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ENTREPRENEURIAL CULTURAL CAPITAL AND COMPETITIVENESS OF MANUFACTURING FIRMS IN SOUTH-SOUTH, NIGERIA.

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ABSTRACT

This study investigated the effect of entrepreneurial cultural capital on the competitiveness of manufacturing firms in the South-South region of Nigeria. Using a positivist approach, a cross-sectional survey design was employed to collect primary data from 324 managerial respondents across 108 manufacturing firms. Entrepreneurial cultural capital (financial, intellectual, and cultural dimension) and competitiveness (cost, product, and technological) were measured using structured questionnaires. The descriptive statistics, Pearson correlation, and partial correlation were used to analyze data. The results showed meaningful positive associations among entrepreneurial cultural capital and each of the dimensions of competitiveness i.e. correlation coefficients were 0.638-0.680 at the level of significance of 0.01. These findings give a hint that the more the cultural capital, the greater the level of cost efficiency, product innovation, and technological development. The research arrives at the conclusion that entrepreneurial cultural capital is a determinant of competitive advantage of manufacturing firms in Nigeria. Such policy implications as the requirement to increase cultural awareness, social networking, and innovation-oriented practices are aimed at increasing firm competitiveness.

KEYWORDS: Entrepreneurial Cultural Capital, Cost Competitiveness, Product Competitiveness, Technological Competitiveness.

INTRODUCTION

Background to the Study

The competitiveness of manufacturing companies in an ever globalized and knowledge based economy is now a critical factor of industrial growth, generation of employment, and economic development of a region. The manufacturing companies, especially those in the developing economies are under strong pressure to lower their expenses, enhance the quality of their products and to embrace the appropriate technologies so as to stay competitive nationally and globally (Porter, 1990). In Nigeria, South-South region where there is an abundance of natural resources but a lack of infrastructural amenity, high production expenses, and technological disparities, manufacturing companies are still grappling with the challenge of maintaining competitive advantage (Adenikinju & Olofin, 2017). All these difficulties explain why it is necessary to go beyond the traditional economic and structural considerations and focus on intangible assets that determine the competitiveness of firms.

An example of the intangible resources is entrepreneurial cultural capital that is based on the general idea of cultural capital developed by Bourdieu (1986) and which is defined as the mutual values, norms, beliefs, skills and entrepreneurial dispositions that shape the managerial decision-making and the firm behaviour. Entrepreneurial cultural capital refers to entrepreneurial innovativeness, risk-taking, proactivity, learning orientation, and opportunity recognition aspects that are inherent in the entrepreneur and organizational culture (Lounsbury and Glynn, 2001; Zott and Huy, 2007). These cultural features determine the reaction of the manufacturing companies towards the market competition, resource management, and efficiency and innovation.

The aspect of competitiveness in manufacturing firms is usually considered in three dimensions that are all interrelated and these are cost competitiveness, product competitiveness and technological competitiveness. Cost competitiveness can be defined as the capability of a firm to produce commodities at low unit costs due to efficient use of resources, minimized wastages and also through economies of scale (Porter, 1985). Product competitiveness is the ability of a firm to provide its products which are of superior quality, design, durability and customer satisfaction (Kotler and Keller, 2016). Technological competitiveness on the other side associates adoption, adaptation and development of

technologies that improve production processes, product innovation and flexibility in operations (OECD, 2011). In the case of manufacturing companies in South-South, the lack of strength in these dimensions has been traditionally associated with the infrastructural limitations and the inconsistency of the policies, but the contribution of the entrepreneurial culture has been under-researched.

Much of the current literature on the subject of manufacturing competitiveness in Nigeria and other developing economies has focused on external influences, i.e., access to finance, infrastructure, energy supply, and government policy (Akinwale, 2018; World Bank, 2020). Although these factors are admittedly significant, they do not entirely justify why certain firms which run their activities in similar conditions are more successful than others. According to emerging literature, the internal, culturally embedded entrepreneurial capabilities are important determinants of the way firms can cost-manage, differentiate their products, and use technology as a competitive advantage (Rafiki, 2020; Teece, 2018). Nevertheless, there are still few empirical studies that explicitly tie entrepreneurial cultural capital the multidimensional competitiveness of manufacturing firms especially in the South-South region.

It is the fact that this study has its point of departure with the argument that, next to the structural and economic constraints, entrepreneurial cultural capital of manufacturing firms is a key, albeit under-researched, determinant of competitiveness. This study as opposed to others in the past that dwell more on the external determinants, it takes a step in laying entrepreneurial cultural capital as a strategic internal resource that influences cost efficiency, product differentiation, and technological development at the same time. Through targeting the manufacturing firms within the South-South region, the study aims to offer context-driven information on how the inherent entrepreneurial characteristics which are tied to cultures can improve firm competitiveness and help in sustainable industrial growth within the region.

Statement of the problem

Nonetheless, manufacturing firms in the South-South region in Nigeria still demonstrate poor performance in terms of competitive performance despite the strategic role of manufacturing sector to the economic diversification, job creation, and sustainable development in Nigeria. Most companies have challenges of high costs of production, low product differentiation and slow adaptation of the relevant technologies which in totality hamper their competitiveness in terms of cost, product and technology. This is the case despite the fact that companies are

within the same regional environment implying that there are other factors outside infrastructural and policy limits that could be shaping the competitive results.

The available bodies of empirical research on manufacturing competitiveness in Nigeria and other developing economies have mainly concentrated on external and structural factors, including poor infrastructure, unstable power, availability of finance and even regulatory issues. Though these are admittedly an important element, they are not sufficient to say why certain manufacturing companies in the South-South region can manage costs more effectively, launch competitive products, and implement new technologies quicker than other companies that have the same restriction. This means that there was a lack of insight on the role played by firm level, intangible resources in the development of competitiveness.

