OPPORTUNITY-SEIZING CAPABILITY AND BUSINESS PERFORMANCE: THE EXPERIENCE OF SMALL AND MEDIUM-SCALE ENTERPRISES IN AGRIBUSINESS

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ABSTRACT

This study was examined the relationship between opportunity-seizing capability and business performance among SMEs in Agribusiness. Opportunity-seizing capability was utilized as unidimensional variable; while business performance was viewed multidimensionally, and decomposed into customer-base enlargement, profitability and portfolio expansion. The study adopted an explanatory research design, and collected primary data through cross-sectional survey, using a structured questionnaire whose validity and reliability was confirmed through exploratory factor analysis and Cronbach's Alpha test respectively. The population of the study comprised SMEs in agribusiness in Rivers State. 90 SMEs in agribusinesses in Rivers State were surveyed as the accessible population. After data cleaning, data collected from 77 respondents were found usable for analyses. Pearson Product Moment Correlation served as the test statistic, relying on Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS) version 24.0. The study found that opportunity-seizing capability has very strong, positive and statistically significant relationship all the indices of business performance used in the study. The study therefore concluded that opportunity-seizing capability drives improved business performance among SMEs in agribusiness in Rivers State; and that improved business performance of SMEs in agribusiness in Rivers State depends on their opportunity-seizing capability. The study recommends that SMEs in agribusinesses in Rivers State that seek improved business performance (customer-base enlargement, profitability and portfolio expansion) should develop and optimally utilize the capability exploit or take advantage of sensed current and emerging opportunities in their operating environment.

Keywords: Business performance, portfolio expansion, customer-base enlargement, opportunity-seizing capability, profitability

INTRODUCTION

The operating environment of firms is growing increasingly dynamic and complex; presenting both threats and opportunities (Stern et al., 2007), such that sustained business growth and robustness becomes a function of the ability to adjust, reposition, refocus or redirect marketing programmes smartly, and in response to market-dynamics (Ateke & Nwulu, 2021). As firms get exposed to increased amount of information about the content and structure of the business environment; increased environmental turbulence; and improved information processing capabilities orchestrate convoluted business practices, processes and programmes; the surest and most sustainable route to company growth and survival is increased propinquity to, and capability to obtain, combine, and deploy idiosyncratic resources in ways that augment the firm's marketing environment (Ateke & Nwulu, 2021; Morgan et al., 2009).

Thus, firms must have entrenched marketing capabilities that promote adaptability, and also contrive constructive ways to face the future, in order to escape entropy. This assertion aligns with the position that business survival and growth in the new economy is anchored on ability to anticipate, provide for, respond appropriately and adapt to gradual and sudden disruptions in the business environment (Ebenuwa, 2021).

This further suggest that adequately developed and studiously harnessed dynamic marketing capabilities (DMCs) will drive continuous learning and knowledge accumulation through ongoing collection of intelligence that facilitate superior value creation and delivery (Ateke & Didia, 2017); reiterates the perception that DMCs orchestrate improved responsiveness to market needs; facilitate the conception and implementation of requisite marketing strategies that confer competitiveness (Linjconsin & Jaaji, 2010); and facilitate organizational renewal, resilience, innovativeness and growth (Ateke & Nwulu, 2021; Cirjevskis, 2019; Alharbi & Wang, 2016).

Business performance is a first-order objective of small and medium-scale enterprises (SMEs), and even large corporations. It is a key objective that dictates firms' strategies and programmes of actions; as a business concern that is not growing is threatened. Business performance or wellness describes the health of a firm as an outcome of management processes measured against nominated objectives or compared to the health of competing firms (Ateke & Didia, 2017); and a measure of a firm's capacity to achieve desired objectives by optimally utilizing available resources and capabilities. Business performance also captures the outcome of firm's' marketing strategies and programmes, as well as their dexterity in terms of enlarging their customer base, growing their profitability, expanding their business portfolio, developing new markets, etc.

Attempts to explain performance differences among firms in an industry and across industries have been a source of debate among scholars and industry practitioners (Cyfert et al., 2021); even as marketing literature recognizes long-term survival and sustainability as strategic feats in business. More than half of new businesses do not survive beyond five years; and some businesses close shop as curiously as they entered the business-scape; though others stride for decades (Ateke & Amangala, 2020). Ateke and Nwulu (2021) submit that what separate the "successes" from the "failures" may be the DMCs possessed by one and which the other lack.

