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Effect of Strategic Orientation on Performance of SME's in Juba, South Sudan

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Abstract

As a newly founded developing country, the development of the Small Medium Enterprises (SME) sector in South Sudan is indispensable. The progression of SME as a support industry enhances growth of large industries. SME development is a foundation of large industries because every large enterprise, at one point, had an experience of starting as an SME. Therefore, the future of the large enterprise depends on the development of SME. South Sudan, as a young nation, has an opportunity to lay a solid foundation on developing SME sector at this early stage of state formation. However, it would not make sense to develop the SME sector without ascertaining factors that would influence performance of SME. In this context, the researcher was motivated by the ongoing debate, in which South Sudan is not an exemption, on whether strategic orientation would authority performance of SMEs. Primary objective of this research is to investigate the effect of strategic orientation on the recital of SMEs in Juba, South Sudan. With the help of descriptive research design, 10,000 small medium enterprises were target population for this study. Fisher et al formula has been applied to finalize the total sample size (i.e. 95) for this research. Drop and pick later technique was being adopted to enhance the response rate from samples. Structured questionnaire has been used to collect data. Data analysis and interpretation has been done through the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS). The data was then coded to enable the responses to be grouped into various categories. The research originates that premeditated course affects recital of SMEs in Juba, South Sudan. The study recommends that SMEs need to continuously identify and acquire new customers. They should encourage customers to give feedback about the products and services while vigilant on customers' future needs. They need to continuously monitor the competition and strive to find new ways to improve customer satisfaction with the products and services they offer.

Keywords: Strategic orientation, small medium enterprise, performance

1. Introduction

According to Philip (2010), small and medium enterprises have a momentous contribution towards economy in global sense. It is being treated as an engine for growth purpose that it creates employment, enhances innovation and contributes in the agenda of poverty reduction (Stokes, 2003 and Prasad, 2004). According to Barney (1991), the necessary condition for developing competitive advantage and reaching company's strategic goal is the availability of resources. He argues that sustainable competitive advantages of a company come from its resources that are unique and valuable but cannot be imitated by the competition. However, due to the limitation of SMEs resource potential, it is apparent that SME sector would need extra support to develop.

Some of the factors influencing the development of SMEs in Sri Lanka include access to capital, infrastructure, labor intensiveness, potential to mobilize financial resources, balanced regional development, nurturing entrepreneurial talents, while SMEs are playing significant roles to large industries through sub-contracting and facilitating the linkage between the formal and informal sector (Gamage, 2003). South Sudan is in a dire need to identify factors that would have positive impact on the development of SME. Some of the negative factors currently affecting private sector development in South Sudan include; political insecurity, weak government institutions, weak rule of law and high levels of corruption, lack of physical infrastructure, limited access to land, access to finance, multiplicity of taxes, lack of input and output markets, and a lack of skilled workers and well-educated managers (World Bank, 2008). Due to these factors, entrepreneurial orientation, which is regarded as one of the most important factors for a firm's growth and profitability is stalled in South Sudan. Research has shown that high growth correlates with a firm's entrepreneurial orientation. Hence, growth can be associated with innovativeness, pro-activeness and risk-taking behavior of the firm, which refers to an entrepreneurial orientation dimension (Zainol & Ayadurai, 2011).

1.1. Overview of SME in South Sudan

The SME is dominant in most of the sectors of the economy in South Sudan such as the retail and wholesale trade, construction, hotels and restaurants, transport and communication sectors. According to a survey carried out by African

Development Bank, a business registry in Juba shows that the number of formal businesses grew gradually from 471 businesses in 2006 to 8,894 in 2010 (South Sudan: Competitiveness and Cross Border Trade with Neighboring Countries, 2013). South Sudan SMEs accounts for 99% of all firms. An evaluation in the former state of Northern Bahr el Ghazal found that a sample of 97% of the firms came out as SMEs, only 3% found to be medium and surprisingly none has been found as large firm. All of this information has been highlighted by a study conducted by Garang (2014). South Sudan depends heavily on oil export and little is being done on building the productive capacity in the SME sector. Dependence on oil as a single commodity has created sluggishness on the institutional reform, and the political incentives of the nascent state are being shaped by capturing the gains from oil exports as little is being done to improve and diversify production and trade (Deng et al., 2014).