The literature has identified entrepreneurial cultural capital that includes shared entrepreneurial values, beliefs, skills, and orientations as a possible source of internal performance and competitive advantage in firms, which include innovativeness, risk-taking, learning orientation, and opportunity recognition. Nevertheless, slight empirical data exists on the impact of the entrepreneurial cultural capital on particular aspects of competitiveness, which are cost competitiveness, product competitiveness, and technological competitiveness, in the framework of South-South manufacturing companies. The majority of the existing literature considers competitiveness as a one-dimensional concept or looks at entrepreneurial orientation without adequately addressing its cultural bases.

The lack of empirical data on the correlation between entrepreneurial cultural capital and the multidimensional competitiveness of manufacturing companies that is context-specific and specific to a target group leads to a knowledge gap. In the absence of this knowledge, policymakers, industry players, and owners of firms might keep focusing on providing external interventions and not fully utilizing culturally entrenched entrepreneurial endowments that can help provide a competitive advantage. Therefore, the problem this study seeks to address is the insufficient empirical understanding of how entrepreneurial cultural capital affects cost, product, and technological competitiveness of manufacturing firms in Nigeria’s South-South region.

Conceptual framework

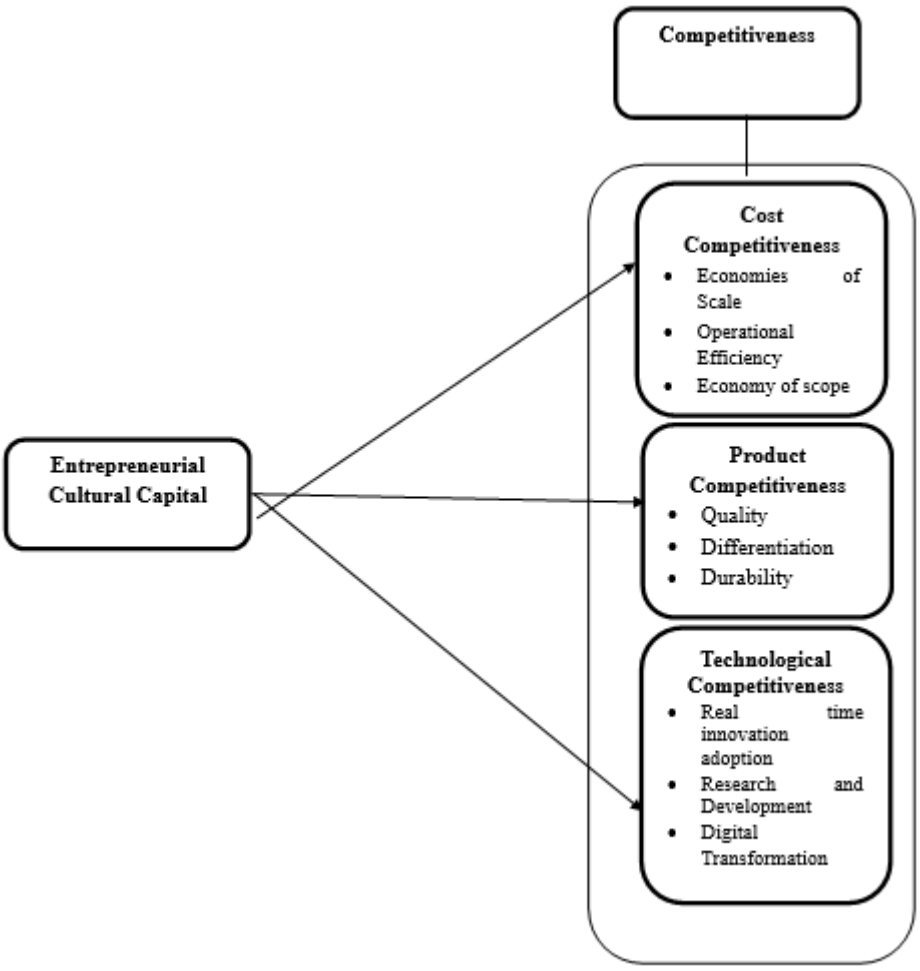

Figure 1: conceptual framework showing Entrepreneurial Cultural Capital and competitiveness of manufacturing firms in South-South, Nigeria.

Source: Adapted from Drucker (1985); Schumpeter (1942) and Porter (1985), Barney, (2019)

Aim and objectives

The aim of this study was to determine the relationship between Entrepreneurial Cultural Capital and competitiveness of manufacturing firms in South-South, Nigeria. The specific objectives was to

1. examine the effect of entrepreneurial cultural capital on the cost competitiveness of manufacturing firms in the South-South region of Nigeria;
2. determine the effect of entrepreneurial cultural capital on the product competitiveness of manufacturing firms in the South-South region of Nigeria; and
3. assess the effect of entrepreneurial cultural capital on the technological competitiveness of manufacturing firms in the South-South region of Nigeria.

Research Questions

The study seeks to provide answers to the following research questions:

1. To what extent does entrepreneurial cultural capital affect the cost competitiveness of manufacturing firms in the South-South region of Nigeria?
2. How does entrepreneurial cultural capital influence the product competitiveness of manufacturing firms in the South-South region of Nigeria?
3. What effect does entrepreneurial cultural capital have on the technological competitiveness of manufacturing firms in the South-South region of Nigeria?

Research Hypotheses

The following null hypotheses will be tested at a 0.05 level of significance:

H_{o1}: Entrepreneurial cultural capital has no significant effect on the cost competitiveness of manufacturing firms in the South-South region of Nigeria.

