Academic Journal of Digital Economics and Stability
Volume 31, July-2023

ISSN 2697-2212 Available Online: https://economics.academicjournal.io

STRATEGIC DIGITAL ORIENTATION: A TOOL FOR ENHANCING BUSINESS SUCCESS OF CABLE TV OPERATORS IN RIVERS STATE

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Abstract

This study investigated the relationship between Digital orientation and business success of Cable TV firms in Rivers State, Nigeria. It was observed that most Cable Tv firms operating in Rivers state are at low ebb, and are experiencing absymal success. The aim of this study was to examine relationship between Digital orientation and business success of Cable Tv firms in Rivers State. Primary data was collected, using structured questionnaire, from 25 management level staff representing five cable TV firms operating in Rivers State. The data were analyzed using regression analysis with the aid of SmartPLS4 software. The measurement instrument were subjected to confirmatory factor analysis, convergant/descriminant validity to ensure validity and reliability of instruments. It was found that Digital Orientation significantly relates with business success. The study recommends that Cable TV operators in Rivers State, that intends to enhance their business success should embrace Strategic Digital Orientation.

Keywords*: Strategic Digital orientation, Business Success, Financial Performance, Non-financial Performance.*

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The goal of businesses is to be competitive and in achieving this, they look out for the best strategies to adopt in order survive the threats coming from the environment and avert entropy. Hence, Success in business is the aim of every for-profit organization. Cable TV operators are not left out in this regard, more so considering the fact that the Cable TV industry is made up of downstream and upstream players such as content providers, set-up box producers, multiple system operators (M.S.O), signal distributors, etc., while the downstream comprises local cable operators, major dealers and vendors (Maduka (2014). Studies have been carried out to examine the diverse relationships between market orientation and business performance. In the United States of America (Pelham, 1997a, 1997b, 1999, 2000; Kumar, Subramanian, & Yauger, 1998; Becherer, Halstead, & Haynes, 2003). In Greece, studies (Salavou, 2002; Theodosiou, Kehagias & Katsikea, 2012) were carried out linking strategic market orientation and business performance. In China, various studies (Zhou, Yim, & Tse, 2005; Pan, Oh & Wang, 2021; Yu & Moon, 2021) have been done linking strategic orientation, Digital capabilities, innovation and firm performance. Renko, Carsrud and Brannback (2009) carried out a study in Finland, United States and Sweden on the influence of market orientation, entrepreneurial orientation, and technological capabilities on technology ventures innovativeness.

In Nigeria, few studies (Nwokah, 2008; Aminu, 2016; Olabode, Adeola & Assadinia, 2018) have been carried out on strategic market orientation and business performance. This study is adopting digital orientation (Nugroho, Prijadi & Kusumastuti, 2021 and Kurniawan *et al*, 2021). The current study hopes to fill the knowledge gap in literature where there is dearth of empirical studies on Digital Orientation and business success of Cable TV firms in Rivers State.
No business wants to collapse even in the face of keen competition. Leal-Rodriguez and Albort (2016), in a study carried out in Spain among automotive component manufacturers recommended that to achieve improved business performance, firms have to adopt various market orientation strategies. Kara, Spillan, and DeShields (2005) in a study in New York, Maryland and Pennsylvania among SMEs recommended that for sales growth and profitability to be achieved firms need to focus on proxies of strategic market orientation-customer orientation, competitor orientation and inter-functional coordination. Mahmoud in a study in Ghana among SMEs recommended that for business success to be achieved, firms need to focus on proxies of strategic market orientation-customer orientation, competitor orientation and inter-functional coordination. Hence, one expects cable TV firms operating in Rivers State not to experience business failure, if they adopt the above appropriate Digital Orientation strategies.

However, it has been observed that most Cable TV firms operating in Rivers state are far from being successful. A case in hand is the case of Metro Digital cable TV firm in Rumuola Port Harcourt, Rivers State. The current research is curious to know what could have accounted for the poor business agility, non-financial performance and financial performance indicating lack of business success experienced by these cable TV firms in Rivers State.

