the study conducted by Nabil (2021) in the context of Saudi Arabia that inter-functional coordination had a substantial positive influence on the success of SMEs. Similarly, the study conducted by Hassen and Singh (2020), revealed that inter-functional coordination significantly and positively affected small and medium enterprises performance in Amhara Region of Ethiopia. Similar finding was also reported by Wahyuni and Sara (2020) in the context of Indonesia.

5. Conclusion

The main purpose of this research work is to examine the effect of market orientation on performance of small and medium scale enterprises in Kogi state Nigeria. The present study proved empirically that customer orientation, competitor orientation and inter-functional coordination have a significant and positive effect on performance of small and medium scale enterprises in Kogi State. Therefore, the underperformance among small and medium scale enterprises in Kogi state which is an issue of serious concern and subject of discussion to all citizens and other stakeholders could be ameliorated through market orientation.

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