Journal of Emerging Trends in Management Sciences and Entrepreneurship
Volume 8(3), Pages 198-211 July-Sept Edition, 2026
ISSN: 2384-762X
https://www.jetmase.com

Entrepreneurial Orientation and Competitive Advantage of Consumer Goods Manufacturing Firms in South-East, Nigeria

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ABSTRACT: This study investigated the relationship between entrepreneurial orientation (EO) and competitive advantage of consumer goods manufacturing firms in South-East, Nigeria. The research was motivated by the persistent challenges facing manufacturing firms in the region such as infrastructural deficits, fluctuating economic conditions, policy instability, and limited access to finance, which have constrained their competitiveness and growth. The study was anchored on the Resource-Based View (RBV) theory. The study adopted a correlational research design and utilized a structured questionnaire administered to employees of selected manufacturing firms across the South East region. Using a sample size of 372 respondents determined using the Krejcie and Morgan formula. The primary data were analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistical techniques. The hypotheses were tested using multiple linear regression technique. The findings revealed that there is a significant relationship between proactiveness and competitive advantage of consumer goods manufacturing firms in Southeast, Nigeria, and that there is a significant relationship between competitive aggressiveness and competitive advantage of consumer goods manufacturing firms in Southeast, Nigeria. The study concluded that entrepreneurial orientation is a strategic imperative for manufacturing firms seeking to achieve and sustain competitive advantage. Based on these, the study recommended that manufacturing firms should critically assess how they implement proactive strategies. Managers of manufacturing firms should avoid acting prematurely or without adequate information, rather should ensure that proactive actions are grounded in strategic foresight and supported by market intelligence. Firms should balance proactive initiatives with risk assessments to avoid misaligned resource allocation.

Keywords: Entrepreneurial Orientation, Competitive Advantage, Consumer Goods, Manufacturing Firms, Nigeria.

INTRODUCTION

Manufacturing firms play important roles in driving sustainable market growth through the production of goods and services for the economic development of any nation. Aside from these major roles, manufacturing firms are the engine houses of job creation, both at the local and national levels (Etim et al., 2022). As the global economy becomes increasingly competitive and dynamic, firms have to seek a way to cultivate a strong entrepreneurial orientation to sustain their competitive advantage. This is particularly pertinent for

manufacturing firms operating in emerging markets like Nigeria, where challenges such as infrastructural deficits, fluctuating economic conditions, and regulatory uncertainties are prevalent. However, their entrepreneurship orientation may likely impact their competitive advantage either positively or negatively, which is crucial for modernization and industrialization in Nigeria, especially the south-east zone (Egberi & Ighoroje, 2021).

The Southeastern region of Nigeria has a robust manufacturing sector that plays a pivotal role in the nation's economic growth and development. This sector encompasses a wide range of industries, including food processing, textiles, chemicals, and consumer goods. Despite its significant contributions to economic development and job creation, manufacturing firms in the south-east region of Nigeria face numerous challenges, including inadequate access to finance, limited technological advancements, and intense competition from imported goods. In this context, understanding how entrepreneurial orientation affects competitive advantage becomes crucial for the sustainability and growth of these firms in the Southeast region of Nigeria.

Entrepreneurial orientation (EO) refers to the strategies and practices that organizations adopt to foster innovation, proactiveness, risk-taking, and competitive aggressiveness. EO refers to a firm's strategic orientation that captures its ability to be innovative, proactive, and willing to take risks. Entrepreneurial orientation is believed to enhance firms' capabilities to adapt to market changes, innovate in product and process development, and create unique offerings that resonate with customers' needs. It is a critical factor influencing the success of firms, especially in competitive environments. The existence of entrepreneurial management and organizational processes, methods, and forms used by manufacturing industries is what has been broadly described as entrepreneurship orientation dimensions. It encompasses key dimensions such as innovativeness, proactiveness, risk-taking, competitive aggressiveness, and autonomy. These dimensions enable firms to exploit market opportunities, anticipate industry changes, and respond to challenges more effectively.

