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Contingency Theory and Cultural Dynamics: Implication on Entrepreneurship Development in Nigeria

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ABSTRACT: This research aimed to investigate and uncover the critical role that contingency theory plays in a dynamic cultural context, as well as its implication on entrepreneurship development in Nigeria. The study's introduction provided a fundamental review of the relevance of contingency theory in an entrepreneurial culture and its impact on entrepreneurship development in Nigeria. It identified the problems associated with entrepreneurship development in Nigeria as a lack of succession framework, inadequate record keeping, incorrect recruitment procedures, and overreliance on decision-making on a single individual. This research also included a theoretical and empirical review. Four dimensions of culture were captured in the study: power distance culture, individualism culture, masculinity culture, and uncertainty avoidance culture. Considering all of the literature reviewed, it was determined that contingency theory is the best strategy for managers or entrepreneurs to take in a dynamic cultural context.

KEYWORDS: Contingency theory, culture dynamics, and Entrepreneurship.

INTRODUCTION

In contemporary global business organizations, scholars and entrepreneurs have acknowledged the need to adopt a contingency perspective to achieve significant impact in a dynamic business environment (Adebisi et al., 2018). Fundamentally, the contingency view queries the best way to administer or coordinate business activities, considering the varying environmental circumstances. The vital foundation of situational concept buttresses the role environment plays in the functionality of an organization, which defines and creates the most appropriate technique to galvanize and administer venture. Entrepreneurship ventures do not function in a vacuum; they require the environment in which they operate. Also, the culture likewise influences the expectations, procedures, achievements, and poor performance of any commercial venture. Hence, a reciprocal link or interface subsists amongst commercial ventures and their environmental settings. The business environmental setting is the physiological and functioning elements that comprise the interior and exterior that delay a business organization's course of events (Kotler, 2001). These factors include customers, business competitors, suppliers, distributors, industry trends, government programs, the economy, demography, social and cultural factors, innovations, and technological advancements.

There is increasing indication that a viable business environment in which an entrepreneur functions is pivotal for advancing that organization's rapid and viable growth (Bello, 2011). Kotler, 2001 stated that the association between entrepreneurship and its situational context is a symbiotic relationship: culture portends influence on the commercial venture, whereas the commercial activities also influence certain facets of its business surroundings. Hence, providing a supportive business environment translates to better profitability in the business context, increased prosperity, job creation, and, ultimately, advancement in social and economic growth. To appreciate an entrepreneur's output, one must identify the internal and external fundamentals in the company's operating environment that upset their efficiency and effectiveness. Given the volatility and uncertainty inherent in Nigerian entrepreneurship, the most realistic approach for entrepreneurs in managing business ventures is to research how to best adapt the activities of business organizations to the reality of the prevailing environmental circumstances (Achumba, 2006). The survival of entrepreneurship is imperative for the economy and society (Ramirez & Lim, 2021). As such, it has been a subject of extreme intellectual inquiry (Halabi & Lussier,2014). With the increasing acceptance of entrepreneurship as a bedrock for sustainable economic development (Olorunshola, 2001), developing nations such as Nigeria have shown considerable interest in their development, establishment, and expansion. This sector's anticipated contribution to economic growth, poverty reduction, and job creation must be revised (Ihua, 2012; Odunayo, 2014). The scholarly work of Makinde (2015) suggested that internal components ranging from mindset and behaviour to external issues have contributed to the optimum performance of the sector in Nigeria. Key factors influencing poor performance in entrepreneurship include a need for a succession framework, inadequate record keeping, incorrect recruitment procedures, and overreliance on decision-making on a single individual (Onugu, 2005). The organizational structure is another major obstacle that hampers the success of entrepreneurship. An organizational structure is usually predicted to ease job performance; nevertheless, failure is unavoidable unless the organizational structure is reviewed and upgraded regularly following the demands of the business environment (Kabuoh, 2016). Owuala (2001) established that many entrepreneurs need to gain management skills to manage their businesses successfully despite the training and workshops often structured for them. Business culture has damagingly affected this development area, adversely impacting the nation's economy. Studies show that entrepreneurial cultural dynamics significantly impact variables and industry effectiveness; hence, it is pivotal to tackle this subject and consider appropriate activities to boost entrepreneurial business culture (Karimi & Abedin, 2015). Majama and Magang (2017) stated that scholarly works on entrepreneurship had yet to receive the necessary attention from scholars and researchers, who focused more on their sustainability and disappointing performance rate, frequently attributed to insufficient resources, such as capital, skilled labour, and land. However, the unavailability of required resources can impede businesses from making use of required energy; entrepreneurship experts maintained that accessibility of such input, a considerable number of businesses do nose-dive as a result of inadequate deliberate planning occasioned by poor business management, inadequate managerial training and absence of creativity (Eniola & Ektebang, 2014; Kraja & Osmani, 2013; Majama & Magang, 2017; Nwankwo et al., 2012). Therefore, this study aims to theoretically determine the role of contingency theory and cultural dynamics: implications on entrepreneurship development in Nigeria.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Contingency Theory