Prior studies show that DMCs relate to various facets of marketing and business performance, including innovativeness (Ateke & Harcourt, 2022; Cirjevskis, 2019), resilience (Ebenuwa, 2021), adaptability (Ateke & Nwulu, 2021), foreign business ownership and performance (Konwar et al., 2017), business wellness (Ateke & Didia, 2017), organizational performance (Takahashi et al., 2016), strategy development (Alharbi & Wang, 2016), competitiveness (Bruni & Verona, 2009) and international joint venture (Fang & Zou, 2009).

However, none of these studies directly probed the relationship between opportunity-seizing capability (an important dimension of DMCs) and business performance. Also, these studies were either conducted in business and economic climate different from what obtains in Nigeria or are focused on firms other than SMEs. Hence, do not provide adequate explanatory power to SMEs in agribusinesses that have business performance challenges. Thus, the current study joins the discourse by probing the association between opportunity-seizing capability and performance of SMEs in agribusiness.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Sociological baseline theory

This study in anchored on absorptive capacity theory (Cohen & Levinthal, 1990) which holds that the ability of firms to understand the value of new intelligence; incorporate such new intelligence into their operational processes; and utilize the new intelligence is instrumental to achieving improved competitiveness. Absorptive capacity theory argue that firms become more innovative, adaptive and perform better when they incorporate new knowledge in their business practices and processes (Miles, 2012); and is founded on the assumption that sensing, assimilating, combining and utilizing new knowledge requires firms to develop a knowledge-base through "research and development; new knowledge from current operations; new knowledge from other firms or research institutions; new knowledge by purchasing new equipment, hiring new talents, or training current employees on how to utilize new technologies or methods." Absorptive capacity helps firms to absorb new knowledge in one period or market(ing) operation and use it in another. Miles (2012) opine that "successful application of new knowledge is self-reinforcing and motivates firms to continue to absorb new knowledge indefinitely."

The current study adopt absorptive capacity theory as a befitting baseline theory based on its position that "it is necessary for firms to identify, integrate and utilize new knowledge in their operations that focuses on achieving set objectives (Ebenuwa, 2021). Absorptive capacity suggests that the possession and exploitation of market-sensing capabilities help firms to build strong knowledge; and challenges firms to set up a culture that prepares organizational members to see the importance of learning and using new knowledge to attain goals; monitor the environment to identify opportunities; contrive and execute appropriate strategies to adapt the firm to environmental dictates; and monitor progress to track successes and failures. The intelligence gathered in the entire enterprise is then stored, and retrieved for use in future marketing operations.

Opportunity-seizing capability

Ateke and Nwulu (2021) and Takahashi et al. (2016) view opportunity seizing as a process of exploring, assessing, selecting and investing in present and emerging environmental conditions that promise profitable business growth and sustainability. Firms respond to opportunities by introducing new products, developing new markets or utilizing new channels (Wagner et al., 2017). Opportunity-seizing capability thus define firms' propensity and dexterity to expertly align operations and make decisions that enables them select appropriate business models and marketing actions aimed at taking advantage of identified opportunities (Tempelmayr et al., 2019). Min and Kim (2022) suggests that opportunity-seizing capability enable firms address real and perceived opportunities with new products, processes, or strategies; and selecting or inventing business models that define the when, where and how of investment.

Opportunity-seizing capability is essential to sustainable competitiveness of firms in today's increasingly mercurial environment with fleeting opportunities and daunting challenges. The possession of opportunity seizing capability enhances a firm's visibility and reckoning in the market; enables the creation of superior customer value (Ateke & Didia, 2017); and postures firms to continually contrive and execute appropriate marketing strategies that confer superior performance. Customers savor variety and will be favorably disposed to bonding with firms that sense their changing preferences and create new products to fulfill them. Opportunity-seizing capability is thus, also associated with customer acquisition and customer retention and loyalty.

Identifying opportunities (market-sensing) and actually exploiting them (opportunity-seizing) requires distinct skills and expertise (Min & Kim, 2022) that manifest in the activities companies undertake in their attempt to take advantage of identified opportunities. Every decision and action taken after has an opportunity has been detected is considered an opportunity-seizing effort (Popadiuk et al., 2018). In essence, opportunity-seizing means exploiting business opportunities, and addresses firms' capacity to refine products, markets and internal processes to achieve economies of scale, efficient orchestration of resources (Ateke & Nwulu, 2021); and expertise in collecting, sharing and using market(ing) intelligence.