H_{o2}: Entrepreneurial cultural capital has no significant effect on the product competitiveness of manufacturing firms in the South-South region of Nigeria.

H_{o3}: Entrepreneurial cultural capital has no significant effect on the technological competitiveness of manufacturing firms in the South-South region of Nigeria.

Significance of the Study

This study is significant in several respects, as it contributes to theory, practice, and policy concerning the competitiveness of manufacturing firms in developing economies, particularly in Nigeria's South-South region. From a theoretical perspective, the study contributes to the entrepreneurship and strategic management literature by extending the concept of cultural capital to the domain of manufacturing competitiveness. Although the previous literature has studied the concept of entrepreneurial orientation and its relationship with firm performance, minimal research has been conducted on the entrepreneurial cultural capital as a dimension of multidimensional, culturally imbedded resources that drive particular facets of competitiveness. Empirical relationship between entrepreneurial cultural capital and cost, product, and technological competitiveness enables the study to give a more insightful perception on the role of internal cultural resources in complimenting external factors to determine competitive advantage.

The empirical perspective is that the study completes a significant gap in the literature by offering location-specific evidence in Nigeria, South-South region, which is still underrepresented in studies on competitiveness and entrepreneurship. The results will provide

empirical evidence on why manufacturing companies that are subject to the same set of environmental restrictions have different competitiveness levels. This evidence is likely to add to the current empirical discussions and act as a benchmark in further researches in other developing or resource-rich areas.

Regarding managerial and practical value, the research will be helpful to the owners, managers and entrepreneurs running firms that manufacture. By underscoring the contribution of entrepreneurial cultural capital to cost-efficiency, differentiated products, and the adoption of new technology, the findings will inform firm-level strategies that formulate entrepreneurial values, skills, and learning culture-oriented cultures. This may encourage managers to invest not only in physical assets but also in cultural and human capital development as a means of improving competitiveness.

There are also policy implications of the study. Policymakers and development agencies concerned with industrial growth and economic diversification can benefit from the findings by designing support programs that go beyond infrastructural provision and financial incentives. The research findings may be used in the entrepreneurship development programs, capacity-building, and industrial policies, which results into the development of the entrepreneurial culture among manufacturing enterprises in the South-South part of the world, making the region more competitive and sustainable in its industry. Finally, the study will be of significance to academics and researchers, as it provides a conceptual and methodological framework for examining the link between entrepreneurial cultural capital and firm competitiveness. The research can be used as a basis on comparative studies in other regions or sectors and also trigger more studies into the intangible cultural drivers of competitiveness in emerging economies.

Review of Related Literature

Conceptual Review

Entrepreneurial Cultural Capital

Entrepreneurial cultural capital is based on the theory of cultural capital as developed by Bourdieu (1986) that focuses on the non-economic resources that individuals and organizations hold and utilize in order to take an advantage. The traditional definitions of cultural capital include embodied dispositions, skills, values, and competencies that affect social and economic results. Using the context of entrepreneurship, entrepreneurial cultural capital are the collective commercial archetype, norms, faith, knowledge, and skills that

categorize the chance discernment, strategic choice and organizational conduct in the firms (Lounsbury and Glynn, 2001; Zott and Huy, 2007).

Practices that include the expression of entrepreneurial cultural capital are innovativeness, proactiveness, risk-taking orientation, learning orientation, and openness to change. These characteristics are enshrined in organizational practices and routines of managers affecting how companies invest and respond to uncertainty as well as competitive strategies (Rae, 2010). Entrepreneur cultural capital plays a vital role in shaping decisions concerning cost management, product enhancement, and technology investment in the manufacturing companies, hence it is a fundamental internal firm asset towards attaining sustainable competitiveness. In contrast to physical resources, entrepreneurial cultural capital as a type of capital is path-dependent and socially constructed thus being hard to follow. This attribute is consistent with resource-based perspective of the firm that posits that intangible, valuable, rare, inimitable, and non-substitutable resources are the core of long-term competitive advantage (Barney, 1991). In the developing world like the South-South of Nigeria where companies are prone to similar infrastructural and regulatory impediments, entrepreneurial cultural capital might be used to explain the differences in competitive performance among manufacturing companies.

Competitiveness of Manufacturing Firms

Competitiveness is a state whereby a firm can design, manufacture, and sell products in a more efficient and effective way compared to its competitors. It indicates the ability of the firm to attain high performance due to cost leadership, differentiation and innovation (Porter, 1985). Competitiveness in the manufacturing environment is often investigated in terms of cost competitiveness, product competitiveness, and technological competitiveness each of which is a separate and distinct (albeit interdependent) aspect. The connection between entrepreneurial cultural capital and competitiveness is supported by the opinion that the culturally-based entrepreneurial characteristics determine the process of deployment of resources and reaction to the competitive forces of firms. Entrepreneurial cultural capital bias the cost competitiveness that enhances efficiency and innovation in process of production, product competitiveness that encourages creativity, product innovation that is customer-focused, technological competitiveness which encourages technological learning and adaptation. In this regard, entrepreneurial cultural capital is an integrative internal resource that at the same time defines several aspects of competiveness manufacturing firms.

Cost Competitiveness

Cost competitiveness is the capability of firms to manufacture products that are less expensive compared to their competitors without compromising on the quality. It was affected by effective use of resources, optimization of the processes, economies of scales and effective cost management practices (Porter, 1985). In manufacturing companies of the developing economies, the cost competitiveness was often compromised due to the high cost of energy, inefficient production cycle and inefficient supply chain. Entrepreneurial cultural capital has major contribution to the promotion of cost competitiveness through the development of efficiency-oriented tendencies, continuous improvement culture, and resource prudence. An organizational culture of innovation and learning prompts entrepreneurs and managers to implement lean manufacturing, minimise waste, and consider other inputs and processes that can be used to lower the cost of production (Rafiki, 2020). In such a manner, the entrepreneurial cultural capital may be an initiator to cost efficiency among manufacturing companies.

