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THE MODERATING EFFECT OF MARKETING ORIENTATION ON LEARNING AND ORGANIZATIONAL PERFORMANCE: A STUDY OF NBC PORTHARCOURT, RIVERS STATE

BY

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Abstract

The study investigated the moderating effect of Market Orientation on Learning and Organizational Performance: A study of NBC Port Harcourt, Rivers State. The study employed the cross-sectional survey using quantitative method. The population comprised of 50 middle and senior managers. The study used the census approach and studied the entire population using convenient sampling techniques. Primary data sources were employed; the questionnaire was structured using the four point likert scale. In establishing the reliability of each of the scales, Cronbach's alpha (α) composite reliability (CR) was used. The Partial Correlation and Person Product Moment Correlation were employed to test the hypotheses formulated. From the empirical analysis, it was revealed that a positive and significant relation was found between open mindedness and organizational performance. Again, shared vision showed a significant relationship with profitability growth of NBC Port Harcourt. The study concluded that learning is a significant predictor of organizational performance. In line with the findings and conclusion, the study recommends that: NBC Port Harcourt should a adopt open-mindedness as it helps to promote development of innovative services within the organization and they should have a policy of shared vision at the organizational level as it will help unite a loosely connected system and encourage progress.

Keywords: Market Orientation on Learning and Organizational Performance.

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INTRODUCTION

Organizational learning is very sacrosanct as it will position the firm in a competitive position. Vij and Farooq (2015) stated that there is a growing interest in organisational learning due to its contribution to business success. For firms to be successful, they must be industry innovators, adapting to the changing market demands, agile and must be cost-efficient (Vanpoucke et al., 2014). On the other hand, firms must also learn how to match resources to their market situation (Wilden & Gudergan, 2015). Learning orientation is "an organizational culture that emphasizes continuous learning, adaptation, and the acquisition of new knowledge and skills as essential components of business success" (Sinkula et., al., 2006). To Hult et., al., (2004) learning refers to "the degree to which an organization encourages and supports employee learning, growth, and the acquisition of new knowledge, fostering innovation and adaptability".

According to Zhou et., al., (2014) learning orientation can be divided into three categories: commitment to learning, which requires managers to support and encourage learning at all levels; shared vision, which creates an environment conducive to learning; and open-mindedness, which allows for the development of new skills and the discarding of old and unusable knowledge. Araiza et., al., (2014) found that learning is related to perceived operational performance in companies, as well as the three components of organizational learning: learning orientation, shared knowledge, knowledge and retention recovery, influence on organizations performance (Cardona & Calderón, 2006).

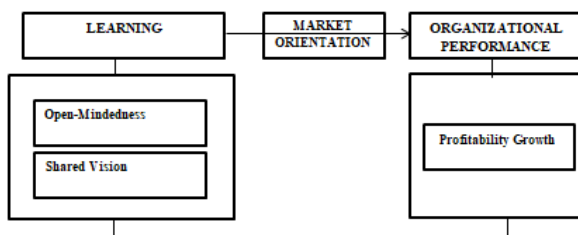
Organizational performance is "the achievement of an organization's goals and objectives through effective utilization of resources, strategic alignment, and the delivery of desired outcomes" (Richardson & Thompson, 1999). It encompasses "the overall effectiveness, efficiency, and

sustainability of an organization in delivering value to stakeholders and fulfilling its mission" (Lawler, 2003).

When an organization has a learning orientation, Baker and Sinkula (1997) say that it continuously challenges assumptions about how it interacts with its environment while also focusing on demonstrating abilities to adapt in a changing business environment. As a result, it is a process of knowledge creation (Grinstein, 2008) that may assist to transform strategic efforts into competitive advantages for greater business performance (Calantone, et., al., 2002).

Organizational performance is major challenge that hinders the growth of NBC Port Harcourt, Rivers State. Organisational learning is generally designed to help improve shared vision and open mindedness with the firm, but without a periodic review and redesign of organizational learning organizational performance will suffer. The lack of organisational learning, shared vision and open mindeness are the major causes of loss of profit which has negatively affected the overall performance of NBC Port Harcourt. Furthermore, previous studies have concentrated on learning orientation and performance of SMEs, learning and innovative service; learning orientation and its impact on organizational performance and competitiveness in SMEs. They failed to look at market orientation moderating learning and organizational performance. Furthermore, the relatively few studies that have examined the relationship between learning orientation and performance nexus (Suliyanto & Rahab, 2012; Zhao, Li, Lee & Chen, 2011; Jimenez-Jimenez et al., 2008) have revealed mixed findings. It is on this premise that this study examined the moderating effect of market orientation on learning and organizational performance: A study of NBC Port Harcourt, Rivers State.