Business performance

Business performance is the outcome of management efforts in relation to predetermined goals; as well as firms' ability to attain stated goals through efficient and effective use of available resources. Business performance is an important construct in determining the success of organizations; and can be considered in financial and non-financial terms (Bontis et al., 2000), and measured in terms of productivity in return on investment, profits and sales turnover. It explains a firm's success over a period of time in a given market operation. Business performance also explains a firm's success in given market operation measured in customer, market and financial achievement. Didia and Nwokah (2015) suggest that business performance is used to mean the achievement of qualitative and quantitative operational goals.

Business performance is a multidimensional construct with multidisciplinary and cross functional orientation (Didia & Nwokah, 2015). The essence of measuring the performance of a firm is to gauge the results of strategy implementation and monitoring, in order to identify areas that require improvement. Business performance is a construct often used in differing context; and understood differently between profit and non-profit organisations. This study however looks at it in the context of profit-oriented organisations and employs customer-base enlargement, profitability and portfolio expansion as a mix of non-financial and financial measures of performance of SMEs. The reason for adopting non-financial and financial metrics of performance is to gain a balanced view of performance, and also an acknowledgement of the fact that the results of most marketing efforts are non-quantitative and non-financial in nature, but facilitate the attainment of quantitative and financial indices of performance.

Customer-base Enlargement

The foundation for, and sustenance of firms depends on customers. Customers are thus the lifeblood of a business and are essential to business growth (Manirakiza, 2020). Ateke and Amangala (2020) states customer acquisition, retention and expansion provide the surest guarantee for firms' survival and sustainability. This is because acquiring and retaining customers, as well as expanding the scope of business the firm has with current customers through cross-selling and upselling is the premise for creating and maintaining customer relationships; and underpins the notion of creating extra value by making existing customers increase their frequency and volume of purchase (Ateke & Amangala, 2020). The extent to which a company is successful cannot be divorced from it customer-base, the larger, the better.

Customer-base enlargement is thus a core marketing objective and salient metric of performance. A firm has only one way to grow its business: to enlarge its customer-base by acquiring new customers (Olek & Sarvary, 2001). A firm that is not acquiring new customers is threading a perilous path. This is because customers form the foundation for a business; they also guarantee the continued existence of the business (McFarlane, 2013). Customer-base enlargement will always be a crucial objective of firms because it relates to several aspects of business performance.

In mature markets, firms employ several techniques to win and retain customers. They implement programmes aimed at preventing switching behaviour and offer special customer care programmes that raises customer satisfaction (Ateke & Nwulu, 2021). The possession of a strong customer-base is a prerequisite to stable company operation, and achievement of improved business performance (Manirakiza, 2020). Research shows that having a large number of loyal customers provides a number of significant short- and long-term advantages (Manirakiza, 2020; Ateke & Amangala, 2020; McFarlane, 2013).

Profitability

Profitability is the ability of a business to make profit or the degree to which a business generates revenue in excess of cost of operations. It is a quantitative metric often used to assess a firm's ability to generate earning in excess of the combination of all the expenses it incurred on a given investment during a specific accounting period. Scholars identify Return on Assets and Return on Equity as common indicators of profitability (Ejoh & Iwara, 2014); though anyone of them can be used, depending on the objective of the user.

Profitability is an important concept in business that has arrested the interest of managers, shareholders and academic researchers alike (Ejoh & Iwara, 2014) since the dawn of commerce. It is a fundamental goal of firms because of its link to long-term survival. Morgan et al. (2009) affirm that profitability is fundamental to investors and managers alike because it indicates expected cash flows. Despite this, profitability is an infrequently used measure of business performance, and knowledge concerning the link between marketing capabilities and profitability growth is limited (Bahadir et al., 2008).

Profitability is often used to determine the attractiveness of an investment; or to compare the promise of different investment portfolios and opportunities (Bahadir et al., 2008). It is also used to measure gains and losses generated in an undertaking, especially in relation to resources invested. In calculating profitability, the benefits from an investment are divided by its costs, and the result expressed as a percentage (Farris et al., 2010). Higher profitability often means that gains from an investment compare favourably to cost of the investment.

Portfolio expansion

A business portfolio represents a business interest which develops from a firm's resources allocation and investments in areas with future potentials; and which are all governed by one corporate management; or the creation and introduction of a brand that is new to a firm or the market (Didia & Ateke, 2017; Raggio et al., 2011). Portfolio expansion offers several benefits. It helps firms choose a positioning approach that best complements existing portfolios while circumventing cannibalization, and accurately caters for the needs of current and prospective customers. Portfolio expansion is achieved through internal brand creation or external brand acquisition (Raggio et al., 2011); and these are common practices that enable firms expand business interests within and across industries. The choice of mode of expansion is a critical element in business portfolio management; and several models that provide assistance to managers on how to analyze and manage investment portfolios exist (Didia & Ateke, 2017).