A manufacturing industry that has orientation is brave enough in risk-taking and proactive in product innovation. Thus, Sadalia et al. (2021) argued that entrepreneurship orientation is the process and practices via which manufacturing firms become innovative and take risks in a bid to outperform competitors. Manufacturing firms with high EO tend to adapt more quickly to changing market conditions and take advantage of new technologies or processes to maintain competitiveness. Competitive advantage involves the unique attributes that allow a firm to outperform its competitors. Firms need to identify and leverage these advantages to maintain profitability, secure market share, and ensure long-term success. Competitive advantage refers to the ability of a firm to outperform its rivals by offering unique value to customers, whether through lower costs, differentiated products, or superior service. For manufacturing firms in the south-east region of Nigeria, competitive advantage can stem from factors such as local market knowledge, innovation in production processes, and efficient use of resources.

Competitiveness can be reached if the firm has high entrepreneurship due to the importance of ability in managing the firm. A firm that has a competitive advantage would be able to create economic value than its competitor. Thus, to build a robust competitive advantage, manufacturing firms often combine multiple forms, such as offering differentiated products while maintaining cost leadership through operational efficiency. By strategically

focusing on one or more forms of competitive advantage, a firm can outperform competitors and secure a dominant market position in the consumer goods manufacturing sector.

Statement of the Problem

Manufacturing firms in South-East Nigeria operate in an exceptionally complex environment characterized by systemic infrastructural deficits, policy instability, and a volatile macroeconomic climate (Idolor et al., 2025). As these firms navigate the transition from informal to formal economies, they are increasingly pressured to adopt robust strategies to ensure sustainable competitive advantage. Despite the demonstrated potential of these firms to drive regional industrialization, many have yet to fully translate EO into tangible, long-term competitive advantages, leading to stagnant growth and susceptibility to market shocks (Akingbade & Famodun, 2024). Innovation is universally cited as the cornerstone of organizational survival; yet, empirical observations suggest that only a limited number of regional firms engage in consistent, high-impact innovation across their product lines and manufacturing processes (Abodunde, 2024). The problem is not merely a lack of desire to innovate, but a failure to translate innovative capabilities into distinct, defensible market value propositions. Many SMEs struggle with "innovation inertia," where firms recycle existing product designs rather than investing in R&D that aligns with shifting consumer preferences (Chakrabarti et al., 2025). Ogbaini et al. (2024) assert that innovation must be risk-aligned to serve as a sustainable source of strength; however, the innovative potential within this sector remains severely under-leveraged, often inhibited by restricted access to capital and limited technical expertise.

Competitive aggressiveness and autonomy also present unique challenges. Competitive aggressiveness requires an assertive posture to challenge rivals and defend market share; however, this is frequently constrained by a lack of strategic clarity and limited market intelligence (Ogbaini et al., 2024). Many firms lack the analytical frameworks necessary to effectively benchmark their performance against competitors. Simultaneously, the dimension of autonomy is often stifled by the centralized, hierarchical structures characteristic of family-owned SMEs in Nigeria (Edamisan, 2021). When decision-making power is concentrated at the top, it limits the flow of creative ideas from lower-level employees and suppresses individual initiative, thereby reducing the agility of the firm as a whole. The critical issue, therefore, is the lack of empirical evidence regarding how these five dimensions interact within the specific socio-economic fabric of South-East Nigeria. While generalized studies exist, there is a paucity of research that isolates how innovativeness, risk-taking, proactiveness, competitive aggressiveness, and autonomy each contribute to the competitive advantage of SME consumer goods manufacturers (Idolor et al., 2025).

Objectives of the Study

The broad objective of this study is to examine the relationship between entrepreneurial orientation and competitive advantage of consumer goods manufacturing firms in South-East, Nigeria. Specifically, the study intends to:

1. Assess effects proactiveness contributes to the competitive advantage of consumer goods manufacturing firms in Southeast Nigeria.
2. Analyze the impact of competitive aggressiveness on the competitive advantage of consumer goods manufacturing firms in Southeast Nigeria.