Drawing on market-based view theory (Bain, 1956) and core competence theory (Prahalad & Hamel, 1990), this paper argues that it is possible these cable TV firms in Rivers

State can use Digital orientation to achive business success. Hence, our interest in this study titled "Strategic Digital orientation and business success of cable TV firms in Rivers State".

The aim of this study is to examine relationship between Strategic Digital orientation and business success of Cable Tv firms in Rivers State. The question is: How does Digital orientation relate with business success of Cable TV firms in Rivers State? Three hypotheses were developed to guide this study. The outcome of this study is expected to benefit scholars, players in the Cable Tv Industry, as well as other business practitioners.

Theoretical Foundation and Empirical Review

Theoretical Foundation

This paper is situated on two theories, namely, Market-Based View and Core Competence Theory

Market-Based View (MBV) theory posits that external market orientation and industry factors are the primary determinants of firm performance (Bain, 1956; Porter, 1985). It evaluates a firm's strategy based on the requirements of the market. In the Market-Based view, a firm's sources of market power can explain its relative performance. According to Grant (1991), three sources of power are frequently highlighted as Monopoly, barriers to entry and bargaining power. When a firm enjoys a monopoly status, it has a strong market position and therefore performs better (Pfeffer, 1998). High barriers to entry for new firms in an industry leads to reduced competition and hence better performance. This theory was adopted by Onditi (2016) in a study that examined the relationship between market orientation and firm performance adopted the market-based view theory. Cable TV firms need to understand their positioning in the external environment in order to know the right strategies to adopt in order to enhance their competitive advantage which may in turn improves sales volume, market share and profitability of the firm (Bain, 1956). This study is of the view that Digital Orientation is a strategy that is market-based, which can enable Cable TV firms in Rivers State become more successful in their business.

Core competence theory states that the main objective of competition among enterprises is to identify who can effectively and efficiently allocate resources (research and development) in order to improve performance. Organizations are faced with the problem of how to make best decisions in optimizing resource allocation and improve efficiency across all areas production, procurement, research and development, design, procurement, production, distribution, and service, enterprises are facing the problem of how to optimize resource allocation and improve efficiency (Prahalad & Hamel, 1990). It emphasizes the ability of a company to gain competencies that are hard to imitate in some strategic areas, thereby making them stand out from competing firms. Yu and Moon (2021) adopted core competence theory in a study that examined the impact of strategic orientation on organizational performance through Digital competence at the organizational level.

Cable TV firms needs to know which of the Digital competritor orientation strategies will form a core competence for their organization, as theoretically it has been proven that the core competence of a firm leads to competitive advantage, which may in turn improves sales volume, market share and profitability of the firm (Prahalad & Hamel, 1990). This study argues that Digital competritor orientation is a core competence which Cable TV firms in Rivers State can put in place to achieve superior business success in the face of stiff competition.

It has been observed that business success of most Cable TV firms operating in Rivers State is absymal or more precisely below expectation. According to a report by Olawale, 2021 a journalist working for Daily Trust News, it was gathered that the honourable minister of information and culture in April, 2021 noted that most of the licenced pay Cable TV firms in Nigeria are not profitable (Olawale, 2021). The begging question is: What could have accounted for this? Drawing on Market-Based View theory (Bain, 1956; Porter, 1985) and Core Competence Theory (Prahalad & Hamel, 1990), this study strongly believes that Cable TV firms in Rivers State can wield the potentials of Digital orientation to achieve above average business success.

Business Success

Paige and Littrell (2002) conceptualized success with intrinsic criteria's (freedom and sovereignty, ability to control one's prospect, and being in charge) and extrinsic outcomes (increased financial returns, personal income and wealth). In this study, success is seen as accomplishing set goals. These goals might be personal or corporate. According to Harvard Business Review (2020), business success is typically defined as maximizing shareholder value. For many corporations, focusing on shareholder value is perfectly satisfactory. Business success is defined in economic or financial terms such as return on assets, sales, profits, employee's survival rates (Masuo *et al*., 2001). Kurniawan, *et al*. (2021) defined firm performance as how successful an organization is at generating a high level of financial and non-financial performance that consists of sales revenue, profit margins, cash flow, market share, products and services quality improvement and customer satisfaction. Pelham (1997) performance components is divided into three categories organizational effectiveness, growth/share and profitability. Chin (2003) opined that Business success components are placed in two categories: Market performance: includes components: customer retention, attract new customer's financial performance: includes components; rate of return on assets, market share, sales growth.