Product Competitiveness

Product competitiveness means how a firm can provide a product that is of the expectation of the customer, in quality, design, functionality, durability, and perceived value, by fulfilling the requirements of the customer. It indicates the ability of the firm to differentiate as well as its sensitivity towards the needs of the market (Kotler and Keller, 2016). Within competitive manufacturing sectors, companies are forced to keep on increasing product features to be able to maintain customer loyalty and market share. Entrepreneurial cultural capital enhances product competitiveness by encouraging creativity, customer orientation, and opportunity recognition. Companies characterized by good entrepreneurial culture tend to invest in product innovation, customization and quality enhancement hence coming up with differentiated products that attract the evolving consumer tastes (Lumpkin and Dess, 1996). These cultural aspects allow manufacturing companies to leave price differentiation behind and embrace value differentiation.

Technological Competitiveness

Technological competitiveness is the capacity of the firm to acquire, adapt, as well as effectively make use of technologies that enhance and refine production processes, increase product quality, and promote innovation. It encompasses the technological capabilities of the firm, research and development and technological learning and adaptation capacity (OECD,

2011). Competitiveness is a major concern that is highly technological in the manufacturing sector with development of automation, digitalization and process technologies that determine productivity and market positioning. Entrepreneurial cultural capital has an effect on the technological competitiveness in that it promotes the freedom of change, experimenting and learning. The entrepreneurship that has high cultural capital is more likely to invest in new technologies, cooperate with knowledge institutions, and stimulate the development of skills among employees (Teece, 2018). The cultural orientation aids in the constant technological advancement and the capability of the firm to compete in the competitive manufacturing markets.

Theoretical Review

Cultural Capital Theory

Pierre Bourdieu came up with the Cultural Capital Theory as a way of describing how non-economic assets, in the form of values, norms, skills, knowledge, and dispositions, were a source of social and economic benefit. Bourdieu (1986) identifies three types of cultural capital, which include embodied (internalized skills and dispositions), objectified (cultural goods), and institutionalized (formal qualifications) cultural capital. Cultural capital in an entrepreneurial and organizational sense is represented by entrepreneurial values, beliefs, competencies, and behavioral orientations with a role in decision-making, an opportunity recognition, and strategic behavior in firms.

The central belief of Cultural Capital Theory is that people and organizations have different amounts of cultural resources which determine the accessibility of opportunities and the competitive advantage. This is due to the fact that these culturally embedded resources are acquired over time in socialization, education, and experience, and they have a great impact on the outcome of the economy (Bourdieu, 1986). When applied to manufacturing companies, the theory presumes that entrepreneurs and managers of high cultural capital on entrepreneurship are more well-placed to mobilize resources, innovate, and adjust to the competition.

Although it is widely applied, Cultural Capital Theory has been said to be abstract and difficult to operationalize. The opponents claim that the theory had initially been created to elaborate on social stratification and education inequality and therefore, its direct application to organizational and entrepreneurial situations is not quite clear (Swartz, 1997). Moreover,

cultural capital is intangible and context-specific thus measuring it empirically may be challenging thus varying results may be found across researchers.

Despite these criticisms, Cultural Capital Theory is very concerned with the current study because it offers the basis through which entrepreneurial cultural capital can be seen as a strategic and non-economic resource. The theory describes the impact of culturally entrenched entrepreneurial values and competencies on the behavior of firms and the result of competition. Cultural Capital Theory in the case of manufacturing companies in the South-South region assists in the explanation of the difference in cost effectiveness, product differentiation and the adoption of technology beyond external environmental factor.

Resource-Based View (RBV) of the Firm

Resource-Based View (RBV) of the firm lays focus on internal firm resources being the main driver of sustained competitive advantage. RBV, derived, in turn, by Wernerfelt (1984) and extended by Barney (1991), is the assumption which states that companies can perform better in the case when they have resources of value, which are rare, impossible to imitate, and non-substitutable (VRIN). These resources can either be tangible resources or intangible resources embedded in the firm structure, processes and culture. One of the key assumptions with regard to RBV is that the firms are heterogeneous in the sense that their resource endowments vary and these differences are long lasting. The theory presumes that not every resource will be equally competitive advantage generating; only resources, which can pass the VRIN test, can be used to create long-lasting competitive advantage (Barney, 1991). Such resources in the manufacturing companies are not only physical resources and technologies but also intangible resources like organizational culture, managerial capabilities and entrepreneurial orientation.

RBV has encountered a number of criticisms especially that it is a static model and does not pay much attention to the dynamics of the environment. Critics claim that RBV fails to explain well how firms develop, renew or reconfigure resources in the fast changing environments (Priem and Butler, 2001). Also, the theory has been criticized as tautologous reasoning in that resources are at times identified as valuable since they result in competitive advantage, and is not at times evaluated separately.

These criticisms notwithstanding, RBV is very much applicable in this study since it offers a powerful model in the conceptualization of entrepreneurial cultural capital as intangible

resource that is strategic. Entrepreneurial cultural capital fits the VRIN criteria, as it can be valuable in efficiency, innovation, it is rare (firm specific), hard to duplicate (socially embedded) and it cannot be substituted (only generates sustainable competitiveness). With the help of RBV, the paper demonstrates how the entrepreneurial cultural capital increases cost competitiveness, product competitiveness, and technological competitiveness of manufacturing companies in the South-South region.