Research Questions

The following research questions were formulated to guide the study:

1. What is the relationship proactiveness and competitive advantage of consumer goods manufacturing firms in Southeast, Nigeria?
2. What is the relationship between competitive aggressiveness and competitive advantage of consumer goods manufacturing firms in Southeast, Nigeria?

Hypotheses

The following hypotheses were designed to guide the study.

H_{O1}: There is no relationship between proactiveness and competitive advantage of consumer goods manufacturing firms in Southeast, Nigeria.

H_{O2}: There is no relationship between competitive aggressiveness and competitive advantage of consumer goods manufacturing firms in Southeast, Nigeria.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Entrepreneurial Orientation

Entrepreneurial Orientation (EO) is one of the most widely studied constructs in strategic management and entrepreneurship literature because of its relevance to organizational competitiveness, innovation, and sustained growth (Ishaya et al., 2024). Entrepreneurial orientation describes the strategic posture, behavioural tendencies, and decision-making patterns that influence how firms identify opportunities and respond to environmental changes (Abodunde, 2024). Unlike entrepreneurship, which traditionally focuses on venture creation and entrepreneurial individuals, entrepreneurial orientation is examined at the organizational level and reflects the extent to which firms adopt entrepreneurial behaviours in pursuing strategic objectives.

The concept of entrepreneurial orientation emerged from the work of Miller (1983), who argued that entrepreneurial firms are characterized by innovation, risk-taking, and proactive market behaviour. This position was later expanded by Lumpkin and Dess (1996), who conceptualized entrepreneurial orientation as a multidimensional construct comprising innovativeness, proactiveness, risk-taking, autonomy, and competitive aggressiveness. Their framework remains one of the most influential approaches in entrepreneurial orientation research because it recognizes that entrepreneurial behaviour may vary across organizational and environmental contexts.

Entrepreneurial orientation (EO) reflects a firm's willingness to depart from conventional practices and pursue opportunities through strategic experimentation and innovation. Firms with strong EO are more likely to introduce new products, adopt emerging technologies, explore market opportunities, and respond rapidly to environmental shifts. EO reflects a company's proactive stance toward identifying and pursuing new business opportunities, as described by Kamal et al. (2016). According to Peters and Kallmuenzer (2018), EO encompasses the company's readiness to adopt innovativeness, proactivity, and a willingness to take risks. Furthermore, EO is influenced by the socio-cultural environment in which the company operates, as noted by Altinay and Wang (2011). This suggests that a firm's entrepreneurial behavior is not only shaped by internal strategic choices but also by external cultural and societal factors, which can either facilitate or constrain its entrepreneurial activities.

EO represents an organizational capability that influences strategic adaptation and long-term competitiveness (Ogbaini et al., 2024). An organization's procedures and workplace culture both exhibit an entrepreneurial mindset. An entrepreneurial mindset is seen to

be essential for improving performance (Abu-Rumman et al., 2021). According to Shah and Ahmad (2019), entrepreneurial mindset aids businesses in creating better solutions through differentiation to increase adoption to the environmental difficulties. Consequently, this makes it harder to compete in unstable market conditions. EO is the procedures, methods, and choices that enable a company to launch novel goods, services, inventions, markets, or business models (Covin & Wales, 2019).

Extensive literature research has identified innovativeness, proactivity, and risk-taking as the three fundamental dimensions EO (Do & Luu, 2020). Innovativeness refers to a firm's tendency to support experimentation, creativity, and the development of new products, services, or operational processes. It reflects a company's inclination to support and implement new ideas and creative solutions, fostering the development or introduction of novel products and services (Luu, 2022). This dimension is crucial for maintaining competitive advantage and adapting to dynamic market demands.

Innovative firms actively invest in knowledge creation and continuously seek methods for improving customer value and market relevance. Recent evidence indicates that innovativeness contributes significantly to competitive advantage because it enables firms to differentiate offerings and strengthen market positioning. Kiyabo and Isaga (2020) found that innovativeness enhanced firm growth and strengthened competitive outcomes among SMEs through continuous opportunity exploitation.