1.2. Statement of the Problem

Many countries have found it immense important about the roles played by Small and medium enterprises (SMEs) for enhancing and developing economy. This is the major reason why governments are focusing a lot for development of SMEs. As per FinMark Trust (2006), SMEs can contribute significantly to solve the problem of unemployment and promoting business developments. SMEs face many problems in their growth performance (Kirby, 2003). These problems can be due to the lack of entrepreneurial values, financing and markets (Kirby, 2003). Other external factors such as the macroeconomic environment, government policies and regulations, and the availability of physical infrastructures also affect the growth performance of SMEs. Szegedi (1989) found that the potential factors that influence SMEs' growth performance in Hungary are economic, political, and the social infrastructure. Therefore, the strategies that will best promote SMEs' growth performance are still being discussed among the theorists, economists, policy makers, and entrepreneurs. As per Basnett (2010), SMEs of South Sudan has many limitations like lack of infrastructure, poor controlling, poor support in financial term. Proper planning in financial inclusion can increase development of SMEs, can strengthen regulatory framework. Moreover, through banks it can channel the oil revenue (Garang, 2014b). With such sentiments, it's clear that much focus is being placed on how to support the expansion of SMEs through financing and regulatory reform, yet less attention is placed on the internal factors create significant impact on the performance of SMEs in South Sudan. Main context is that the researcher was aggravated to cram the effect of strategic orientation (which is one of many other internal factors) on small medium enterprises performance in Juba, South Sudan. There are no known studies on this particular area of interest. Thus, the study was meant to bridge the gap in Knowledge. The results would help entrepreneurs and policy makers in approaching the development of SME sector in South Sudan from an informed perspective.

1.3. Purpose of the Study

Effect8 of strategic orientation on SMEs in Juba, South Sudan is the primary objective of this research.

2. Literature Review

2.1. Fayol's Theory of Management

According to management theory of Henry Fayol (1949), management is the harmonization of collective efforts of personnel in an organization to achieve desired results. Fayol (1949) identified six groups of activities or essential functions to which all industrial undertakings give rise which include: technical, commercial, financial, security, accounting, and managerial (planning, organization, command, co-ordination, control) activities. This paper will refer to Fayol (1949) on the last cluster, represented by managerial activities, which are concerned with drawing up of the broad plan of operations of the business, with assembling personnel, Co-coordinating and harmonizing effort and activity (Fayol, 1949). According to Fayol (1949), to manage is to forecast and plan, organize, command, co-ordinate and control, foresee and provide means, examining the future and drawing up the plan of action. The impacts of strategic orientation on performance of SMEs were being highlighted by Fayol's Management Theory.

2.2. Strategic Orientation and Recital of SME

For any successful business main job is to improve product variety and new technologies and techniques. Innovation also plays a great role. As per Morgan & Strong (2003), innovation helps to create improved quality, differentiate products and enhance performance to a great extend. Innovation starts from inception and continues up to delivery of product and services. Marketing clout, financial resources, production capabilities might moderate the strength of innovation (Rhee, 2010). Through innovation a firm can boost itself and gain the courage to compete internationally. Right mix of innovation able to attract customers and increase sales upto a grate extends. New area of business also gets prominent through innovation. Rhee (2010), mentioned that entrepreneurial orientation is a must need to fulfill gals of companies. Competitive advantages can be achieved by innovativeness. Firms become proactive, risk lover with innovations. Aggressive strategies at best can be utilized through innovation. More competitive advantage can be gained through this. Gupta (2015) while researching on the business orientation and enterprises performance in India, found that entrepreneurial orientation makes companies to devise new ways in which products and services that meet the consumers' requirements are provided. Gupta (2015) concur with Pulendran et al. (2003) who argued that market orientation is dependent on marketing plans, which also agrees with (Hayes & Wheelwright, 1984) who confirmed that firms characterized by high technological uncertainty compete more on the basis of technology than on the basis of market orientation in contrast to firms characterized by low technological orientation in order to increase the performance. This is a confirmation that enterprises' performance depends on technological proficiency. Change in environment enables new

strategy implementations, fulfill customer demands, pricing can be proper, satisfaction and loyalty can be higher. Organization of a firm should come with proper mix of product, service, price, distribution, and communication elements. As per Morgan (2009), proper application of strategies helps to assist customer and competitor-oriented firms. As per Slater (2012), reduction in costs help to achieve competitive advantage finally competitive advantage can be noticed. Products and services with low marginal costs create benefits for many types of strategic orientation. Availability and proper resource enhance the chance to enter into new business (Jaworski & Kohli, 1993). Opportunity can't be created by its own, rather process of exploitation of resources via proper planning creates it. As per Hakala (2010), proper market helps to embrace opportunities. Customer value can be restructured through proper strategies for market-oriented organizations. Hence it is likely to occur that with market orientation firms adapt new products, services, and processes. It works as a motivational factor. For Im and Workman (2004), it plays great role for getting success. Ultimately it proactively satisfies customer need, strengthen relationship between firms and many more. Barsky (1992) and Hallowell (1996) argued that customer satisfaction is an essential factor for achieving customer loyalty. Their studies empirically support the notion that customer satisfaction is positively related to customer loyalty. Their findings agree with argument of Deshpandé et al (1993) that customer orientation is a set of beliefs which puts the customer's interest first, while not excluding those of all other stakeholder; in order to nurture a long-term and profitable enterprise. Lukas and Ferrell (2010) found out that by continuously seeking new opportunities, firms' strategic orientation should take into account the strategies of their competitors, networking and entrepreneurial capacity

