

# Corporate Entrepreneurship, Innovation and Sustained Competitive Advantage in the Nigeria Manufacturing Firms

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## Abstract

This study examines the relationship between corporate entrepreneurship, innovation and sustained competitive advantage in the Nigeria manufacturing firms. Corporate entrepreneurship and innovation has been of interest to scholars and practitioners due to its beneficial effect on competitiveness. A survey research design was used. A simple and systematic sampling technique was used to determine the sample size. A total of 263 questionnaires were distributed to senior managers or CEO, and middle level staff at each manufacturing firm surveyed. Data from the study were collected analyzed using descriptive statistics, product moment correlation and regression analysis with statistical package for social science (SPSS V. 20). The results of the study revealed that there is a significant relationship between corporate entrepreneurship, innovation and sustained competitive advantage in the Nigeria manufacturing firm. Thus, corporate entrepreneurship and innovation has significant impact on the sustainability of the Nigeria manufacturing firms. The F-value (159.417) indicates that the model is good and that corporate entrepreneurship and innovation is a good predictor of sustainable competitive advantage in the Nigeria manufacturing firm. The study shows that the resources needed by organizations to achieve sustainable competitive advantage are mainly those that are imperfectly imitable and organizational specific procedures (organizational exploitation) developed overtime. It is this uniqueness which is not tradable that gives a firm an edge. It is hereby recommended that manufacturing firm in Nigeria should adopt corporate entrepreneurship and innovation as a panacea for survival as this will help them surmount the challenge of obsolescence and achieve sustained competitive advantages.

## Keywords

Corporate Entrepreneurship, Innovation, Sustainable Competitive Advantage, Process Performance, Entrepreneurial Orientation

## 1. Introduction

Business organizations in Nigeria are faced with intense competition thereby making their survival and growth of any organization dependent on their ability to offer greater value

to customers. Value creation is of core concern to organizations and the ability to offer greater value depends on the ability of the firm to utilize resources efficiently more than the competitors. This often, results from superior processes and technical know-how. As a result, some organizations give their employees the opportunity to

innovate. This leads to corporate entrepreneurship.

Then, entrepreneurship was seen narrowly as starting of new business or restricted to activities of small and medium enterprises. Although this is most evident of entrepreneurial activities, it is the most simplification of entrepreneurship (Mokaya, 2012). This view holds that at the growth stage of organization in its life circle, it is bureaucratized thereby foreclosing entrepreneurial activities. The idea ignores the fact that major innovations especially resource intensive technologies emerge in large companies. Confining entrepreneurship to start ups of new business ignores the instrumentality of entrepreneurship in acquiring and maintaining competitive advantage (Mokaya, 2012) which has now become the basis of survival in the competitive global market. Many authors have emphasized that companies of different sizes need entrepreneurial behaviors to survive and perform competitively (Barringer & Bluedon, 1999). This has led to tremendous growth in past few decades on body of literature on corporate entrepreneurship though without consensus on approaches or types.

Corporate entrepreneurship is a process by which individuals inside organizations pursue opportunities without regard to resources they currently control (Stevenson & Jarillo, 1990) in (Mokaya, 2012). To Olga, Benoit & Olivier, (2010), corporate entrepreneurship is a combination of formal and informal induced and autonomous activities of employees at all levels within an organization. Thornberry (2003) describes corporate entrepreneurship as an attempt to take both the mindset and skill set demonstrated by successful start-up entrepreneurs and inculcate these characteristics into the cultures and activities of a large company. These mindset and skill are captured by Olga, Benoit, & Olivier, (2002) when they define entrepreneurial behaviors as the discovery, evaluation and exploitation of entrepreneurial opportunities.

In Nigeria today, manufacturing firms have from time to time searched for new adventures for the purpose of having competitive advantages over their rivals. According to Chandy and Narasimhan (2011), nearly all firms including startups, global partner alliances and major corporations are determined to make full use of opportunities in the product market by the means of visionary, innovative and proactive behavior. Therefore, the capability of conducting oneself in an entrepreneurial manner is gaining importance in several work circumstances (Dean, Shook & Payne, 2007). Consequently, practitioners and scholars have interest in the identification of factors within the organization as well as in the environment that have an effect in the firm's entrepreneurial behavior. Within the factors, the conduct of the leader as well as his/her strategies have the ability of becoming significant in energizing people, demonstrating entrepreneurial innovativeness, continuously looking out for newer ventures and going after them, taking risk, operating in newer areas, directing and inspiring the people strategically (Harris & Gibson, 2008).