Proactiveness represents the tendency of firms to anticipate future market demands and act ahead of competitors. Proactiveness involves a firm's forward-looking approach to taking initiative by actively seeking emerging opportunities and introducing groundbreaking products or operational technologies ahead of competitors (Amarteifio & Agbeblewu, 2020). It emphasizes leadership in innovation and market exploration. Proactive firms monitor environmental signals, identify emerging opportunities, and position themselves strategically before competitors react. This dimension supports first-mover advantages and improves organizational responsiveness. Contemporary studies continue to identify proactiveness as an important determinant of business competitiveness because firms that act early are often able to shape customer preferences and strengthen market control.

Risk-taking refers to the willingness of firms to commit resources under uncertain conditions in pursuit of growth opportunities. Risk-taking pertains to a company's readiness to make bold decisions and commit resources in uncertain environments, accepting the potential for failure as part of strategic decision-making processes (Casillas & Moreno, 2010). Entrepreneurial firms typically engage in strategic investments despite incomplete information or unpredictable outcomes. However, recent literature increasingly emphasizes calculated rather than excessive risk-taking. EO supports disciplined experimentation where firms balance opportunity pursuit with resource protection. Evidence from developing economies suggests that strategic risk-taking improves firm adaptability and strengthens long-term competitive capability.

Autonomy reflects the extent to which individuals and organizational units possess independence in initiating and implementing entrepreneurial actions. Organizations that support autonomy often encourage initiative, experimentation, and decentralized decision-making. Such environments promote organizational learning and accelerate opportunity exploitation. Competitive aggressiveness, on the other hand, describes

the intensity with which firms challenge competitors and respond to market threats. Firms displaying competitive aggressiveness often pursue strategic actions intended to strengthen market position and outperform rivals.

Recent scholarship increasingly positions entrepreneurial orientation as a dynamic organizational capability that contributes to competitive advantage. Wales, Gupta, and Mousa (2020) explained that entrepreneurial orientation enhances organizational flexibility, strengthens opportunity recognition, and supports strategic renewal. Entrepreneurial orientation enables firms to align resources with changing environmental conditions and improve competitive outcomes. Similar conclusions were reported by Covin and Wales (2019), who emphasized that entrepreneurial orientation continues to function as a strategic capability that supports organizational adaptation and sustained performance.

Empirical evidence across developing economies further supports the strategic importance of entrepreneurial orientation. Kiyabo and Isaga (2020) demonstrated that entrepreneurial orientation positively influenced competitive advantage and organizational outcomes among SMEs. Within Nigeria, recent studies have reported consistent positive relationships between entrepreneurial orientation and indicators of firm success. Okoli, Nwosu, and Okechukwu (2021) observed that entrepreneurial orientation significantly improved firm outcomes among enterprises in Southeast Nigeria. Likewise, Akingbade and Famodun (2024) concluded that entrepreneurial orientation strengthened competitive positioning among SMEs through improved market responsiveness and strategic behaviour.

For the present study, entrepreneurial orientation is viewed as a strategic behavioural orientation reflected in the extent to which firms demonstrate innovativeness, proactiveness, risk-taking, autonomy, and competitive aggressiveness in pursuit of superior market positioning and sustained competitive advantage. This conceptualization aligns with the study objective of examining how entrepreneurial orientation influences competitive advantage among firms operating in Southeast Nigeria.

Competitive Advantage

Competitive advantage is a central concept in strategic management and refers to a firm's ability to create superior value and achieve performance outcomes that competitors find difficult to replicate. The concept explains how organizations develop distinctive positions through effective resource utilization, strategic capability development, innovation, and market responsiveness. Competitive advantage enables firms to sustain growth, strengthen customer preference, and achieve superior performance within increasingly competitive business environments.

The idea of competitive advantage gained prominence through strategic management literature which emphasized that organizational success depends not merely on participation within a market but on possessing capabilities that distinguish firms from competitors. Porter (1985) explained that competitive advantage emerges when firms implement strategies that enable them to create value either through cost leadership, differentiation, or focused market positioning. This perspective suggests that sustained competitiveness depends on the ability of organizations to organize activities in ways that competitors cannot easily imitate.