Non-Financial Performance (NFP) includes measures such as new products and services improvement, increased employee satisfaction, increased customer satisfaction and increased franchisees' satisfaction (Kurniawan *et al*., 2021). In this study, non-financial performance are indicators that are not financial in nature but reflect the wellness or failure of a business. Such as, market share, customer satisfaction, product and service improvement, improved competitive advantage among competitors, brand image improvement (Kurniawan *et al*., 2021). Recent studies, still align with the conceptualization from Venkatraman and Ramanujam (1986). Kaplan (2001) and Atkinson and Brown (2001) also noted that non-financial performance measures are also considered worthwhile indicators of a firm's long-term viability. Non-financial performance measures such as employee satisfaction and customer satisfaction are crucial since they complement static financial performance measures (Miller and Lee, 2001).

ISSN 2697-2212 (online), Published under Volume 31 in Jul-2023

Previously, scholars have measured non-financial performance using different statement items. Yu and Moon (2019) measured non-financial performance using the following statement items adapted from Tanriverdi *et al*. (2017): higher market share, achieved higher customer satisfaction, improved competitive advantage among competitors, brand image of our company has been improved. Also, Kurniawan *et al*., 2021 adopted measures used by Le MeunierFitzHugh and Piercy, 2011; Simon *et al*., 2015; Williams, 2018 in measuring non-financial performance. They include the following: increased market share, product and service quality improvement, increased customer satisfaction

In this study, we adopted the following measures of non-financial performance: (i) Increased market share, (ii) increased customer satisfaction, (iii) product and service improvement (Kurniawan *et al*., 2021), (iv) improved competitive advantage among competitors, (v) brand image of our company has been improved (Yu and Moon, 2019).

Financial Performance (FP)

Organizations financial performance, are indicators that are quantifiable in line with accounting principles and they include the following measures: sales revenue, profit margins, cash flow, etc. (Venkatraman and Ramanujam, 1986; Le Meunier-FitzHugh and Lane, 2009; Le Meunier-FitzHugh and Piercy, 2011; Lee *et al*.,2015 and Simon *et al*., 2015). Financial performance used in this context is used to examine such indicators as sales growth, profitability (reflected by ratios such as return on investment, return on sale, and return on equity and earnings per share (Simon *et al*., 2015). In this study we adopted the definition of Simon *et al*, 2015.

Kurniawan *et al*., 2021, adopted measures used by Le Meunier FitzHugh and Piercy, 2011; Simon *et al*., 2015 and Williams, 2018 in measuring financial performance. They include the following: (i) increased sales revenue, (ii) increased profit margins and (iii) increased cash flow. Yu and Moon (2019) added higher return on investment as a measured financial performance adapted from Tanriverdi *et al*., 2017.

This study is adopting the following statement items in measuring financial performance (i) increased sales revenue in the last one year, (ii) increased profit margins in the last one year and (iii) increased cash flow in the last one year (Kurniawan *et al*, 2021 & Simon *et al*, 2015), (iv) Higher return on investment in the last one year (Yu & Moon, 2019).

Digital Orientation and Business Success

Digital orientation is a firm's growing interest and commitment in deploying technological devices and platforms to create and deliver innovative offerings to its customers (Khin & Ho, 2019). Digital orientation is the extent to which the company inclines to introduce or use new Digital manufacturing operation technologies in transformation (Ng *et al*, 2017). In this study, Digital orientation is the recognition by an organization of the importance of Digital technologies in providing superior offerings to its customers and the deploying of this technologies to ensuring that the business achieves success. The advent of Digitalization has distorted the ways customer perceive value and the ways firms create value to satisfy the ever-changing needs of their customers. These effects include organizational learning, organizational structures, organizational agility, Digital ecosystems and Digital innovations (Kuusisto, 2017).