Empirical Review

The article by Ernest Jebolise Chukwuka (2024) is called The Nexus Between Cultural Factors and Entrepreneurial Performance of Small and Medium Scale Enterprises in Nigeria, which is a quantitative and empirical research. The research design adopted the descriptive survey research design where primary data was gathered through the use of structured Likert scale questionnaires of 200 employees in the SMEs in Delta State. The data was analyzed by using descriptive statistics and correlation tests. The results indicated that core cultural factors including the social network capital, the risk-taking behavior, the work ethic, failure attitude, and religious beliefs had positive and significant impacts on entrepreneurial performance (in terms of sales demand, supply, and customer patronage). The conclusion of the study was that cultural factors are important in entrepreneurial performance with an understanding that entrepreneurial ventures should be first familiarized with the local culture before setting up business. Some of the recommendations included that the entrepreneur ought to evaluate cultural conditions of potential locations so as to ensure that business strategies met expectations of the cultures. This study's link to competitiveness lies in its demonstration that cultural capital (e.g., social network capital and risk orientation) significantly shapes performance outcomes that underpin competitive advantage for SMEs.

A similar empirical study Nnabugwu and Ibekwe (2023) conducted highlights the research on the topic of Entrepreneurial Culture and Performance of Small and Medium Scale Enterprises in Anambra State, Nigeria. The authors employed a quantitative survey paradigm with primary data gathered by means of the structured questionnaire, which was based on SMEs. Findings showed that the variables entrepreneurial culture entrepreneurial mindset, leadership styles, and entrepreneurial values had positive impacts of significant weight on the firm performance indicators including financial performance, sales performance, and marketing outcomes. The research was able to conclude that entrepreneur culture has positive impacts on the competitive nature and operational performance of SMEs in their respective

markets. The recommendations were geared towards improving entrepreneurship training and leadership to improve the entrepreneurial culture and performance. This study did not specifically measure the competitiveness, but the increased performance levels are crucial elements of the competitive positioning of the Nigerian SMEs.

Eruteya (2025) is a more recent empirical article, which explored the determinants of culture and their effect on SMEs in Warri, Delta State. The research conducted a survey using a survey research design and Pearson correlation and were able to find that cultural determinants had a significant impact on entrepreneurial behavior, decision-making, and growth of SMEs. The research found that the socio-cultural elements have a positive influence on the SME performances and development, indicating that cultural capital that is ingrained in the local business context shapes the entrepreneurial behaviours, which may help firms to achieve sustainable competitiveness in Warri. This study also shows that culture can be significant in determining entrepreneurial capital and competitive orientation in Nigeria.

Imo Okorie Imo (2024) conducted an empirical investigation into networking practices and social capital among Igbo spare parts entrepreneurs in Nigeria. Using a hybrid quantitative and qualitative design, the study found that networking practices and social capital key dimensions of cultural/social capital significantly influence entrepreneurial marketing orientation and business performance outcomes such as profitability, market share, and customer loyalty. Social networks and marketing strategies interaction also led to a dramatic improvement in the overall business performance indirectly introducing the competitive capacity among the entrepreneurs under scrutiny. The authors advised the policy makers and support organizations to intensify networking activities to promote competitiveness and sustainability of the small businesses entrenched in the cultural cohesive community.

Research Gap and Justification

Although the research on entrepreneurship in Nigeria is gaining more attention, the available research found in the scientific community has focused on the general impact of the culture or social capital on business performance (Chukwuka, 2024; Nnabugwu and Ibekwe, 2023; Eruteya, 2025; Imo, 2024). Nevertheless, a grave gap in understanding the specifics of entrepreneurial cultural capital as an independent construct and the direct link between business competitiveness currently exists. Most studies have been applying performance measures, including sales, profits, and customer satisfaction, as a proxy of competitiveness as

opposed to directly applying competitiveness in such measures as market share, adoption of innovation, and strategic positioning.

Moreover, it is also due to the fact that most of the studies use cross-sectional designs, which restricts knowledge of how cultural capital and competitiveness are related causally, and how cultural attributes can affect competitive advantage is still poorly understood. The vast majority of studies are also geographically and sectorally limited and only studied SMEs in specific states such as Delta and Anambra, which makes it difficult to generalize to the rest of the Nigerian entrepreneurial ecosystem. Moreover, there exists the failure to incorporate the strong theoretical foundations, including Bourdieu cultural capital theory and the dynamic capabilities theory, in the explanation of the roles of cultural resources in enhancing competitiveness. The proposed study aims to fill these gaps and investigate the connection between the entrepreneurial cultural capital and competitiveness among the Nigerian SMEs with a mixed-methods approach to represent the quantitative and qualitative performance measures as well as understanding the cultural practices and strategic behavior of the involved companies. Through this, the research will aim at coming up with practical recommendations on the policies and strategies that the entrepreneurship should focus on to develop that can be exploited to the cultural strengths to improve the competitiveness of the firm within the Nigerian context.

METHODOLOGY

This research is developed on the basis of positivism that underlines the importance of scientific knowledge based on empirical findings and observable facts. In the environment of entrepreneurial capital and competitiveness among manufacturing companies in the South-South part of Nigeria, positivism is the framework of the systematic analysis of tangible resources, competencies, and connections. The entrepreneurial capital in this case comprises financial capital, human capital, social capital and physical capital. The methodology permits quantitative techniques to be used in studying the effect of these types of capital in the competitiveness, in terms of productivity, market share, rate of innovation, and profitability. The cross-sectional survey design was used which was appropriate to evaluate the relationships between entrepreneurial capital and competitiveness at one specific time. This design is effective in capturing the up-to-date trends and interaction among the variables of the target population.