Conceptual Framework



Source: Zhou et., al., (2014), Sinkula, et., al., (1997); Baker and Sinkula (1999).

Fig. 1.1: Conceptual framework of learning, market orientation and organizational performance.

Aim and Objectives of the Study

The aim of this study was to investigate the moderating effect of market orientation on learning and organizational performance: A study of NBC Port Harcourt, Rivers State. In order to achieve this broad aim, the study intends to:

- i. Find out the relationship between open-mindedness and profitability growth of NBC Port Harcourt.
- ii. Ascertain the relationship between shared vision and profitability growth of NBC Port Harcourt.

- iii. Determine the moderating effect of market orientation on learning and organizational performance of NBC Port Harcourt.

Research Questions

The following research questions were put forward to address the objectives of the study:

1. How does open-mindedness relate with profitability growth of NBC Port Harcourt?
2. To what extent does shared vision relate with profitability growth of NBC Port Harcourt?
3. How does market orientation moderates the relationship between learning and organizational performance of NBC Port Harcourt?

Research Hypotheses

The following hypotheses were postulated to guide this study:

- Ho₁: There is no significant relationship between open-mindedness and profitability growth of NBC Port Harcourt.
- Ho₂: There is no significant relationship shared vision and profitability growth of NBC Port Harcourt.
- Ho₃: Market orientation does not significantly moderate the relationship between learning and organizational performance of NBC Port Harcourt.

Review of Related Literature

Theoretical Review

The study was anchored on the Dynamic Capabilities Theory (DCT)

The DCT was initially introduced by Teece and Pisano in 1994. Dynamic Capabilities was an extension of the Resource Based View. Teece and Pisano (1994) opined that companies pursued a resource-based strategy in the past to accumulate valuable technological assets, often reserved by a defensive approach towards intellectual property in order to be successful. DCT is defined as the firm's ability to integrate, build and reconfigure internal and external competencies to address rapidly changing environments (Teece, Pisano & Shuen, 1997). Dynamic capabilities thus reflect an organizations ability to achieve new and innovative forms of competitive advantage given path dependencies and market positions. DCT is the suitable term to stress the firm's ability to exploit internal and external changing environment to be able to beat competition, achieve organizational goals and remain in business. Beyond building organizational capability, stakeholder perceptions also indicate that the organization has to build its capacity to exploit current resources, capability exploitation, and engage in capability building (Ahenkora & Ajei, 2012). Effective managers adopting DCT will always excel performance wise.

This supports the need for organizations to learn new skill sets in order for them to achieve set of goals on a gradual basis and also achieving competitive advantage in dynamic markets (Ferdinand, Graca & Easter by-Smith, 2004). They added that intangible resources like knowledge and skills need to be reconfigured and adapted to suit the changing business environment by adding value to it. Market orientation, knowledge management and customer relationship

management are the three important aspects of organizational capabilities needed to for the creation of superior customer value (Landroquez, Castro & Cepeda, 2011).

Concept of Learning

Learning is an internal process involving the development and utilising of expertise to improve the edge that a firm has over its rivals (Wolff et al., 2015). It is "an organizational culture that emphasizes continuous learning, adaptation, and the acquisition of new knowledge and skills as essential components of business success" (Sinkula et., al., 2006). To Hult et., al., (2004) learning refers to "the degree to which an organization encourages and supports employee learning, growth, and the acquisition of new knowledge, fostering innovation and adaptability". This definition emphasizes the role of learning orientation in facilitating innovation and adaptability through employee learning and growth.

Learning involves "an organization's commitment to creating an environment that promotes exploration, experimentation, and learning from both successes and failures" (Calantone et al., 2002). Organizations with a learning orientation are more equipped to adapt to changes in the external environment, market trends, and customer preferences (Calantone et al., 2002).

Developing a learning culture requires overcoming resistance to change, creating a safe space for experimentation, and aligning learning goals with business objectives. A firm's learning culture directly affects its performance (Hakala, 2013; Frank et al., 2012; Baker & Sinkula, 1999). This relationship has gained support, with learning having a more significant relative impact on performance aspects such as a change in relative market share, overall performance, and new product success (Celuch et al., 2002; Farrell & Oczkowski, 2002).