However, newly established firms or start-ups firms in Nigeria can contribute to the process of economic

development in a positive way (Baldwin & Gellatly, 2003). If the young firm is to survive and/or flourish, it must develop itself from the inception and start-up phase on in a persistent way (Gray, 2002). Following, start-ups – as existing companies - can contribute to the industrial transition via the growth that occurs as these firms develop and expand the scope of their activities (Baldwin & Gellatly, 2003). In other words, start-ups can benefit from trying to preserve their entrepreneurial posture throughout the subsequent development phases. Corporate entrepreneurship in general and innovation in particular are often brought forward in this context as a desired tool to suit the action to the word (Baldwin & Gellatly, 2003; Drucker, 1985; Hsueh & Tu, 2004). After all, it is seen as an instrument for keeping up the entrepreneurial spirit by means of business development, revenue growth, and pioneering the development of new products, services and processes (Lumpkin & Dess, 1996; Miles & Covin, 2002).

Manufacturing firms in Nigeria are facing many challenges and problems. These constitute major hurdle to effective local and global competitiveness. As a result, Nigeria remains a mono-product economy, remains underdeveloped or is often said to be developing. This article aims at starting to bridge this gap and investigates to which extent Nigeria manufacturing firms can safeguard their entrepreneurial flair, thus securing the sustained progression from the start-up phase, enhancing their chances of survival and stimulating their growth prospects. As mentioned earlier, innovation is considered to be excellent for this purpose as it embodies the entrepreneurial spirit and stimulates the growth, development and performance capabilities of new firms (Baldwin & Gellatly, 2003; Drucker, 1985; Hsueh & Tu, 2004).

In this article we explore the relationship between corporate entrepreneurship, innovation and sustainable competitive advantage in the Nigeria manufacturing firms; evaluating the impact of corporate entrepreneurship and innovation on sustainable competitive advantage in the Nigeria manufacturing firms. This study started with the introduction of the term corporate entrepreneurship, innovation and sustainable competitive advantage in the Nigeria manufacturing firms relying on the works of past researchers. This was then followed by the research methodology, analyses of data and consequently the conclusion and implication for management.

## 2. Literature Review

### 2.1. Corporate Entrepreneurship

Entrepreneurship is one of the most powerful drivers of growth and prosperity in the global economy. Entrepreneurship according to different contexts is defined differently by authors; Morrison (2006) defined entrepreneurship as forming and growing something valuable from virtually nothing; process starts from creating or grasping an opportunity, and then pursuing it. Heilbrunn

(2005:422) defined it as “a dynamic process involving opportunities, individuals, organizational contexts, risks, innovation and resources. As a process, entrepreneurship is applicable to organizations of all sizes and types.” Thus, Entrepreneurs generate variety by exploiting opportunities, and creating new ventures. (Tiessen, 1997).

In Nigeria context, Ige (2007) sees entrepreneurship as a pre disposition towards the establishment and operation of business venture by any individual, either alone or along with others, including government for the sake of making profit or social surplus in order to accumulate wealth social or real.

A number of authors have emphasised entrepreneurship as the primary act underpinning innovation (Amit, Glosten, and Muller, 1993; Drucker, 1985; McGrath, 1996; Stevenson and Jarillo, 1990), which also resonates with Schumpeter's (1961) view of entrepreneurship, as the primary catalyst for innovation. All of these views are, however, concerned almost exclusively with entrepreneurial activity as a radical change mechanism. Evidence suggests however that this might not always be the case (Afuah, 2003). In contrast, corporate entrepreneurship is held to promote entrepreneurial behaviours within an organisation (Echols and Neck, 1998). It uses the fundamentals of management, while adopting a behavioural style that challenges bureaucracy and encourages innovation (Barringer & Bluedorn, 1999). It is also responsible for stimulating innovation within the organisation through the examination of potential new opportunities, resource acquisition, implementation, exploitation and commercialisation of the new products or services (Guth & Ginsberg, 1990).