Situational theory research gained prominence in the 1950s in various specialized fields of study (Zsolt, 2012). According to him, the growth of contingency theory was shown by academic research in sociology that said Weber's bureaucracy theory was incapable of describing the several existent kinds of organizational bureaucracy. Dobak and Antal (2010) averred that situational theory is the adoption of different approaches in different conditions that may address prevailing circumstances. Situational theory's historical viewpoint may be traced back to Burns and Stalker in the 1960s. Burns and Stalker (1961) investigated the impact of the external environment on organizational structure (Reid & Smith, 2000). According to Lawrence and Lorsch (1967), "contingency theory" was coined in response to sub-unit integration and differentiation concepts. As a result, the beginnings of situational theory may be traced back to organizational studies, which were backed by philosophers who disagreed with the classical school of management. He claimed that administrative control should be decentralized (Donaldson, 1999).

According to Fagundes et al. (2010), the contingency theory rose to popularity as a result of the work of Woodward (1958), Burns and Stalker (1961), and Lawrence Lorsch (1967). Joan Woodward (1958) established that current skills impact every firm's operating period and that a strong link exists between organizational structure and predictability of production techniques; due to scientific discovery, companies shift from a mechanical structure to an organic structure. It is important to note that firms with features and settings of mechanistic compositions are rigid and bureaucratic. Decision-making is vested in the authority, consistent and established positions, and at the same time, executive decisions taken at the Summit of the Organization (Silva, 2005).

Firms with elements and characteristics of organic structures have to do with distinct guidelines and processes, as workers are motivated by complex needs (Silva, 2005). Burns and Stalker (1961) examined the role of external work climate on the management design and economic growth of 20 British and Scottish firms in manufacturing activities, and his study maintains that mechanical design, in which the environment is stable, is more efficient.

However, if the business climate is dynamic, Burns and Stalker (1961) claimed that it is required to have an organic organizational structure in which decision-making is decentralized. It implies that individuals with superior professionalism or experience in management should be given pivotal roles in decision-making. It will secure survival in a dynamic business environment. Burns and Stalker (1961) state that organizational makeup successfully responds to dynamic conditions such as technology economics. A workplace with an organic structure tends to have innovation as the foundation of survival rather than the mechanical bureaucratic system (Morgan, 2002). Lawrence and Lorsch (1967) studied the association among the structural elements of the workplace and actions to be carried out to manage several situations of the economy. The study of Lawrence and Lorsch (1967) supported the situational theory presenting the diverse degrees of dynamics in science and technology; organizations require different skills in dealing with these environmental changes through diversity and incorporation. The model stresses that there is no best way to manage and that "everything is relative" situations affect decision-making, such as organizational design, technology, work climate, and policy (Pereira et al., 2012). The contingency theory disagrees with the classical school of thought of management, which supports using a single approach that can be operationalized by different workplaces and is effective in all circumstances (Silva, 2014). Calia and Guerrini (2006) stated that components in the firm's configuration are decided by applying suitable communication structures in arriving at decisions that enable achieving the organization's goals.