Dimensions of Learning

Open-mindedness

Open-mindedness is a strategy that promotes a company's belief, routines, and habits being reviewed (Nguyen & Barrett, 2006). It is "a cognitive disposition characterized by a willingness to consider new ideas, alternative perspectives, and diverse viewpoints without immediate judgment or preconceived biases" (Stanovich, 2011). Additionally, open-mindedness is related to the field of unlearning, where top executives urge staff members to challenge the status quo, leading to the abandonment of preexisting views, values, and procedures (Sinkula et al., 1997; Hernandez-Mogollon et al., 2010). According to studies, open-mindedness promotes the development of innovative services because the effectiveness of the introduction of new services depends on how the firm's structures and procedures respond to the innovations (Sinkula, 2002; Keskin, 2006).

Shared Vision

A shared vision is "a collectively held, inspiring mental image of a future state that an organization or group aspires to achieve, serving as a unifying force to guide decision-making, actions, and behaviors" (Senge et al., 1994). According to

Exposito-Langa et., al. (2015), shared vision (SV) is the conventional concept of goal-oriented execution and consensus-building. In addition, shared vision (SV) is defined as organizational principles that, in contrast to the current top-down strategy, enable the overall effective engagement of all staff members toward growth, promotion, spreading, and execution (Wang & Rafiq, 2009). A shared vision at the organizational level has been shown to unite a loosely connected system and encourage the inclusion of the entire firm to achieve its goals (Orton & Weick, 1990). Similar to this, shared vision acts as a relationship-building strategy that helps various parts of the company use limited resources effectively and efficiently to launch new, valuable products and services (Tsai & Ghoshal, 1998).

Concept of Organisational Performance

Organizational performance is "the achievement of an organization's goals and objectives through effective utilization of resources, strategic alignment, and the delivery of desired outcomes" (Richardson & Thompson, 1999). They aim for continuous improvement in performance through innovation, learning, and adaptation. According to Lawler (2003) it encompasses "the overall effectiveness, efficiency, and sustainability of an organization in delivering value to stakeholders and fulfilling its mission". Similarly, O'Neill and Sohal (1999) stated that organizational performance refers to "the results and accomplishments of an organization as measured against its goals and objectives, indicating the extent to which it has fulfilled its mission".

Organizational performance signifies the successful attainment of goals, whether they are financial, operational, strategic, or societal. Effective utilization of resources, including human capital, financial assets, and technology, enhances organizational performance (O'Neill & Sohal, 1999).

Lawler (2003) submitted that organizational performance and profitability growth are interconnected. Effective organizational performance often leads to improved profitability growth, as optimized processes, engaged employees, and satisfied customers contribute to financial success. Conversely, profitability growth can provide resources for enhancing organizational performance through investments in technology, talent, and innovation.

Profitability Growth

Profitability growth is "the continuous increase in an organization's net income over time, reflecting its ability to generate more revenue than expenses and achieve sustainable financial growth" (Tong & Reuer, 2013). According to Kaplan and Norton (2001) profitability growth is "the improvement in an organization's ability to generate profits by optimizing its revenue streams, managing costs, and enhancing operational effectiveness" This definition highlights the interconnectedness of revenue optimization, cost management, and operational effectiveness in achieving profitability growth.

Profitability growth reflects the financial health of an organization, ensuring sustainability and resilience. Strong profitability growth attracts investment, enabling the

organization to fund expansion and innovation (Tong & Reuer, 2013).

Market Orientation

Market orientation is the effort of knowing what customers want by means of acquiring some level of ideas and then implementing such ideas so as to create value for clients and remain competitive. This definition is not far from the works of Narver and Slater (1990) submission on the concept of market orientation. The execution of a suitable marketing activity therefore promotes superiority of a firm's activities and strengthens the competitiveness and market share of the firm (Ghouri, Khan, Ur, & Malik, 2011). It therefore becomes damaging for businesses to ignore market oriented activities in their business setup (Theodosiou, Kehagias, & Katsikea, 2012).

The positive impact market orientation has on performance has been supported by many researchers. Narver and Slater (1990) established a positive relationship between market orientation and business performance for that matter profitability where a market orientation is predominantly concerned with learning from various forms of contact with customers and competitors in the market (Slater & Narver, 2000).

Learning and Organizational Performance

According to Cardona and Calderón (2006), contrasting results have been found in the study of the relation of learning orientation with organizational performance, in other words, there are authors who link LO with positive results in organizations and performance improvement (Slater & Narver, 1995; Sawaeen & Ali, 2020). On the other hand, there are those who say that learning does not necessarily improve performance or there is no positive relationship between them (Crossan et al., 1999; Jerez, 2001).