Portfolio expansion is topical in strategic management because it indicates growth, risk reduction, efficiency optimization, and performance enhancement (Puranam & Vanneste, 2016). It can be achieved by offering additional products, integrating other participants in the value chain, or expanding into other zones, regions or countries. Grant (2016) states that portfolio expansion is manifested when a firm engages with different (at least two) ways of creating and or capturing value; and each of which is associated with a distinct monetization mechanism. The achievement of corporate objectives rest on strategic thrust; and a firm may pursue different objectives in order to increase shareholders' wealth (Didia & Ateke, 2017). Kotler (2003) argue that strategic planning that lead to the attainment of corporate goals requires managing a company's business as investment portfolios. The idea of managing company business as investment portfolios refers to expanding business operations in terms of serving newer customer groups and needs, product line extension and creation of newer business units.

Firms develop business interest within and across customer groups and product lines, and also across geographies so that business risks can be spread, sources of revenue and profits are diversified; and shareholders' wealth is improved (Didia & Ateke, 2017). Portfolio expansion is especially attractive when a firm can leverage existing resources, competences and capabilities. Akewushola (2015) states that portfolio expansion fundamentally indicates business success and shows performance differential among firms; while Oladimeji and Udosen (2019) proffered that portfolio expansion leads to improved profitability, market value and shareholder wealth; and that firms' survival and prosperity is linked to the expansiveness of their business interests. Thus, increased profitability, efficient use of resources, exploitation of market opportunities, achievement of economies of scale and preferred market position all ensue from portfolio expansion (Oladimeji & Udosen, 2019; Emel & Yildirim, 2016).

Opportunity-seizing capability and business performance

The locus of opportunity-seizing is firms' ability to respond to identified market opportunities by developing new products, processes or business models that orchestrate a strategic fit between the firm and such opportunities (Ateke & Nwulu, 2021; Ebenuwa, 2021; Takahashi et al., 2016). It involves exploring, assessing and selecting present and emerging environmental conditions that promise profitable business growth and sustainability; and often result to in developing new products or markets or utilizing new channels (Wagner et al., 2017); and enable firms to expertly align their operations and make decisions that foster desired market positions (Tempelmayr et al., 2019).

O'Reilly and Tushman (2013) contend that opportunity-seizing capability develop through a firm's efforts to organize itself for innovation, as well as integrate and allocate new and existing resources to take advantage of market(ing) opportunities. So, opportunity-seizing capability enable companies refine or improve products, knowledge, and traditional markets which may be observed through internal process modifications that results in economies of scale, efficient orchestration of resources (Ateke & Nwulu, 2021); as well as expertise in collecting, sharing and using market(ing) intelligence.

Opportunity-seizing is anchored on "refining, using or optimizing existing resources, processes, competencies, knowledge, paradigms, and technologies to obtain efficiency and effectuate implementation" (Popadiuk et al. 2018). Hence, insights provided by market-sensing capability enable firms to take advantage of, or seize market opportunities. The dynamic capabilities theory implies that the ability to recognize market opportunities is not sufficient to achieve sustainability and competitiveness; rather, firms must seize those opportunities by (re)structuring business models, revising strategies or (re)combining resources to enhance their readiness to exploit the opportunities (Žitkiene et al., 2015; Kindström et al., 2013).

Hence, opportunity-seizing encompass formulating strategic response to sensed opportunities. Decision to seize market opportunities could stem from or lead to planned entry into a market. Žitkiene et al. (2015) provides that opportunity-seizing involves (re)formulating strategies that translates to: systems integration - integrating components into a functioning system, including business process (seizing customer value by integrating customer's business processes) and technical application integration (customizing technical solution to fit individual customers' needs); operational services - services for operating and maintaining products which encompass maintenance, warranty and customizing services related to product, based on individual needs; and business consulting - providing customers with design, financing, purchasing, maintaining and operating various assets (Fischer et al., 2010).

Companies' marketing strategies are mostly influenced by market conditions; and companies can enlarge their customer base, become more profitable and expand their business portfolio by seizing immediate and emerging market opportunities (Takahashi et al., 2016). This can be achieved by reconfiguring existing products and marketing operations or extending current offerings. Popadiuk et al. (2018) aver that opportunity seizing or opportunity exploitation, addresses a firm's propensity to and dexterity in refining and improving products, knowledge, and traditional markets; and is observed through internal movements that results in economies of scale, efficient orchestration of assets and resources, among others.