According to Dentchev et al. (2018), the contingency approach is the primary theoretical lens used to evaluate organizations. The situational model emphasizes that companies can progress strategically by corresponding matching of the uncontrollable variables (external environment) and uncertainties to gain the required competitiveness, business enhancement, performance, and sustainability. The contingency theoretical approach is a significant organizational theory that recognizes that organizational systems are interrelated with their environment and that diverse settings require diverse organizational relationships for the effective working of the enterprise (Hofstede, 2001).

This theoretical viewpoint is based on the assumption that there can be no universal rule that applies to all circumstances (Kabuoh, 2013). The situational perspective on organizational learning gained momentum in the 1970s as a flexible framework for synthesizing the critical concepts of open systems theory with the results of objective research undertaken at all phases of organizational analysis (Ihua, 2009). The organizational situational approach was first explicitly given in the book Organization and Environment by Lawrence and Lorsch (1967), which detailed the results of an experience study of 10 commercial organizations functioning in various environmental settings. The research concluded that alternative organizational principles and theories were appropriate in various environmental situations and, most importantly, in different areas of the same enterprise (Ihua, 2009).

The contingency theory perspective emphasizes the responsibility put on organizations by their environment, notably regarding market size and technological development (Mihet, 2013). The situational viewpoint reports the principles methodically. This contingency model will promote the integration of modern challenges and concerns and give a mechanism for analyzing the state and value of viewpoint and research in this field by analyzing the organization as a social system from a management standpoint. Chua (2009) proposed the following contingency theory approach principles on which it is built.

a) The contingency approach to organization postulates that the operation of an organization may be understood within the perspective of biological organism principles.

b) It is founded on an open system concept, which considers an organization an existing structure inside a larger ecosystem.

c) The system and its surroundings have a symbiotic influence and relationship. The organization is seen as a subsystem of a larger social framework, of which its environment is a component.

d) The idea emphasizes the organization as a self-contained entity separated from the larger environment by a natural border.

b) It concerns the association's view of the connection between the organization and its surroundings.

f) It is thought that the critical interaction between the environment and the organization may be understood as a reflection of the organization's "need" to survive.

From the above, it is clear that this theory's central and fundamental emphasis is that organizational systems are inextricably linked to the environment in which they function. However, according to Kabuoh (2013), performance is the organization's capacity to take advantage of its surroundings and access limited resources. To that end, because different organizations require different environments for optimal efficacy and performance (considering various sources, legal, political, technological, and economic factors), the social context in which SMEs operate will help to support the expected performance level. According to Hofstede (2001), effective organizations take an approach to organization and administration that agrees with the environment's needs. A company's survival, performance, or failure is mainly determined by the appropriate balance maintained or not maintained in the organization's environment.

As a result, there is a more significant need for interdependence with multiple work groups and the environment to ensure performance. The measure of interdependence within and across these variables remains critical for SMEs' efficiency and performance. According to this theoretical perspective, the performance of SMEs is determined by the circumstances in which they operate since the environment plays a vital role in organizational effectiveness and efficiency.