Technology oriented firms popularized the idea of Digital orientation (Gatignon & Xuereb (1997). Therefore, a firm is said to be digitally oriented when it has the will and ability to acquire new Digital technologies and deploy it in creating valuable offerings. (Khin & Ho, 2019). Using current Digital technologies enhances the development of marketing capability in an organization, thereby improving the way market information are analyzed, identification of new segments and developing novel campaigns (Joensuu-Salo, 2021). Using Digital technologies can transform the communication between different stakeholder and departments of an organization (Coreynen, Matthyssens & Van, 2017). Studies (Khin & Ho, 2019), has shown that Digitalization has the potential to enhance marketing capabilities and performance, relating to commerce adoption, online advertising and social media expertise.

Technology-oriented firms focus on Digital investments and emphasize the introduction or use of new technologies to create value (Gatignon & Xuereb, 1997). This means that the traditional system of the enterprise, with the development of Digital technology will be updated to suit the market requirement. Organizations can develop and customize their own systems according to their needs and further implement flexible and optimized combinations depending on what is required to satisfy its customers (Wang, 2018).

Organizations that acquire advanced new technology are usually more innovative and will develop new products and services that meet customer's needs (Cooper, 1994). Taking advantage of new technologies, organizations which are technology-oriented efficiently links to the market, integrating potential customer value and conceptualize new ideas in the product development process (Visnjic *et al*, 2016).

In a highly competitive industrial and ever-changing technological environment the adoption of Digital technologies enables an organization to understand market needs efficiently and effectively. In such an environment, technology orientation should have a positive impact on firms' new product development performance in the context of their Digital transformation, because firms' technological capabilities facilitate the pursuit of higher performance (José-Ruiz-Ortega *et al*, 2013). Digitalization requires companies to have strong perception about customer's needs, integration with customers and proper configuration of its capabilities to remain competitive. Digital capabilities are a vital influencing factor for companies to effectively and efficiently allocate resources and manage the environmental turbulence (Teece, 2018).

Adopting the use of Digital technologies will increase the speed of market reaction, improve efficiency, reduce cost and improve the competitiveness of an organization (Ng & Wakenshaw, 2017). In an intense competitive environment, an organizations Digital strategy affects Digital business resources (Mithas *et al*, 2013). A major success factor in Digital business strategy as reported by Holotiuk & Beimborn (2017) is for organizations to deploy Digital resources according to the Digital business strategy. Sebastian *et al* (2017) noted how large-scale organizations develop a Digital strategy orientation and acquire Digital competence to respond to competitive tendencies as a result of Digital transformation. Vial (2019) noted how vital Digital resource capability is to the strategic orientation of an organization, most especially within the Digitalization era.

Yu and Moon (2019) measured Digital orientation using the following statement items adapted from Ng *et al* (2019): (i) proactive in the development of new technologies, (ii) use sophisticated technologies in our new product development, (iii) new products are always at the state of the art of technology (iv) technological innovation is readily accepted in our program/project management, (v) based on the results of technological innovation it has been accepted by our organization. Also, Zhou and Wu (2010) made use of the following operational measures of Digital orientation (i.) Proactiveness in accepting new Digital technologies, (ii.) adopting Digital technologies in introducing new offerings, (iii.) acquiring important effective Digital technologies, (iv.) responding to Digital changes, (iv.) mastering the use of industry standard Digital technologies, (v.) accepting the use of efficient yielding Digital technologies.

In this study, the following are operational measures of Digital orientation adapted: (i) technological innovation is readily accepted in our program/project management, (ii) proactive in the development of new technologies (Yu & Moon, 2019), (iii.) adopting Digital technologies in introducing new offerings, (iii.) responding to Digital changes, (iv.) mastering the use of industry standard Digital technologies (Zhou & Wu, 2010). Therefore, we propose the following research hypothesis:

H_{01}: There is no significant relationship between Digital orientation and non finacial performance of Cable TV firms in Rivers State.

H_{02}: There is no significant relationship between Digital orientation and finacial performance of Cable TV firms in Rivers State.

Methodology

Research Design

This study adopted cross-sectional aspect of Survey research design. On the other hand, cross sectional survey measures the opinions of cable TV firms.

Population of Study.

n this study our A population comprised all five Cable TV firms operating in Rivers state. This study made use of proportionate technique in choosing the number of respondents in each of the firms to be studied, in order to have equal representation from all cable TV firms in Rivers state.