The population comprised 146 manufacturing firms registered with the Manufacturers Association of Nigeria (MAN) in the South-South region. Using the Krejcie and Morgan (1970) table, a sample of 108 firms was selected. Simply put, a purposive sampling approach used in selection of three managerial respondents (branch, operations and finance/accounting managers) in each of the 324 firms because they have a thorough understanding of the study variables. Primary data were gathered through a developed structured questionnaire based on a literature review and in accordance with the research objectives and hypotheses. The questionnaire was divided into two parts: in the first part, Section A, the demographic data was collected, and in the second part, Section B, the variables in the study (dimensions of entrepreneurial capital: financial, intellectual, cultural and competitiveness: cost, product, technological) were measured on a 5-point Likert scale between Strongly Disagree and Strongly Agree.

The validity of the instrument was measured by the supervisor of the researcher and two other experts in the field of entrepreneurship who reviewed the instrument and refined its content. The importance of the variables was confirmed in the Factor Analysis by using Principal Component Analysis, which had high loadings of all the variables, especially on the organizational climate, cultural capital, and product competitiveness. Cronbach alpha reliability, which was used as a measure of reliability, resulted in a reliable scale of seven items, which showed a value of 0.842.

The researcher and the five trained research assistants administered the questionnaires. The purpose of the study was explained to the respondents, to give them a true and voluntary input. The information was coded, inputted in SPSS version 22 and the data were analyzed at three levels: Univariate Analysis, Descriptive statistics, provided frequencies, percentages, means and standard deviations, summarizing demographic variables and the main variables. Bivariate Analysis - Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient (PPMCC) was used to evaluate the relationships between independent (entrepreneurial capital) and dependent (competitiveness) variables at the level of significance of 0.01.

Data Presentation and Analysis

Questionnaire Distribution and collection statistics

Table 1: Total Questionnaire Distribution Statistics

Questionnaire	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Administered	**324**	**100**
Retrieved	**314**	**96**
Unretrieved	**10**	**4**
Utilized	**300**	**95**
Unutilized	**14**	**5**

Source: Researchers field work (2025)

Table 1 clearly shows that out of the 324 research questionnaires distributed, 314(96%) were retrieved. However, 10 (4%) were not returned due to errors and incomplete information. Out of the 314 retrieved questionnaires, 300 (95%) were properly filled out and thus formed the basis for this study's analysis while 14 (5%) were not properly filled.

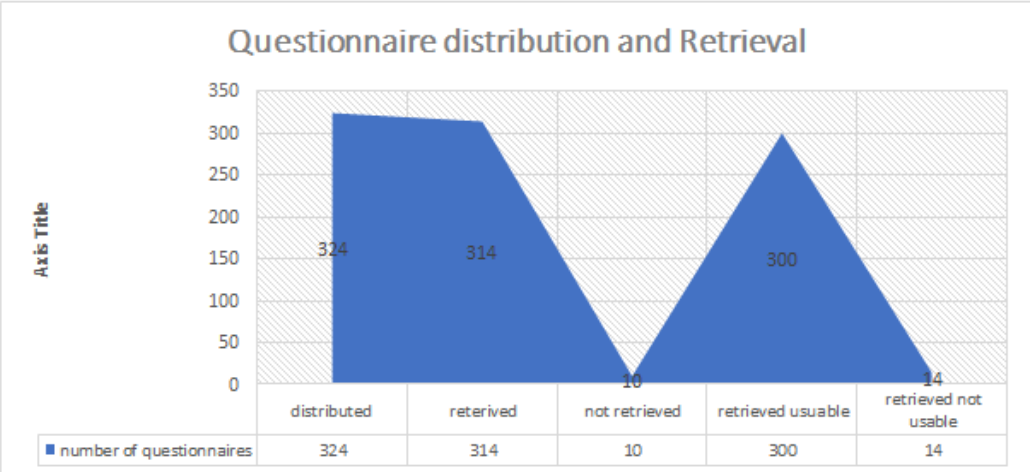

Fig 4.1: Questionnaire Distribution and Retrieval.

Table 2: Descriptive Statistics on cultural Capital as a dimension of entrepreneurial capital

	N	Min	Max	Sum	Mean	Std. Dev
I believe that taking risks is essential for the success of my manufacturing firm.	300	1	5	992	3.31	1.456
The culture within my firm supports celebrating small wins and achievements.	300	1	5	1023	3.41	1.255

Employees in my firm have the autonomy to make decisions related to their work.	300	1	5	966	3.22	1.300
I feel empowered to pursue innovative projects without excessive oversight from management.	300	1	5	971	3.24	1.431
My manufacturing company has measures that would enable it to address any unforeseen issues.	300	1	5	997	3.32	1.635
The employees are also trained in a way that they are ready to embrace uncertainty and adapt swiftly to the changing market conditions.	300	1	5	969	3.23	1.625
Valid N (listwise)	300					

Source: Survey data (2025) via SPSS version 22

Table 2 contains data that is exhaustive in revealing the descriptive statistics relating to cultural capital as an aspect of entrepreneurial capital among manufacturing firms. Each statement comprises of 300 respondents, which means that there is a strong dataset to be analyzed. The former illustrates the perception that risk taking is required to make manufacturing companies successful with the lowest score of 15 and the highest score of 99 with a mean score of about 23.31 and a standard deviation of about 11.456. This implies that although it may be seen that there is a consensus on the significance of risk-taking, there is much difference in opinions between respondents. The second statement evaluates the internal culture on the focus of celebrating small wins and achievements and has a score ranging between 15 and 102 with a mean score of 33.41 and a standard deviation of 11.255. This shows that the employees feel that the culture within their firm is accommodating and it also shows that there is a difference in experiences or perceptions. With respect to employee autonomy in making decisions concerning their work, the lowest scores were 15 and the highest scores were 96, which gave an average of 63.22 and standard deviation of 21.300. This suggests that there is considerable support for autonomy among employees, although some may feel less empowered.