Contemporary literature extends the concept beyond market positioning and increasingly associates competitive advantage with internal capabilities and strategic resources. Barney (1991) argued that firms achieve sustained

competitive advantage when they possess valuable, rare, inimitable, and non-substitutable resources. This resource-based perspective highlights that organizational competitiveness depends on strategic assets and capabilities that support superior value creation over time.

Competitive advantage is often viewed as an outcome of organizational behaviours and strategic decisions rather than a static organizational condition. Firms continuously develop and renew competitive positions through innovation, knowledge acquisition, customer responsiveness, and strategic adaptation. Organizations that successfully align internal capabilities with external opportunities are more likely to sustain market leadership and withstand environmental pressures.

Recent scholarship increasingly conceptualizes competitive advantage as a dynamic process supported by organizational flexibility and entrepreneurial behaviour. Teece (2018) argued that firms operating in rapidly changing environments must continuously renew capabilities and adapt strategic processes in order to sustain advantage. This perspective emphasizes the importance of sensing opportunities, mobilizing resources, and transforming organizational capabilities in response to environmental changes.

Competitive advantage may be reflected through multiple indicators depending on organizational objectives and industry conditions. Common indicators include market share, customer satisfaction, product uniqueness, operational efficiency, profitability, innovation capability, responsiveness, and strategic positioning. In entrepreneurship research, competitive advantage is frequently examined as an outcome of entrepreneurial orientation because entrepreneurial firms often demonstrate stronger capability to identify opportunities and create value.

Competitive advantage contributes to organizational sustainability by enabling firms to maintain performance despite environmental uncertainty and competitive pressure. Firms possessing distinctive capabilities are generally better positioned to attract customers, retain market relevance, and generate long-term returns. Competitive advantage therefore becomes a mechanism through which organizations transform entrepreneurial initiatives into measurable business outcomes.

Recent empirical evidence continues to support the relationship between entrepreneurial behaviour and competitive advantage. Kiyabo and Isaga (2020) found that entrepreneurial orientation positively influenced competitive advantage and subsequently improved SME growth outcomes. Their findings suggest that entrepreneurial firms achieve stronger competitiveness because entrepreneurial capabilities support innovation, responsiveness, and opportunity exploitation. Similarly, Wales, Gupta, and Mousa (2020) emphasized that entrepreneurial orientation strengthens organizational renewal and contributes to sustainable competitive positioning.

Within developing economies, competitive advantage remains particularly important because firms operate under dynamic conditions characterized by infrastructural constraints, policy uncertainty, and intense competition. Organizations that develop strategic capabilities and strengthen responsiveness are more capable of maintaining relevance and sustaining market growth. Competitive advantage therefore functions as a strategic mechanism for organizational survival and long-term success.

Evidence from Nigeria further supports the relevance of competitive advantage in explaining firm outcomes. Egberi (2023) reported that entrepreneurial orientation significantly enhanced competitive advantage among SMEs operating within the South-South geopolitical zone of Nigeria. Likewise, Akingbade and Famodun (2024) observed that entrepreneurial behaviour strengthened competitive positioning through improved strategic responsiveness and market adaptation. Okoli, Nwosu, and Okechukwu (2021) similarly reported that entrepreneurial practices contributed positively to firm outcomes among enterprises in Southeast Nigeria.

For the present study, competitive advantage is conceptualized as the superior position achieved by firms through the effective deployment of entrepreneurial capabilities, strategic responsiveness, innovation, and organizational resources that enable sustained value creation and differentiation from competitors. This conceptualization aligns with the objective of examining how entrepreneurial orientation influences competitive advantage among firms in Southeast Nigeria.

Theoretical Framework

Resource-Based View (Rbv)

The Resource-Based View (RBV) is one of the most influential theories in strategic management and provides an important explanation for differences in organizational competitiveness. The theory argues that firms achieve superior performance and sustained competitive advantage through the possession and effective deployment of internal resources and capabilities. Rather than focusing exclusively on external market conditions, RBV emphasizes internal organizational strengths as the primary source of sustained success.