Data Collection/instrument Design

Using a structured questionnaire, primary data were collected from 25 members of the decision-making bodies representing these five Cable TV firms. This study made use of ordinal data.

The questionnaire was designed in three segments respectively. Section A: focused on demographic data, Section B: was to generate data on the scopes of competitor orientation, and Section C: was designed to illicit responses on business success. The 5-point Likert-scale question approach was adopted, with five rating scale from end points ‘strongly agree to strongly disagree” or from very high degree to very low extent was also used. Also, responses were anchored on a 5-point Likert scale of very low extent to great extent. The operational measurement of scale used for the independent variable are similar to that of previous studies (Lu *et al*, 2016; Im and Workman, 2004; Ng *et al*, 2017; Zhou & Wu, 2010; Yu & Moon, 2019).

Validity and Reliability

The validity of this study measurement scales has already been confirmed by previous studies (Narver & Slater, 1990; Jaworski & Kohli, 1999; Im and Workman, 2004; Ng *et al*, 2017; Lu *et al*, 2016) but due to change and differences in application of variables, will be reconfirmed in two-fold. First the instruments were subjected to face validity involving the scrutiny of supervisor(s), colleagues, and other informed persons in order to ensure that the batteries of statement raised properly represented the phenomenon under review. Secondly a pilot survey to inconsistencies and/or ambiguities before the actual survey. Reliability on the other hand, measures empiricism pre-test the scale measurement on selected sample units in order to permit corrections of of results. In other words, it measures the extent to which the same set of items to be measured generates same results when replicated in similar setting. Scientifically, Cronbach Alpha will be used to ascertain the reliability of constructs and their measurement items.

Based on the pilot study results, the scale reliability coefficients are reported in Table 3.1 as follows:

Table 3.1 Reliability of the Variable Scales

	Cronbach's Alpha	Composite Reliability (rho_a)	Composite Reliability (rho_c)	Average variance extracted (AVE)	Number of Items
Digital Orientation (DGO)	**0.785**	**0.857**	**0.723**	**0.745**	**5**
Financial Performance (FNP)	**0.737**	**0.709**	**0.781**	**0.561**	**4**
Non-financial Performance (NFP)	**0.708**	**0.727**	**0.847**	**0.654**	**5**

Source: SmartPLS 4

Validity of the Questionnaire Items

Data Analysis

The data were analysed using Regression/Structural Model, with the aid of **SmartPLS 4**

Table 4.1: Summary of Hypothesis and Finding

ISSN 2697-2212 Available Online: https://economics.academicjournal.io

H_0:	Path	Hypothesis Statement	Coefficient	P Value	Decision
H_{01}:	DGO -> NFP	There is no significant relationship between Digital orientation and Non-financial performance of Digital TV firms in Rivers State.	0.093	0.050	Not Supported/ Accept alternate
H_{02}:	DGO -> FNP	There is no significant relationship between Digital orientation and financial performance of Cable TV firms in Rivers State.	-0.264	0.000	Not Supported/ Accept alternate

Discussion of Findings

The first alternate hypothesis is accepted: there is a significant relationship between Digital orientation and non-financial Performance of Cable TV firms in Rivers State. This finding tend to align with the findings from scholars (Yu & Moon, 2021; Ng *et al*, 2017) who carried out similar studies in China.

The second alternate hypothesis is accepted: there is a significant relationship between Digital orientation and financial performance of Cable TV firms in Rivers State. Therefore, we reject our null hypothesis. This is in agreement with the findings from scholars (Pan, Oh & Wang, 2021; Joensuu-Salo, 2021) who carried out similar studies among SMEs in China and Finland.

Conclusion and Managerial implication

This paper concludes that Digital orientation relates with business success (Non-financial performance and financial performance) of Cable TV firms in Rivers State. This paper recommends that managers of cable TV firms in Rivers State, who are interested is improving their business success should enhance their Digital orientation (being Digitally innovative in product development, development of new Digital technologies, responding to Digital changes, mastering the use of industry standard Digital technologies) in order to enhance business success (Non-financial performance and financial performance).

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