In an empirical study, applied to Spanish companies with the highest turnover in the following sectors: agro-fishing, industry, construction and services; it was demonstrated that adaptive learning and generative learning result in improvements in innovation and in organizational performance, with generative learning being the most influential that leads to the creation of more competitive strategies (García et al., 2011). Similarly, Araiza et., al., (2014) found that learning is related to perceived operational performance in companies, as well as the three components of organizational learning: learning orientation, shared knowledge, knowledge and retention recovery, influence on organizations performance (Cardona & Calderón, 2006).

Empirical Review

Winston et., al., (2021) Assessed the effect of learning orientation on innovative service development, business growth and profitability in the insurance sector. The study relied on the resource-based view (RBV) and the dynamic capabilities of a firm. Three hundred and five (305) top and middle managers of insurance firms, brokers and reinsurance within the Ghanaian setting were surveyed. The findings indicated that commitment to learning and shared-vision that define learning orientation indicate a positive and significant

effect on innovative service development activities. Similarly, the results also showed that innovative service development has a significant and positive effect on business performance. The indirect effect was significantly positive, which buttresses the essence of ISD in the insurance sector. The study re-echoed that commitment to learning and shared vision necessitate insurance firms, brokers and reinsurance players to be more proactive in introducing innovative service development activities.

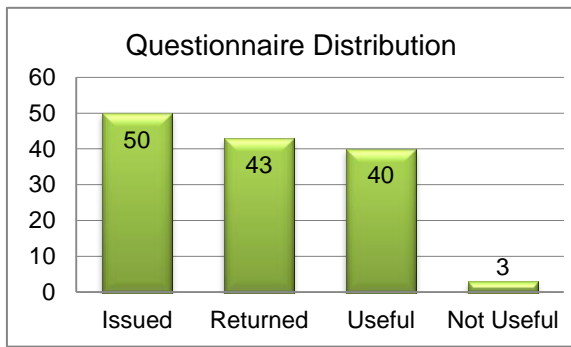
Akeke, et., al., (2022) examined the Effect of Learning Orientation on Performance of Nigerian Small and Medium Enterprises. Using a cross-sectional descriptive methodology to examine the owners of small and medium scale business covering the states of the Southwest Nigeria. A total sample of 1,366 respondents was obtained through a multistage sampling technique. Both descriptive and inferential statistics were used to analyse the data collected. The results of the research indicate that all the three main constructs of learning orientation and their factors contribute to the regression weights of learning orientation. Specifically, it indicates that all the factors of commitment to learning, shared vision and open mindedness significantly high in regression weights. It is concluded that SMEs can benefit from learning orientation by their shared vision and commitment to learning.

María et., al., (2019) examined the impact of learning orientation to innovation and performance in SMEs in Mexico. This study used a sample of 350 small and medium companies, to which a poll was sent to its top management positions or owners, in order to identify if the learning orientation influences in obtaining better levels of innovation in the context of SMEs and that such influence impacts to its better performance. The results indicate that the learning orientation is a good predictor to improve the innovation and the performance of the company.

Methodology

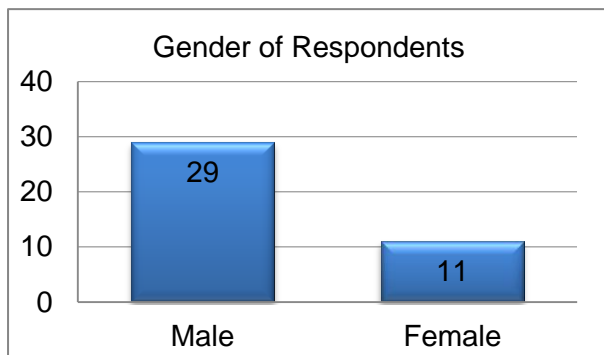
The study employed the cross-sectional survey using quantitative method. The population comprised of 50 middle and senior managers. The study used the census approach and studied the entire population using convenient sampling techniques. Primary data sources were employed; the questionnaire was structured using the four point likert scale. In establishing the reliability of each of the scales, Cronbach's alpha (α) composite reliability (CR) was used. The result stood at 0.85 higher than the benchmark of 0.70. The Partial Correlation and Person Product Moment Correlation were employed to test the hypotheses formulated.

Data Presentation and Results



Source: Survey Data, 2025.

The chart above shows that out of the 50 Copies of questionnaire issued, 43 copies were retrieved, 40 copies were useful and 3 copies were not useful.