2.3. Research Methodology

The research design used here is descriptive research. As per Kothari (2004), proper arrangement for collecting and analyzing data is the main purpose of research design. It acts as a blue print. Both quantitative and qualitative data have been gathered to describe the association between strategic orientation and recital of SME. Descriptive study aimed to get information which aims to describe the status of the study. The study considers this design appropriate since it facilitated gathering of reliable and accurate data that was clearly described the relationship between the variable under investigation.

The study used Fisher, Laing and Stoeckel (1983) formula to arrive at the sample. Fisher, Laing and Stoeckel formula is used when the target population is large and that is why it's chosen for this study. Denning (2001) argued that sampling is the process by which a relatively small number of individuals, objects or events are selected and analyzed in order to find out something about the entire population from which the sample is selected. Primary data was collected by use of questionnaires from the selected sample. Questionnaires were used as they are convenient in saving time and are economical in terms of finances. Use of questionnaires provided ample time for the respondents to attend to questions without undue pressure. According to Mugenda and Mugenda (2003), a questionnaire is a written set of questions to which subjects respond in writing. The researcher administered the questionnaire individually to all respondents of the study. The study exercised care and control to ensure all questionnaires issued to the respondents were received and to achieve this, the study maintained a register of data collection tools, after pilot study of validation. A drop and pick later method were being adopted to apply questionnaire to give time to respondent which could enhance chances of 100% collection.

Descriptive analysis was used to analyze quantitative data obtained from closed ended and Likert scale questions, the study used weighted means, standard deviation, relative frequencies and percentages to interpret the quantitative data (Mugenda and Mugenda, 2003). To analyze the data SPSS has been used. The data was then coded to enable the responses to be grouped into various categories. Descriptive statistics were used to summarize the data. Content analysis was used to test data that is qualitative in nature or aspect of the data collected from the open ended questions.

3. Results and Discussions

3.1. Response Rate

The study targeted a sample size of 95 respondents. The 95 questionnaires were distributed and only 83 usable responses were received representing 87.4 % response rate, which is an excellent response in research. In another study rate of response showed that 70% is excellent, and 30% are not feasible (Mugenda and Mugenda, 2003).

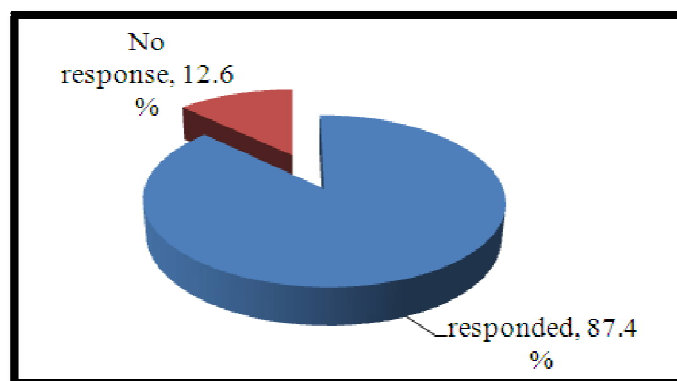


Figure 1: Response Rate

3.2. Reliability of Data Collection Instruments

Data was collected using a psychometrically tested questionnaire. The reliability results of the questionnaire are presented in Table 1

Variable	Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
Strategic Orientation	0.751	5
Performance	0.923	16

Table 1: Reliability of Data Collection Instruments

Table 4.2 shows strategic orientation had Cronbach Alpha of $\alpha = 0.751$, while the performance (dependent variable) had the $\alpha = 0.923$. Both constructs were reliable because the Cronbach alpha statistic was at least 0.7 which is the acceptable threshold for similar studies.