Thus, opportunity-seizing capability could regenerate competitive advantage (Teece, 2012) by brand enhancing performance, innovation and new product success, customer acquisition, retention and customer loyalty; and financial performance (Susanto, 2019); adaptability (Ateke & Nwulu, 2021); marketing resilience, (Ebenuwa, 2021); service innovation (Žitkiene et al., 2015); and new product adoption (Walugembe et al., 2017). Scholars are generally of the view that opportunity-seizing capability enhances firms' capacity to undertake activities required to push products through the value chain (Day, 2011); and that when adequately harnessed, enables firms deliver superior value (Lindblom et al., 2008); exploit new opportunities, engage with customers and build strong bonds with collaborators (Teece, 2012).

The foregoing raises the suspicion that opportunity-seizing capability will relate to various facets of business performance. Yet, in view of the aim of this study to undertake statistical examination and interpretation of the link between opportunity-seizing capability and business performance of SMEs agribusinesses, the following null hypotheses are formulated:

Ho1: Opportunity-seizing capability does not significantly relate to customer-base enlargement of SMEs in agribusinesses.

Ho2: Opportunity-seizing capability does not significantly relate to profitability of SMEs in agribusinesses.

Ho3: Opportunity-seizing capability does not significantly relate to portfolio expansion of SMEs in agribusinesses.

METHODOLOGY

This examen focuses on examining the nexus between opportunity-seizing capability and business performance of SMEs in agribusinesses. The study adopted a pragmatist viewpoint; and aligns with the position that a researcher should focus on a research problem; and not on methods, and should use a range of approaches available to understand a problem (Creswell & Creswell, 2017). The study upholds the uncertainty and subjectivity of phenomena; the belief that the physical senses can picture true reflection of reality (realist ontology); and that knowledge is concrete, hence transferable (positivist epistemology). The study also aligns with the notion that man's interaction with his environment is deterministic in nature, hence; relied on a quantitative approach to acquire primary data (nomothetic methodology) (Johnson et al., 2007).

The study adopted an explanatory research design and was conducted in a natural setting. 90 SMEs in agribusiness in Rivers State comprised the population of the study. This study took a census in lieu of the manageable size of the population of the study and based on the conviction that a larger sample size takes a researcher closer to reality. Structured questionnaire was used to collect primary data in a cross-sectional survey.

The validity of the instrument was determined through face, content and construct validity. Face validity was ascertained by experts consisting of members of the academia within marketing, organizational studies, and measurement and evaluation; and business practitioners with expertise in the subject of the study. Content validity was achieved by ensuring that the measurement scales are derived from literature; and mostly from instruments used by other researchers, with minimal modification where necessary. Construct validity was determined using exploratory factor analysis. Table 1 presents a summary of the test results.

Table 1: Summary of Results of Test of Validity

Variables	Number of Items	Factor Loadings
Opportunity-seizing capability	8	0.926
Performance of SMEs		
Customer-base enlargement	6	0.949
Profitability	5	0.868
Portfolio expansion	8	0.960

Source: SPSS output of data analysis on opportunity-seizing capability and business performance (2022).

Table 1 shows the results of construct validity of the instrument using through Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA). The analysis revealed that there is multicollinearity because all the variables have high factor loadings. This means, each of the items effectively measured what they were set to measure.

The reliability of the instrument on the other hand, was determined using the Cronbach's Alpha test of reliability with a threshold of 0.70 set by Nunally (1978). Table 2 provides a summary of the results of the test of reliability.

Table 2: Summary of Results of Test of Reliability

Variables	Number of Items	Cronbach's Alpha Coefficient
Opportunity-seizing capability	8	0.950
Performance of SMEs		
Customer-base enlargement	6	0.968
Profitability	5	0.957
Portfolio expansion	8	0.950

Source: SPSS output of data analysis on opportunity-seizing capability and business performance (2022).

Table 2 shows that all the variables in the study have high Cronbach's alpha coefficient. The reliability coefficients surpassed the minimum threshold 0.70 set by Nunally (1978). The instruments can therefore be considered reliable; and offering the required standard of precision and clarity. The evidence indicates the instrument adequately addresses the concerns of the study, thus admissible; and that the instrument can produce identical results if used at different times and in different contexts by different researchers.