## 2.2. Multiple Terms for Corporate Entrepreneurship

Another aspect of complexity is added by existence of two constructs: “corporate entrepreneurship” and “intrapreneurship”. Amo (2006) proposes to differentiate between the two types of employee innovation behavior. For him intrapreneurship is initiated bottom-up by an employee to fulfill own interests, whereas corporate entrepreneurship is initiated at the top in order to follow organization's strategy and to increase its competitive advantage. This distinction resembles the discussion on bottom-up and top-down processes as well as the discussion on induced and autonomous strategic behaviors that exist for decades already (Burgelman, 1983; Day, 1994). Nevertheless, the specific terms such as intrapreneurship or corporate entrepreneurship have not been strictly associated with them. In fact, often these terms are used interchangeably (Antoncic & Hisrich, 2001; Kuratko, Montagno & Hornsby 1990; Parker, 2009; Pinchot, 1985; Russell, 1999)

A nearby discussion concerns the status of this activity within an organization. As such, intrapreneurship (as autonomous strategic behavior) should be considered rather informal or even illegal, whereas corporate entrepreneurship, as induced by the higher management hierarchy, will take place within the formal procedures established within an organization. Nevertheless, some authors ascribe

intrapreneurship to purely formalized activities such as those which receive explicit organizational sanction and resource commitment for the purpose of innovative corporate endeavors (Schollhammer, 1982). At the same time Zahra (1991) refers to corporate entrepreneurship as a combination of both formal and informal activities.

To explain corporate entrepreneurship, this paper also believes that the concept of an entrepreneurial orientation (EO) is potentially important to entrepreneurship research and this paper builds on previous work on the entrepreneurial orientation construct. The paper makes use of EO and suggests that theoretical development and empirical research directed at this construct is important for the enhancement of both normative and descriptive theory. Earlier theoretical work proposed a contingency framework for exploring the relationship between EO and organizational performance and suggested the usefulness of considering EO (consisting of autonomy, innovativeness, risk taking, proactiveness and competitive aggressiveness) as a multidimensional construct (Lumpkin and Dess 1996). In this paper, we investigate on the dimensions of EO—autonomy, innovativeness, risk taking proactiveness and competitive aggressiveness. We draw on prior theory and empirical research into these components of EO, as well as examples from business practice, to provide a rationale and justification for exploring three related research questions.

Earlier theoretical work by Lumpkin and Dess (1996) has argued for the independence of several dimensions of EO—including autonomy, innovativeness, risk taking, proactiveness, and competitive aggressiveness. Briefly, *autonomy* is defined as independent action by an individual or team aimed at bringing forth a business concept or vision and carrying it through to completion. *Innovativeness* refers to a willingness to support creativity and experimentation in introducing new products/services, and novelty, technological leadership and R&D in developing new processes. *Risk taking* means a tendency to take bold actions such as venturing into unknown new markets, committing a large portion of resources to ventures with uncertain outcomes, and/or borrowing heavily. *Proactiveness* is an opportunity-seeking, forward-looking perspective involving introducing new products or services ahead of the competition and acting in anticipation of future demand to create change and shape the environment. *Competitive aggressiveness* reflects the intensity of a firm's efforts to outperform industry rivals, characterized by a combative posture and a forceful response to competitor's actions.

## 2.3. Innovation

The dimension of innovativeness is central in corporate entrepreneurship though referred to in fairly wide terms. Stopford and Baden-Fuller (1994) observed that “most authors accept that all types of entrepreneurship are based on innovations.” Innovation is seen as the centre of the conceptual network that encompasses the construct of corporate entrepreneurship, and without innovation there is no corporate entrepreneurship regardless of the presence of

other dimensions termed entrepreneurial through literature (Lassen, 2007).

Various definitions have been developed to explain innovation, and as a result the term has gained greater ambiguity (Garcia & Calantone, 2002). Examination of the innovation literature confirms that there is enormous diversity in views and approaches to what actually constitutes innovative activity, and also highlights some of the confusion that exists within the discipline itself. Confusion seems to stem from the fact that many definitions introduce peripheral concepts, which may deflect attention from the core components of innovation and make its application difficult.