3.3. Demographic Data of Respondents

The study sought to establish the gender, and the research findings on the distribution of the respondents by gender are illustrated in Table 2

	Frequency	Percentage
Female	17	20.5
Male	66	79.5
Total	83	100

Table 2: Response by Gender

From this result, the majority (82.5%) of the respondents were male. This implies that majority of the SMES in Juba are operated by men. This could be attributed to the fact that men could be having better chances in accessing the capital than women. Women have little time to do business as much of their time is taken up by attending to household duties. This does not support the millennium development goal that is aimed at promoting gender equality and empower women.

3.4. Effects of Strategic Orientation on Performance of SMEs

Samples were requested to point out whether they considered that strategic orientation, affects performance of SMEs in Juba, and table 3 presents the results.

	Frequency	Percentage
No	9	10.8
yes	74	89.2
Total	83	100

Table 3: Whether Strategic Orientation Affects Performance of SMEs in Juba

Finding based on table 3 established that 89.2% of sample believed that strategic orientation affects performance of SMEs in Juba, whereas only 10.8% of the respondents possess different opinion. The first group showed similarity with Mwania (2011). For this study strategic orientation significantly associated with the SME performance. The results also concur with Henry Fayol (1949) supposition that to manage is to forecast and plan, organize, command, co-ordinate and control, foresee and examine the future by strategically drawing up the plan of actions. The study further sought to establish the extent to which strategic orientation affects performance of SMEs in Juba, and the results are presented in table 4

	Frequency	Percentage
Very Great Extent	23	27.7
Great Extent	54	65.1
Moderate Extent	5	6.0
Low Extent	1	1.2
Total	83	100.0

Table 4: Extent to Which Strategic Orientation Affects Performance

From the research findings presented in table 4, majority (65.1%) of the respondents indicated that strategic orientation affects performance of SMEs in Juba to significant amount, 27.7% shows good amount of significance and finally 6% and 1.2 % creates moderate and low impacts. Following are the statements on which respondents were asked to express their thoughts (table 5).

Statements	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
The enterprise continually monitors customers and competitors to find new ways to improve customer satisfaction	83	1.00	4.00	1.93	0.274
Marketing personnel in our business unit spend time discussing customers future needs with other functional departments	83	1.00	5.00	2.09	0.239
The technological changes introduced in the business are usually important	83	1.00	3.00	2.11	0.174
Firm encourages customers to give feedback about its products and services	83	1.00	3.00	2.06	0.234
Firm consciously seeks to identify and acquire new customers individually	83	1.00	4.00	2.04	0.256

Table 5: Effects of Strategic Orientation on Performance of SMEs

The findings on the level of agreement on measures used in strategic orientation on performance of SMEs are tabulated in table 5. The low standard deviation supports the mean showing that the responses were very close. On whether the enterprise continually monitors customers and competitors to find new ways to improve customer satisfaction, the respondents agreed as shown by the mean of 1.93. This result agrees with the finding of Gupta (2015) who, while researching on the business orientation and enterprises performance in India, found that entrepreneurial orientation makes companies to devise new ways in which products and services that meet the consumers' requirements are provided.

On whether marketing personnel in their business units spend time discussing customers' future needs with other functional departments, the respondents agreed as supported by a mean of 2.09. This is agreement with the argument of Pulendran et al. (2003) which confirms that market orientation is dependent on marketing plans.

When asked whether the technological changes introduced in the business are usually important, the respondents agreed as supported by a mean of 2.11. The findings concur with (Hayes & Wheelwright, 1984) who argue that firms characterized by high technological uncertainty compete more on the basis of technology than on the basis of market orientation in contrast to firms characterized by low technological orientation in order to increase the performance. This is a confirmation that enterprises' performance depends on technological proficiency.

On whether firms encourage customers to give feedback about their products and services, the respondents agreed as shown by a mean of 2.06. This finding is in agreement with studies carried out by Barsky (1992) and Hallowell (1996) in which they note customer satisfaction as essential factor for achieving customer loyalty. Their studies empirically support the notion that customer satisfaction is positively related to customer loyalty. The findings are agreeing with argument of Deshpandé et al (1993) that customer orientation is a set of beliefs which puts the customer's interest first, while not excluding those of all other stakeholder; in order to nurture a long-term profitable enterprise.

On whether firm consciously seeks to identify and acquire new customers individually, the respondents agreed as supported by a mean of 2.04. The findings are in line with the argument of Lukas and Ferrell (2010) who note that by continuously seeking new opportunities, firms' strategic orientation should take into account the strategies of their competitors, networking and entrepreneurial capacity.