The fourth statement looks at the empowerment feelings to carry out innovative projects without too much supervision of the management with a range of 15 to 97 giving the average score of about 73.24 with standard deviation of 14.31. This implies that a good number of workers are empowered but once again, there is inconsistency in the perceptions. The fifth one assesses strategies that exist to respond to sudden challenges efficiently, with scores ranging between 15 and 99, and overall mean score of approximately 73.32 with a standard deviation of 16.35 indicating that they have confidence in management strategies but at the same time, there is variance in individuals opinions.

Finally, the sixth statement focuses on training employees to manage the unpredictability and to adapt to the new changes in the market quickly; in this case, the lowest possible score was 15 and the highest possible score was 96, which means that training is viewed positively, though there are significant differences in experiences of employees. All in all, the results depict different levels of belief on risk-taking, cultural endorsement of achievement, independence in decision making, empowerment in the initiative of innovations, efficient management planning of challenges, and flexibility training in manufacturing companies.

Table 3: Descriptive Statistics on Competitiveness.

	N	Min	Max	Sum	Mean	Std. Dev
The costs per unit of production decrease with the volume produced in our firm.	300	1	5	999	3.33	1.445
Our operations have fixed costs that are borne by more units that we produce.	300	1	5	1029	3.43	1.237
We have manufacturing processes which are focused on minimum waste and maximum production.	300	1	5	972	3.24	1.286
We also check and update our operation processes in order to achieve efficiency.	300	1	5	976	3.25	1.417
We have a strong ability in using the shared resources in our various product lines.	300	1	5	1004	3.35	1.625

The simultaneous production of various products minimizes the total production expenses.	300	1	5	978	3.26	1.619
Valid N (listwise)	300					

Source: Survey data (2025) via SPSS version 22

The information given in Table 3 gives a comprehensive picture of the cost competitiveness of a firm, as it is quantified on the basis of different operational variables. Each statement will have a uniform sample size of 300 respondents; which implies that there will be a strong dataset to analyze. The former statement indicates that the company is enjoying lower costs per unit as the volume of production is increasing with the average score of 3.33 and standard deviation of 1.45. This implies that the responders are convinced about the positive relationship between volume of production and cost effectiveness. The second statement is able to determine the distribution of the fixed costs in more units produced and the mean score is 3.43 with a standard deviation of 1.237. This shows that the participants are aware of the benefits of distributing the fixed costs to greater production levels. The third statement addresses optimization of manufacturing processes to represent minimal wastes and maximum output which had a mean score of 3.24 with a standard deviation of 1.286. This details a recognition between the respondents of the significance of optimization of the process towards the realization of cost competitiveness.

The fourth statement is the frequent review and enhancement of the operating processes in order to make them more efficient, the mean score of which is 3.25 and the standard deviation is 1.417. This is an indication that there is appreciation of continuous improvement practices in the operations of the firm. The fifth statement is about good use of shared resources in the various product lines and the average score was 3.35 with a standard deviation of 1.625, which shows that there was some consensus on the strategic advantage of sharing resources. Lastly, the sixth assertion brings out the fact that the cost of production can be lowered when you produce many products at a time and both the mean score of 3.26 and the standard deviation of 1.619 reiterate the idea that diversification in production does save money. On the whole, these findings demonstrate that the respondents view different operational strategies as being helpful in improving cost competitiveness in the firm.

H_{o1}: Entrepreneurial cultural capital has no significant effect on the cost competitiveness of manufacturing firms in the South-South region of Nigeria.

Table 4: Correlations on Entrepreneurial cultural capital and cost competitiveness

		Entrepreneurial cultural capital	cost competitiveness
Entrepreneurial cultural capital	Pearson Correlation	1	.638**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	300	300
cost competitiveness	Pearson Correlation	.638**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	300	300
**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).			

According to the findings in Table 4.3.7, the entrepreneurial cultural capital and cost competitiveness among the manufacturing firms in the South-South, Nigeria show a high positive correlation. The Pearson correlation coefficient of cultural capital stands at 0.638 which indicates that it is strongly related to cost competitiveness and that the same is significantly correlated with the latter at the 0.01 level (2-tailed). This implies that the higher the cultural capital, the higher the cost competitiveness that is likely to be found in such firms. Both variables have a sample size of 300, which supports the validity of these results.

H_{o2}: Entrepreneurial cultural capital has no significant effect on the product competitiveness of manufacturing firms in the South-South region of Nigeria.

Table 5: Correlations on Entrepreneurial cultural capital and product competitiveness

		Entrepreneurial cultural capital	product competitiveness
Entrepreneurial cultural capital	Pearson Correlation	1	.680**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	300	300
product competitiveness	Pearson Correlation	.680**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	300	300
**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).			

The findings provided in Table 4.3.8 show that there is a strong and positive relationship between the entrepreneurial cultural capital and product competitiveness of manufacturing companies in the South-South, Nigeria. It is indicated that the Pearson correlation is 0.680 with a significance level (p-value) of 0.000 which is lower than the traditional level of 0.01 in order to be considered statistically significant. This implies that the higher cultural capital, the

higher the product competitiveness is bound to be in this context. In the two variables, the sample used is 300, which further strengthens the validity of these results.

H_{03}: Entrepreneurial cultural capital has no significant effect on the technological competitiveness of manufacturing firms in the South-South region of Nigeria.

Table 6: Correlations on Entrepreneurial cultural capital and technological competitiveness

		Entrepreneurial cultural capital	technological competitiveness
Entrepreneurial cultural capital	Pearson Correlation	1	.661**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	300	300
technological competitiveness	Pearson Correlation	.661**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	300	300
**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).			