The Pearson Product Moment correlation statistic was used to test the direction and magnitude of connection between opportunity-seizing capability and the proxies of business performance. The analyses was based on 77 copies of questionnaire, resenting 85.56% of administered questionnaire which were upon retrieval, found to reveal the absence of error cases with permissible (less than 10%) cases of missing values, and treated using mean imputations. These 77 copies were coded into the SPSS (version 24) software and used for the final analyses. The adopted confidence interval was 95%; and all hypotheses were tested based on a significance level of 0.05. Neuman's (2006) categorization scheme in Table 3 was employed to determine the magnitude and direction of relationships between variables, with a critical value = 0.01; and decision rule: reject null hypothesis if probability value < critical value and accept null hypothesis if probability value > critical value.

Table 3: Rho coefficient level of effects

Values	Interpretation
less than 0.19	Very weak relationship
0.20 – 0.39	Weak relationship
0.40 - 0.59	Moderate relationship
0.60 – 0.79	Strong relationship
0.80 – 0.99	Very strong relationship

Source: Neuman, W. L. (2006). *Social research methods: Quantitative and qualitative approaches (6th Edition)*. Allyn Bacon.

RESULTS AND INTERPRETATION

Univariate analyses

This sub-section presents and interprets result of descriptive analysis of study variables. The statistical techniques employed here, are descriptive and focus on describing average position and experiences of respondents on manifestation of attributes of variables under examination. Hence, mean, standard deviation and variance are used to assess the central tendencies and levels of dispersion of the responses of the study elements. The interpretation used 2.5 as the base mean.

Table 4: Descriptive analysis of opportunity-seizing capability

	N	Sum	Mean	Std. Dev.	Variance
Review marketing programmes and efforts to ensure alignment with market requirements	77	308	4.00	1.136	1.289
Make changes to organizational structure in order to leverage market opportunities	77	325	4.22	1.084	1.174
Dedicate enough time to implement ideas for marketing programmes and improve current ones	77	323	4.19	.987	.975
Constantly implement new marketing policies or strategies to take advantage of identified market opportunities	77	326	4.23	1.037	1.076
At tune marketing processes to market demands	77	320	4.16	.859	.739
Organize for innovation and integrate or allocate new resources to take advantage of a market opportunity.	77	317	4.12	.959	.920
Routinely refine and improve products, knowledge, and traditional markets to remain relevant in the face of change	77	318	4.13	1.005	1.009
Innovate value in response to environmental changes	77	317	4.12	.858	.736
Valid N (listwise)	77				

Source: SPSS output of data analysis on opportunity-seizing capability and business performance (2022).

Table 4 shows results of descriptive analysis using sum, mean, standard deviation and variance. As shown on the Table, the entire responses generated high mean scores greater than 3.00. This means, most of the respondents were on the higher side of the scale. In the result, question 2 has the highest sum of 325 and hence the highest mean score of 4.22. By having the highest mean score, question 2 has the strongest influence on opportunity seizing capability. However, question 1 has the highest standard deviation of 1.136 and variance of 1.289 respectively, which means question 1 has the most data variations.

Table 5: Descriptive analysis on customer-base enlargement

	N	Sum	Mean	Std. Dev.	Variance
Experience increase in new customer acquisition	77	323	4.19	.946	.896
Achieve increase in retention of existing customers	77	329	4.27	1.120	1.254
Sell more products to existing customers	77	324	4.21	1.116	1.246
Expand the scope of business with existing customers	77	320	4.16	1.125	1.265
Frequently leverage cross-selling and upselling opportunities	77	332	4.31	1.016	1.033
Achieve increase in revenue through purchases from new customers	77	340	4.42	1.030	1.062
Valid N (listwise)	77				

Source: SPSS output of data analysis on opportunity-seizing capability and business performance (2022).

From results of the analysis on Table 5, the entire responses generated high mean scores greater than 3.00. This means, most of the respondents were on the higher side of the scale. In the result, item 6 has the highest sum of 340 and hence the highest mean score of 4.42. By having the highest mean score, question 6 has the strongest influence on customer-base enlargement. However, item 4 has the highest standard deviation of 1.125 and variance of 1.265 respectively, which means question 4 has the most data variations.

Table 6: Descriptive analysis on profitability

	N	Sum	Mean	Std. Dev.	Variance
Generate revenue in excess of cost of operations	77	315	4.09	1.066	1.136
Achieve increased return on assets	77	311	4.04	.924	.854
Achieve increased return on equity	77	309	4.01	.939	.881
Have a high capacity to make profit	77	320	4.16	1.148	1.317
Attract investors or gain loans on account of your expected cash flows	77	333	4.32	1.044	1.091
Valid N (listwise)	77				

Source: SPSS output of data analysis on opportunity-seizing capability and business performance (2022).