Culture, defined as a society's shared beliefs, norms, and values, is a critical environmental factor that aggregately programs and influences business people within a specific community, tribal group, section, or nation while also causing changes across national and regional boundaries (Mucller & Thomas, 2001). Culture encompasses belief systems emphasizing business perception, interpretation, and management practices in a specific community (Osadebe, 2015). Culture consists of at least three components: what people believe, what they do, and the products they use or make. As a result, the function of culture in entrepreneurship is critical, and the degree of business involvement in a state is determined by cultural norms (Ligthelm & Cank, 2002). Because culture is about ongoing change, activity, or progress, it may be considered dynamic. In today's world, business initiatives are intertwined with forces of complicated socio-cultural, economic, political, and technical aspects that express complex issues for SME entrepreneurs (Tesfayohannes, 2012). Cultural differences exist across nations and impact the path of participatory entrepreneurial management in enterprises; in this perspective, culture is "the process by which a group of individuals tackle problems and put to rights dilemmas" (Trompenaars, 2003). When cultural boundaries are crossed, the difficulties frequently concern the failure of management procedures that take place incorporation, ignoring cultural differences, attempting to relate to foreign nations companies' management techniques contracted from the unique cultural environment and tend to make progress in that cultural environment. It is critical to recognize and accept cultural differences and to remember that there is no one optimal approach to managing an organization (Trompenaars &Woolliams, 2003).

Shalom H. Schwartz (Schwartz, 1992, 1999) is credited with developing an alternative essential theory, which focuses on cultural standards as the starting point for "the ways that societal institutions (e.g., the family, education, economic, political, and religious systems) work, their objective, and their method of operation" (Schwartz, 1999). He arrived at seven types of standards, thoroughly thought out sideways with three bipolar measures depicting various approaches to addressing numerous challenges people experience in daily life and entrepreneurial activities: (1) conservatism vs. autonomy, (2) hierarchy versus equality. (3) Harmony vs. mastery (Schwartz, 1999).

Trompenaars and Hampden-Turner have defined seven cultural dimensions as pairs of opposing behavioural viewpoints that may be recognized in any country. (1) universalism vs. particularism, (2) individualism versus communitarianism, (3) neutral versus emotive, (4) specific versus diffuse, and (5) accomplishment versus ascription are the five most important criteria (relationships with other people). Others include (6) sequential vs. synchronous time and (7) internal versus external direction (Trompenaars & Hampden-Turner, 1997).

According to Kluckhohn and Strodtbeck, there are five possible explanations for value orientation: Hofstede (2001) defines five types of orientations: (1) human nature orientation, (2) man-nature orientation, (3) time orientation, (4) activity orientation, and (5) relational orientation. Of course, this system of cultural dimensions is far from the only one developed by researchers in the trans-cultural management field. One more common idea is that proposed by Geert Hofstede after a comprehensive mapping of over 50 countries and initially intended to assess job values. (1) power distance, (2) individualism, (3) masculinity, (4) uncertainty avoidance, and (5) long-term orientation (Hofstede, 2001).

Power Distance

This term refers to accepting differences in hierarchy and authority among persons in the workplace or society. It also refers to the relational control or authority between workers and bosses and the acceptance of uneven power and authority distribution (Hofstede, 2001). It shows how a boss with more power may influence a subordinate's performance to the extent that the subordinate can regulate the boss's behaviour. According to Kreiser, Marino, and Weaver (2001), significant power distances show a lopsided arrogation of power, substantial levels of structures, and an established authority framework. It demonstrated no connection between the firm's position and the value placed on the employee's ability to be courteous and respectfully report to those in power. Tsui and Windsor (2001) state that a job-centered relationship is more accessible in highly centralized workplaces. The authors defined this connection as one that primarily supports a high level of productivity from workers rather than requiring their commitment to the organization's overall functioning. The employer's expectations of the employee are established in this association. According to McKenna (1998), the fundamental management issue in an organization is ensuring that people accomplish their duties precisely as described in a high-power distance workplace. In a high-power distance cultural setting, a boss is expected to make decisions without consulting with their subordinates because employees may interpret their involvement in decisions made by their bosses as evidence of incompetence or flaws on the part of the managers (Francesco & Chen, 2000).