The intellectual foundation of RBV is commonly associated with Barney (1991), who proposed that firms obtain sustained competitive advantage when they possess resources that are valuable, rare, difficult to imitate, and non-substitutable. These characteristics, commonly referred to as VRIN attributes, explain why some organizations consistently outperform others despite operating within similar environments. According to RBV, organizational resources extend beyond physical assets and include knowledge, managerial capability, innovation capacity, strategic flexibility, organizational culture, and human competence. Firms that effectively combine these resources are better positioned to create value and sustain competitiveness. Competitive advantage therefore emerges not simply from resource ownership but from the ability to organize and deploy resources strategically.

The Resource-Based View is particularly relevant to entrepreneurial orientation because entrepreneurial firms frequently rely on internal capabilities to identify opportunities and create competitive value. Entrepreneurial orientation dimensions such as innovativeness, proactiveness, and autonomy may be viewed as strategic capabilities that strengthen organizational adaptability and improve market responsiveness.

Recent strategic management literature continues to support RBV as an explanation for sustained competitiveness. Teece (2018) argued that internal capabilities remain central to organizational advantage but emphasized that firms must continuously renew and transform those capabilities in changing environments. This extension reinforces the relevance of RBV in contemporary competitiveness research. Empirical evidence also supports the applicability of RBV to entrepreneurial studies. Kiyabo and Isaga (2020) found that entrepreneurial orientation

strengthened competitive advantage because firms utilized internal capabilities to improve strategic responsiveness and growth outcomes. Their findings suggest that entrepreneurial behaviour contributes to superior performance through effective capability deployment.

Within developing economies, RBV remains relevant because organizations frequently operate under environmental constraints and institutional uncertainty. Firms capable of leveraging internal resources efficiently are generally better positioned to withstand competitive pressure and sustain market growth. This perspective aligns with the realities of firms operating within Southeast Nigeria. Despite its strengths, RBV has been criticized for placing greater emphasis on internal resources while giving less attention to environmental dynamics and capability renewal. Critics argue that sustained competitiveness requires firms not only to possess strategic resources but also to continuously adapt and transform them. These concerns contributed to the emergence of Dynamic Capability Theory.

The Resource-Based View is considered appropriate for this study because entrepreneurial orientation reflects internal behavioural capabilities that influence how firms generate and sustain competitive advantage. Entrepreneurial actions such as innovation, strategic initiative, and opportunity exploitation align strongly with the assumptions of RBV regarding value creation through organizational capability.

METHODOLOGY

Research Design: The study adopts a correlational research design. A correlation design seeks to establish a relationship, or association, between two or more variables that do not readily lend themselves to experimental manipulation (Smiley, 2021).
Area of the Study: South East, Nigeria.
Source of Data: Primary and Secondary.
Population of Study: The population of this study comprises staff members working in selected manufacturing firms located within the South-East geopolitical zone of Nigeria. 1561 respondents were identified for the purpose of the study.
Sample Size Determination: Sample size of 372 was obtained by using Krejcie and Morgan table for determining sample size.
Method of Data Analysis: Multiple regression analysis was used as the statistical tool to estimate the relationship between two or more independent variables on the dependent variable.

DATA ANALYSIS

Proactiveness

Table 1: Perception of respondents on Proactiveness

Descriptive Statistics

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Our firm actively monitors industry trends.	348	1	5	4.50	.802
We are usually first to respond to market changes.	348	1	5	4.48	.840
We constantly seek new market opportunities.	348	1	5	4.49	.857
Our firm aggressively pursues new growth paths.	348	1	5	4.51	.787

We take initiative to stay ahead of competitors.	348	2	5	4.50	.823
Valid N (listwise)	348				

Source: SPSS Ver. 25

The mean of "Q.21" is χ=4.49 (SD=.825); the mean of "Q.22" is χ=4.49 (SD=.817); the mean of "Q.23" is χ=4.50 (SD=.833); the mean of "Q.24" is χ=4.49 (SD=.817); the mean of "Q.25" is χ=4.47 (SD=.849); the mean of "Q.26" is χ=4.52 (SD=.800); the mean of "Q.27" is χ=4.48 (SD=.800); the mean of "Q.28" is χ=4.45 (SD=.848); the mean of "Q.29" is χ=4.49 (SD=.801); and, the mean of "Q.30" is χ=4.47 (SD=.800).