From results of the analysis on Table 6, the entire responses generated high mean scores greater than 3.00. This means, most of the respondents were on the higher side of the scale. In the result, item 5 has the highest sum of 333 and hence the highest mean score of 4.32. By having the highest mean score, item 5 has the strongest influence on profitability. However, item 4 has the highest standard deviation of 1.148 and variance of 1.317 respectively, which means item 4 has the most data variations.

Table 7: Descriptive Analysis on Portfolio Expansion

	N	Sum	Mean	Std. Dev.	Variance
Allocate resources or invest in areas with good future potentials	77	315	4.09	1.102	1.215
Introduce a brand or product that is new to its operations or its market	77	325	4.22	.898	.806
Expand business interests within its industry	77	317	4.12	.946	.894
Expand business interests across industries	77	326	4.23	1.087	1.181
Optimize resources by creating new business interests	77	320	4.16	.933	.870
Create new streams or sources of revenue and profit	77	324	4.21	.978	.956
Integrate other participants in the value chain with a view to expanding its business scope	77	334	4.34	1.108	1.227
Expand its business into other states, regions or zones	77	333	4.32	.938	.880
Valid N (listwise)	77				

Source: SPSS output of data analysis on opportunity-seizing capability and business performance (2022).

From results of the analysis as displayed on Table 7 shows that all responses generated high mean scores greater than 3.00. This means, most of the respondents were on the higher side of the scale. In the result, item 7 has the highest sum of 334 and hence the highest mean score of 4.34. By having the highest mean score, item 7 has the strongest influence on portfolio expansion. In the same vein, item 7 has the highest standard deviation of 1.108 and variance of 1.227 respectively, which means item 7 has the most data variations.

Bivariate analysis

This sub-section presents and interprets results of test of linear correlation between opportunity-seizing capability and indices of business performance of SMEs in agribusinesses. The Pearson Product Moment Correlation served as the test statistic. An important requirement for the use of Pearson Product Moment Correlation in measuring relationship between variables is that there must exist a linear relationship between the variables in focus, and which must be identifiable from the data distribution. A linear relationship exists between variables when and if increase in one prompts an increase in the other; or increase in one variable leads to a decrease in the other.

Table 8: Correlation between opportunity-seizing capability and proxies of business performance

		Opportunity-seizing capability	Customer-base enlargement	Profitability	Portfolio expansion
Opportunity-seizing capability	Pearson Correlation	1	.843**	.821**	.875**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000	.000	.000
	N	77	77	77	77
Customer-base enlargement	Pearson Correlation	.843**	1	.823**	.911**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000		.000	.000
	N	77	77	77	77
Profitability	Pearson Correlation	.821**	.823**	1	.833**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000		.000
	N	77	77	77	77
Portfolio expansion	Pearson Correlation	.875**	.911**	.833**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000	
	N	77	77	77	77

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Source: SPSS output of data analysis on opportunity-seizing capability and business performance (2022).

Results of test of correlation in Table 8 showed opportunity-seizing capability is the treatment variable in the model, while customer-base enlargement, profitability and portfolio expansion are the outcome variables. The correlation coefficient (r) shows the magnitude and direction of relationship between the variables. The analysis revealed a correlation coefficient (r) of 0.843 on the relationship between opportunity-seizing capability and customer-base enlargement. This high correlation coefficient means that the connection between opportunity-seizing capability and customer-base enlargement is very strong. The analysis equally showed that the probability value of the relationship between the variables is less than the critical value (i.e. $p = 0.000 < 0.01$). This means, opportunity-seizing capability has very strong, positive and statistically significant relationship with customer-base enlargement ($r = 0.843$, $N = 77$, $p = 0.000 < 0.01$). In view of this significant relationship between opportunity-seizing capability and customer-base enlargement, as revealed by the analyses, the study rejected the null hypothesis which states that there opportunity-seizing capability does not significantly relate to customer-base enlargement of SMEs.

Table 8 also demonstrates that the correlation coefficient (r) between opportunity-seizing capability and profitability of small and medium-scale agribusinesses is 0.821. This high P(r) value means that the relationship between opportunity-seizing capability and profitability is very strong. Similarly, the analysis showed a probability value of 0.000 in the relationship between opportunity-seizing capability and profitability, which is less than the critical value (i.e. $p = 0.000 < 0.01$). This implies that opportunity-seizing capability has a very strong, positive and statistically significant relationship with profitability ($r = 0.821$, $N = 77$, $p = 0.000 < 0.01$). Therefore, we reject the null hypothesis which states that opportunity-seizing capability does not significantly relate to profitability of SMEs agribusinesses.