Individualism

Individualism denotes an organization in which the connections between individuals are tenuous. Individualistic societies emphasize self-centeredness and, more often than not, personal ambitions. As a result, Hofstede (2001) defined individualistic culture as the interaction between a person and a collectivity inside a specified culture. Hofstede stated that businesspeople choose competitiveness in task performance over teamwork and believe in a non-supportive structure. They would also recognize that purposeful activities are more important than chance in accomplishment and would be less concerned about disappointment. Groups with individualistic cultures value individual rights and opportunities, ensuring individual issues and setting and benefiting personal goals. It reveals the level to which Individual SMEs expect personal liberty to formulate decisions. In individualist cultures, self-reliance is anchored on people respecting their values and beliefs, and it is essential for aggressive and creative behaviour, economic development, and possibly achievement-focused (Lockett, 1993). Collectivism can be defined as the degree to which people from a very early age are integrated into strong, unified groups. Collectivism is associated with shared values, social standards, teamwork, responsibilities, interpersonal coherence, and team cohesion (Triandes, 1995). Collectivity underscores mutual relationships, interdependence, symbiotic relationships, and group achievement.

Masculinity

Masculinity is defined as the degree to which culturally strong-minded gender responsibilities play an essential role in society, or it then means that it is the point to which principles like boldness, performance, achievement, and competition, which Hoststede linked with masculinity, prefer values associated to the standard of living, keeping cordial personal relationships, service, care for weak and solidarity, "which is connected with femininity (Hotstede & Soeters, 2002). To Hofstede, in a masculine society, man is likely to be firm, complex, and rely on measurable accomplishment. In contrast, females are believed to be unassuming, caring, and kindhearted with the standard of living. Society is referred to as feminine when emotional gender roles go beyond: males and females are expected to be unassuming, loving, and kindhearted. (Hotstede 2005).

Uncertainty Avoidance

Uncertainty Avoidance specifies the penchant for certainty and apprehension with shapeless or uncertain circumstances. Also, it clarifies a culture's disregard for inexact, unpredictable, or unambiguous circumstances. Hofstede (2001) describes this as unacceptable behavior with doubt and uncertainty and assesses attitudes and organizations that offer certainty and consistency. Hofstede stated that values varied in degrees of acceptability for uncertainty and decided that structures for accepting uncertainty are, at minimum, partially affected by the cultural makeup of a nation. Cultures tried to control ambiguity through structured organizations through procedures, innovation, rules, and rites. This approach aims to regulate the activities and methods of a set of individuals in a precise nation. Cultural activities that encourage doubt avoidance favor order in firms, organizations, and individual relationships and will continuously favor planned programs. Mihet (2013) affirmed that developing economies are more disposed to be uncertainty reluctant than advanced economies.

However, SME owners in a smaller doubt-avoiding nation begin a new company that should build such assets periodically. This means that culture plays a significant part in entrepreneurial attributes (Block & Walter, 2012; Ozgen, 2002). Momentarily, business ownership is related to uncertainty, which involves novelty and flexibility. It is a positive attribute in a low uncertainty avoidance society (Shinner et al., 2012).

CONCLUSION

The challenges plaguing entrepreneurship development are far from over. The study identified internal components ranging from mindset and behavior to external issues as contributing factors to the optimum performance of the sector in Nigeria. Key factors influencing poor performance in entrepreneurship include a need for a succession framework, inadequate record keeping, incorrect recruitment procedures, and overreliance on decision-making on a single individual. Hence, the study evaluated the implication of contingency theory and cultural dynamics on the survival and growth of SMEs in Nigeria. The theory that suggests appropriateness and aptness is contingency. From the literature above, the survival and performance of SMEs in Nigeria seem discouraging. This study facilitated the understanding of variables choices dependent on each other from the viewpoint of contingency theory, which is relatively linked to cultural context and sustainable growth of SMEs. Also, this study has significant implications for entrepreneurs, stakeholders, strategic administrators, and researchers. The kind of strategy, policy, and management approach adopted in businesses should be considered in tandem with prevailing cultural (environmental) circumstances, which contingency solicited for in the comity of theories in a business context.

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