Source: Survey Data, 2025.

The above chart shows the gender of respondents as a means of ensuring that both male & female are represented in the study. Out of the 40 respondents, 29 are males while 11 are females. This shows that majority of the respondents are males.

Bivariate Analysis

Here, efforts were made to test the hypotheses formulated for this study.

Test of Hypothesis One (1)

H₁: There is no significant relationship between open-mindedness and profitability growth of NBC Port Harcourt.

Correlations				
		open- mindedness	profitability growth	
Spearman's rho	open-mindedness	Correlation Coefficient	1.000	.778*
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.	.023
		N	40	40
	profitability growth	Correlation Coefficient	.778*	1.000
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.023	.

N	40	40
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*. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

Source: SPSS output, 2025.

The table above presents the result of correlation analysis between open-mindedness and profitability growth of NBC Port Harcourt. The result indicates that there is a strong correlation between open-mindedness and profitability growth (rho = .778*) and this correlation is significant at 0.05 level as indicated by the symbol *. Based on this result, the null hypothesis (H₀₁) is rejected and the alternate hypothesis is accepted. This means that there is significant relationship between open-mindedness and profitability growth of NBC Port Harcourt.

Test of Hypothesis Two (2)

H₀₂: There is no significant relationship shared vision and profitability growth of NBC Port Harcourt.

Correlations				
		shared vision	profitability growth	
Spearman's rho	shared vision	Correlation Coefficient	1.000	.799*
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.	.023
		N	40	40
	profitability growth	Correlation Coefficient	.799*	1.000
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.023	.
		N	40	40

*. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

Source: SPSS output, 2025.

The table above presents the result of correlation analysis between shared vision and profitability growth of NBC Port Harcourt. The result indicates that there is a strong correlation between shared vision and profitability growth (rho = .799*) and this correlation is significant at 0.05 level as indicated by the symbol *. Based on this result, the null hypothesis (H₀₂) is rejected and the alternate hypothesis is accepted. This means that there is significant relationship between shared vision and profitability growth of NBC Port Harcourt.

Test of Hypothesis three (3)

H₀₃: Market orientation does not significantly moderate the relationship between learning and organizational performance of NBC Port Harcourt.

Model Summary of learning and organizational performance

Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.946 ^a	.896	.861	.07177

a. Predictors: (Constant), Market orientation

Table 4.10 presents the model summary between market orientation; learning and organizational performance of NBC Port Harcourt. This table provides the R value and R² values; the R value indicates a very strong degree of correlation (.946) and the R² value of .896 indicates a variation of 89%. This shows that the model is effective enough to determine the relationship. In this case, the value of .896 is good. The Adjusted R-square shows the generalization of the results. In this case, the value is .861, which is not far off from .896, so the model is a good fit.

Summary of Findings

1. There is significant relationship between open-mindedness and profitability growth of NBC Port Harcourt.
2. There is significant relationship shared vision and profitability growth of NBC Port Harcourt.
3. Market orientation significantly moderates the relationship between learning and organizational performance of NBC Port Harcourt.

Discussion of Findings

From the empirical analysis, learning orientation showed a strong relationship with organizational performance. Open-mindedness showed a significant relationship with profitability growth of NBC Port Harcourt. Again, shared vision showed a significant relationship with profitability growth of NBC Port Harcourt. The findings are similar to the studies of Pérez et al. (2005); Cardona and Calderon (2006); Araiza et al. (2014); Gálvez et al. (2013); Calantone et al. (2002); Lita and Faisal (2018); Hussein et al. (2014); Mahmoud and Yusif (2012). Bature et al. (2018), who point out a positive influence between learning orientation and performance. The results of this study are consistent with the findings of Perin et., al., (2040) since they found a positive and significant relation between open mindedness and organizational performance.

Conclusion

The study investigated the moderating effect of market orientation on learning and organizational performance: A study of NBC Port Harcourt, Rivers State. From the empirical analysis, it was revealed that a positive and significant relation was found between open mindedness and organizational performance. Again, shared vision showed a significant relationship with profitability growth of NBC Port Harcourt. The study concluded that learning is a significant predictor of organizational performance.

Recommendation

In line with the findings and conclusion, the study recommends that:

- i. NBC Port Harcourt should a adopt open-mindedness as it helps to promote development of innovative services within the organization.
- ii. NBC Port Harcourt should have a policy of shared vision at the organizational level as it will help unite a loosely connected system and encourage progress.

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