Table 8 further showed a correlation coefficient (r) of 0.875 on the relationship between opportunity-seizing capability and portfolio expansion. This very high P(r) value means that the relationship between opportunity-seizing capability and portfolio expansion of SMEs agribusinesses is very strong. The analysis also showed that the probability value of the relationship between the variables is less than the critical value (i.e. $p = 0.000 < 0.01$). This means, opportunity-seizing capability has a very strong, positive and statistically significant relationship with portfolio expansion ($r = 0.875$, $N = 77$, $p = 0.000 < 0.01$). Therefore, we reject the null hypothesis which states that opportunity-seizing capability does not significantly relate to portfolio expansion of SMEs in agribusinesses.

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

This study focused on probing the association between opportunity-seizing capability and business performance. The statistical tests conducted revealed that opportunity-seizing capability has very strong positive and statistically significant relationship with business performance in terms of customer-base enlargement, profitability and portfolio expansion. The findings support that of Kachouie et al. (2016) which established a relationship between dynamic marketing capabilities and business performance through revenue growth rates, profit margins and return on investment. The current findings also align with research reports which show that opportunity-seizing capability enhances firms' capacity to undertake activities required to push products through value chains (Day, 2011); and that when adequately harnessed, enables delivery of superior customer value (Lindblom et al., 2008); exploit new opportunities, engage with customers and build strong bonds with collaborators (Teece, 2012).

The current findings are also in tandem with the view that opportunity-seizing enable firms respond to identified market opportunities by developing new products, processes or business models that orchestrate a strategic fit between the firm and such opportunities (Ateke & Nwulu, 2021; Takahashi et al., 2016). The findings cohere with the position that opportunity-seizing enable firms align operations and make decisions that foster desired market positions (Tempelmayr et al., 2019); and develops through firms' efforts to organize for innovation, as well as integrate and allocate new and existing resources to take advantage of market and marketing opportunities (Ateke & Nwulu, 2021). The findings thus corroborate the dynamic capabilities model that ability to recognize market opportunities is essential to achievement of sustainability and competitiveness (Teece, 2012). The firm must however, be able to seize such opportunities by (re)structuring business models, revising strategies and (re)combining resources to enhance their readiness to exploit the opportunities (Žitkiene et al., 2015; Kindström et al., 2013)

The current findings further support reports that ability to seize immediate and emerging market opportunities enlarge firms' customer base, improve their profitability and expand their business portfolio (Takahashi et al., 2016); especially, where the firm is able to reconfigure existing products and marketing operations or extend current offerings (Popadiuk et al., 2018). This way, opportunity-seizing capability regenerate competitive advantage (Teece, 2012) by enhancing brand performance through innovation and new product success; customer acquisition, retention and customer loyalty (Susanto, 2019); company adaptability (Ateke & Nwulu, 2021); marketing resilience, (Ebenuwa, 2022); innovation and innovativeness (Ateke & Harcourt, 2022; Walugembe et al., 2017; Žitkiene et al., 2015).

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The merits associated with identifying and responding appropriately to current and emerging market conditions that create threats and opportunities for firms, depending on their resources and how well they are able to utilize them to respond to market conditions has been canvassed extensively by scholars. This has also underscored the need for firms to keep abreast with trends in their operating environment.

Firms often perform better when they respond adequately to identified market opportunities. Firms respond to opportunities by figuring out creatively ways to obtain, combine, and deploy resources aligns their operations to environmental conditions. This is however, enhanced by their ability to continuously monitor the environment to identify and exploit current and emerging opportunities.

Firms often develop new products and processes, new strategies and business models, new markets and distribution channels, etc. to respond to sensed or identified opportunities. Therefore, firms improve their performance by monitoring, identifying and making sense out of market conditions. This study focused on assessing the correlation between opportunity-seizing capability and business performance of SMEs in agribusiness. In view of the results of the empirical analysis and the discussion that followed; and which situated the results within extant literature, the study concludes that opportunity-seizing capability strongly relates to business performance of SMEs in agribusiness through customer-base enlargement, profitability and portfolio expansion; and that business performance of SMEs in agribusiness largely depend on their ability seize or take advantage of present of evolving market conditions. The study thus recommends that SMEs in agribusiness that seek to improve their business performance should develop the capacity to interpret market intelligence appropriately and orchestrate business models, processes, strategies and resources to exploit opportunities presented by such intelligence.

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