Table 6 results suggest that there is a strong positive correlation between Entrepreneurial cultural capital and technological competitiveness between manufacturing industries in the South-South, Nigeria. The Pearson correlation coefficient is given as 0.661 implying that there exists a strong relationship between the two variables. The p-value or level is lower than the value on 0.01, which implies that this correlation is statistically significant at 0.01 level (2 tailed). This implies that, the higher the cultural capital in these firms the higher the technological competitiveness hence dispelling the null hypothesis (Ho3) that there exists no significant relationship between the two constructs.

Table 7: Summary of findings

Hypothesis	**Variables**	**Pearson Correlation (r)**	**Sig. (2-tailed)**	**Sample Size (N)**	**Decision**	**Interpretation**
H_{01}	Entrepreneurial Cultural Capital and Cost Competitiveness	0.638	0.000	300	Rejected	Significant positive relationship; as cultural capital increases, cost competitiveness also increases.
H_{02}	Entrepreneurial Cultural Capital and Product Competitiveness	0.680	0.000	300	Rejected	Significant positive relationship; as cultural capital increases, product competitiveness

Hypothesis	Variables	Pearson Correlation (r)	Sig. (2-tailed)	Sample Size (N)	Decision	Interpretation
						also increases.
H_{03}	Entrepreneurial Cultural Capital and Technological Competitiveness	0.661	0.000	300	Rejected	Significant positive relationship; as cultural capital increases, technological competitiveness also increases.

Source: survey Data (2025) via SPSS output version 25

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

The results of this paper show that the effect of cultural capital entrepreneurship is large positively on the cost, product, and technological competitiveness of South-South manufacturing firms in Nigeria. Particularly, the Pearson correlation coefficients were found to be 0.638- 0.680, with all significant at the 0.01 level, indicating a positive relationship between the higher the level of cultural capital and the performance of the firms in the aspect of cost efficiency, product innovation and technological capabilities. These findings highlight the significance of cultural resources, such as social norms, mutual practices, and networks, in the development of competitive advantages in the Nigerian manufacturing companies.

These results are quite consistent with the empirical results of the previous research. As an example, Chukwuka (2024) discovered that core cultural aspects including social network capital, the willingness to take risks, hardworking, and religious orientation had a positive impact on the performance of SMEs in Delta State. Even though Chukwuka concentrated on wider performance measures, as opposed to direct indications of competitiveness, the research also emphasizes that cultural capital offers a platform of improved performance outputs, which is the basis of competitive advantage. The present research builds on this knowledge by showing that cultural capital does not only influence the overall performance, but also directly increases the cost, product, and technological competitiveness, which provides a more detailed view of how cultural resources can be converted to the performance of a firm.

On the same note, the study by Nnabugwu and Ibekwe (2023) in the state of Anambra established that entrepreneurial culture that encompasses entrepreneurial mindset, leadership style, and values positively correlated with the firm performance metrics: financial

performance and sales performance. Such results are consistent with the current research, since the two show that the aspects of cultural capital determine the operational efficacy, and market-focused actions, which are inherent to competitiveness. Though Nnabugwu and Ibekwe did not directly operationalize competitiveness, their findings make sense to the point that cultural capital generates the results that are vital in sustaining a competitive advantage on the market.

Eruteya (2025) also supports these findings by demonstrating the fact that cultural determinants play a significant role in entrepreneurial behaviour, decision-making, and the development of SMEs in Warri, Delta State. The paper has emphasized the importance of the socio-cultural factors in the formation of the entrepreneurial behaviors, which are consistent with the existing evidence that the entrepreneurial cultural capital positively influences the technological and product competitiveness. This suggests that cultural embeddedness in the business environment provides SMEs with the orientation, resilience, and adaptive strategies needed to sustain competitive advantage.

Lastly, Imo (2024) has shown that networking habits and social capital played a significant role in promoting marketing focus, profitability, market portion, and customer loyalty of Igbo spare parts entrepreneurs. These results are in line with the findings in the present study that revealed social and cultural capital to be crucial in improving the cost, product and technological competitiveness. Both papers focus on the fact that a combination of social networks, cultural norms, and strategic business practices is leading to sustainable competitive capacity.

Overall, the current research study supports and builds on the existing body of empirical research by delivering strong statistical data suggesting that entrepreneurial cultural capital does not just have a positive relationship with overall firm performance but also plays a direct role in particular aspects of the manufacturing firm competitiveness. These results support the significance of relying on the cultural resources and social network to increase the efficiency of operations, quality of the products, and technological development, promoting sustainable competitive advantage in the Nigerian environment.

CONCLUSION

This paper concluded that entrepreneurial cultural capital has a lot of impact on the competitiveness of manufacturing companies located in the South-South part of Nigeria. In

particular, cultural capital has a positive impact on cost, product, and technological competitive advantage, which means that companies that successfully use cultural resources, social networks, and shared practices can better manage to lower the costs, develop products and utilize new technologies. These insights support the fact that entrepreneurial cultural capital is an essential source of firm-level competitive advantage and emphasize the need to incorporate cultural insights into business strategies and operation decision-making in the Nigerian manufacturing industry.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Companies in manufacturing must offer training sessions which ensure that the employees are informed on the local culture, norms, and values to be able to use their knowledge of culture in decision-making, innovations and operational effectiveness.
2. Companies ought to work hard and build professional network, alliances, and cooperative systems that will enable the sharing of knowledge and access to resources, thereby improving the product and technological competitiveness.
3. One of the strategic resources that should be viewed by the managers is the cultural capital and align business strategies, innovation initiatives and cost management practices with cultural knowledge to attain sustainable competitive advantage.

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