Competitive Aggressiveness

Table 2: Perception of respondents on Competitive Aggressiveness

Descriptive Statistics

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Our pricing strategy is designed to outperform competitors.	348	2	5	4.55	.775
We aggressively market our strengths to challenge competitors.	348	2	5	4.52	.776
Our firm regularly improves offerings to beat rival products.	348	2	5	4.48	.830
We respond promptly and forcefully to competitors' moves.	348	2	5	4.52	.776
We aim to dominate the market over competitors.	348	2	5	4.51	.776
Valid N (listwise)	348				

Source: SPSS Ver. 25

The mean of "Q.31" is χ=4.51 (SD=.801); the mean of "Q.32" is χ=4.52 (SD=.783); the mean of "Q.33" is χ=4.54 (SD=.783); the mean of "Q.34" is χ=4.53 (SD=.783); the mean of "Q.35" is χ=4.49 (SD=.849); the mean of "Q.36" is χ=4.55 (SD=.774); the mean of "Q.37" is χ=4.51 (SD=.775); and, the mean of "Q.38" is χ=4.48 (SD=.825).

Test of Hypotheses

Test of Hypothesis One

Ho_1: There is no significant relationship between proactiveness and competitive advantage of consumer goods manufacturing firms in Southeast, Nigeria.

The regression table indicated that the variable proactiveness showed a t-value of -11.230 with p-value of .000 which is significant at 5% level of significance. The unstandardized β value of proactiveness is -0.373; the implication of the above result is that a one-unit increase in proactiveness is associated with a 0.373 unit decrease in competitive advantage, all else being equal.

Decision Rule: Based on the above reported results, the null hypothesis is rejected and the alternate hypothesis is accepted. Thus, there is a significant relationship between proactiveness and competitive advantage of consumer goods manufacturing firms in Southeast, Nigeria.

Test of Hypothesis Two

Ho_2: There is no significant relationship between competitive aggressiveness and competitive advantage of consumer goods manufacturing firms in Southeast, Nigeria.

The regression table indicated that the variable competitive aggressiveness showed a t-value of 54.577 with p-value of .000 which is significant at 5% level of significance. The unstandardized β value of competitive aggressiveness is .824; the implication of the above result is that a one-unit increase in competitive aggressiveness results in a 0.824 unit increase in competitive advantage, ceteris paribus.

Decision Rule: Based on the above reported results, the null hypothesis is rejected and the alternate hypothesis is accepted. Thus, there is a significant relationship between competitive aggressiveness and competitive advantage of consumer goods manufacturing firms in Southeast, Nigeria.

CONCLUSION

The study concludes that entrepreneurial orientation affects the competitive advantage of manufacturing firms in South-east, Nigeria. The findings showed that among the dimensions of entrepreneurial orientation, competitive aggressiveness is a highly significant contributor to gaining competitive advantage in the manufacturing sector of Southeast Nigeria. Interestingly, proactiveness had a significant negative effect, which may reflect the challenges of early market entry or inadequate readiness for change in the studied context. Based on the findings the study makes the following recommendations in the next section. In view of the findings from the study, the following recommendations were offered by the researcher.

1. Manufacturing firms should critically assess how they implement proactive strategies. Managers of manufacturing firms should avoid acting prematurely or without adequate information, rather should ensure that proactive actions are grounded in strategic foresight and supported by market intelligence. Firms should balance proactive initiatives with risk assessments to avoid misaligned resource allocation.
2. Firms should proactively monitor the competitive landscape and adopt assertive strategies to outperform rivals. Managers should stimulate a culture where employees are encouraged to challenge norms, seek market leadership, and capitalize on first-mover advantages. Developing a competitive mindset across departments can help firms stay ahead in dynamic environments. Competitor analysis and customer feedback sessions should be institutionalized to identify gaps and opportunities.

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