3.5. Performance

The research wanted to establish the degree to which the following performance indicators are affected by the elements indicated as presented in table 6

Strategic Orientation	N	Minimum	Maximum	mean	Standard deviation
Change in customers numbers	83	1	3	2.07	0.267
Change in profitability	83	1	3	2.04	0.211
Change in sales	83	1	3	2.00	0.258
Level of customer satisfaction	83	1	4	2.09	0.274

Table 6: Performance Indicators

From the research findings, performance indicators have been affected by strategic orientation as supported by the means and standard deviation as indicated: change in customers' numbers (M = 2.07, SD = 0.267), change in profitability (M= 2.04, SD = 0.211), change in sales (M = 2.00, SD = 0.258), level of customer satisfaction (M = 2.09, SD = 0.274). This infers that strategic orientation affects performance of SMEs in Juba, South Sudan. Strategic orientation is important as it align the enterprise for improvement on sales, profitability, number of customers and their level of satisfaction with the products and services offered.

Performance	Pearson Correlation	1				
	Sig. (2-tailed)					
	N	83				
Strategic orientation	Pearson Correlation	.571**	1			
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.001				
	N	83	83			

Table 7: Strength of the Relationship between Strategic Orientation and Performance
** Correlation Is Significant at the 0.01 Level (2-Tailed)

Table 7 reveals that there was a strong positive correlation between performance and strategic orientation as shown by correlation coefficient of 0.571 which is significant at the 0.001 significance level. Simple regression analysis was carried out to empirically find the recital of small and medium enterprises in Juba, South Sudan. Table 8 in the result section reveals that 37% of variations in performance of SME in South Sudan is explained by strategic orientation as supported by R square which is 0.37 at 95% confidence level. This implies that 63% of changes in performance could be influenced by other factors other than strategic orientation.

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1.000	.608a	0.37	0.337	0.6514

Table 8: Model summary
a. Predictors: (Constant), Strategic Orientation

From the ANOVA statistics in table 9, the overall model significance indicated by F-statistics of 11.43 confirms that the overall model was significant at $P = 0.000$, which shows that the data is ideal for making a conclusion on the population's parameter as the value of significance (p-value) is less than 5%. The results infer that strategic orientation is statistically significance in explaining performance of SMEs in Juba, South Sudan.

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1.000	Regression	19.402	1	4.85	11.43	.000 ^b
	Residual	33.1	78	0.424		
	Total	52.502	82			

Table 9: Model Fit (Analysis of Variance)
a. Dependent Variable: Performance
b. Predictors: (Constant), Strategic Orientation

The regression coefficient results, presented in table 10, indicate that strategic orientation is statistically significant at 5% level of significance and 95% level of confidence in contributing to the explanation of variations in the model as confirmed by ($t = 3.695$, $p = 0.006$). Implying that a positive unit change in strategic orientation leads to an increase in performance of SME by 0.643 units. The model's simple regression equation is presented as: $Y = 1.152 + 0.643 X$.

	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
(Constant)	1.152	0.272		4.235	.000
Strategic Orientation	0.643	0.174	0.618	3.695	.006

Table 10: Regression Coefficients
a. Dependent Variable: Performance

4. Conclusion and Recommendation

To find the effect of strategic orientation on the recital of Small Medium Enterprises (SMEs) in Juba, South Sudan, this study found that huge portion of (89.2%) respondents were believed that strategic orientation has significant impact. The change or improvement can be noticed through sales, profitability, quantity of customers, and satisfaction of customers'. The inferential analysis, shows that strategic orientation and performance were found to have a significant positive relationship as supported by correlation coefficient of 0.571 which is significant at the 0.001 significance level. Therefore, from the recommendation's standpoint, the researcher suggested that SMEs need to continuously monitor customers and competitors to find new ways to improve customer satisfaction. They should identify and acquire new customers, encourage customers to give feedback about their products and services, identify desires of customers and satisfy them by providing tailor made products and services in order to enhance performance.

5. Suggestion for Further Research

The outcome proves that strategic orientation can able to explain only 37% of variations in the performance of SMEs in South Sudan. This also provides an indication that other factor contributes up to 67% in case of explaining the variance. This creates need for further studies in this field. Main focus has been placed on the internal factors which also

creates future scopes for studying both internal as well as external factors. Studies can be carried out to bridge these types of gaps on SMEs in Juba, South Sudan.

6. Contribution to Knowledge

Lack of research is there to study the effect of strategic orientation on SMEs of South Sudan. Hence, though this study the researcher has bridged the gap in Knowledge. The results will be used by entrepreneurs and policy makers to approach the development of SME sector in South Sudan from an informed perspective.

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