For example, both Cannon (1993) & Gurteen (1998) introduce paradigmatic change and creative thinking. While Rogers (1995) concentrates on perception, Henderson, Lentz and Christine (1996) feature invention, and Koontz & Weihrich (1990) and Zahra (1995) put forward definitions that highlight marketing and entrepreneurial philosophies. A number of process models have been developed in the literature suggesting that innovation consists of a variety of different phases: idea generation, research design and development, prototype production, manufacturing, marketing and sales (Dooley & O'Sullivan, 2001; Knox, 2002; Poolton & Ismail, 2000). However, theorists have suggested that there is more to innovation than the process (Amabile, 1996). Considerations must also be given to the product so that organisations can evaluate their success (or failure) (Bessant, 2003; von Stamm, 2003). In fact, the most important, as well as consistent, factors to emanate from the innovation literature focus on the product; that is, new ideas and the potential for improvement through change. New ideas can be placed on a novelty continuum.

Heany (1983) suggests that the least novel and risky form of innovation is to incrementally change the style of a product. This tends to be predictable and the effect on the market is likely to be slight. In contrast, at the other end of the continuum, major innovation is held to radically influence the market place. In addition, major innovations have the potential to create new markets and new industries. This in turn can place considerable strain on all the functional areas within an organisation, and can be highly risky and uncertain (Brown, 1992; Clegg *et al.*, 2002; von Stamm, 2003).

Innovation enables manufacturing firm in Nigeria to develop a new product, idea and have a competitive advantage within the manufacturing sector. Between these two points in the continuum, Heany (1983) specifies four other types of innovation: product line extensions, product improvements, new products for the current market, and new products for another established market in which the vendor is currently not involved. According to Drucker (1985), Heany's products of innovation are associated with wealth production for the organisation, which is a form of added value.

Innovation is about helping organizations grow. Growth is often measured in terms of turnover and profit, but can also occur in knowledge, in human experience, and in efficiency

and quality. Innovation is the process of making changes to something established by introducing something new. As such, it can be radical or incremental, and it can be applied to products, processes, or services and in any organization. It can happen at all levels in an organization, from management teams to departments and even to the level of the individual.

#### **2.4. Strategies to Stimulate Corporate Entrepreneurship, Innovation and Sustainable Competitive Advantage**

There are a number of approaches that can encourage the creativity that leads to profitable innovations within an enterprise. They include inundating "creativity – inclined" people with exhortations to "think outside the box", to think "sideways" about problems and to "network" with others with different perspectives; offering rewards and recognitions to successful innovators; exhorting supervisors and gate keepers to be receptive to new ideas, to wink at and ignore time taken from assigned projects and applied to unauthorized ideas and by-passes to bureaucratic procedures created for new ideas (Herbert & Brazeal, 1999). According to Kuratko and Hodgets (1992), when attempting to create an intrapreneurial strategy, organizations should be aware that a corporation that promotes personal growth will attract the best people.

Corporate-entrepreneurship embodies entrepreneurial efforts that require organizational sanctions and resource commitments for purpose of carrying out innovative activities in the form of product process and organizational innovations (Jennings & Young, 1990). This view is consistent with Damanpour (1991) who points out that corporate innovation is a very broad concept, which includes the generation, development and implementation of new ideas or behaviours. In this context, an innovation can be a new product or service, an administrative system or a new plan or programme.

The two common approaches used to stimulate intrapreneurial activity (Herbert & Brazeal, 1999). Skunkworks refers to project teams designated to produce a new product. Such a team is formed with a specific goal and has a specified time frame with a respected person chosen to manage the skunkworks. In this approach to corporate innovation, risk-takers are not punished for taking risks because their jobs are held for them and they have opportunity to earn large rewards. In bootlegging, managers and workers make informal efforts to create new products and processes; sometimes secretly when a bootlegger believes the enterprise will frown on these activities. However, the intrapreneurial organization should tolerate and encourage bootlegging as it may result into innovative products and process to enhance its competitiveness.

Lindsey (2001) argues that rapid and cost-effective innovation may be the only method by which enterprises in the 21st century and beyond will be able to remain competitive. Companies that strive for such innovation to assure their survival and efficiency find that a transformation to an entrepreneurial management style will facilitate their

endeavour. This will entail creation of an environment within the enterprise in which employees can take direct responsibility for turning an innovative idea into a profitable finished product or venture, must be willing to be intrapreneurial or willing to do any job needed to advance their project regardless of their job description; share credit widely; remember it is easier to ask for forgiveness than permission; ask for advice before asking for resources; come to work each day willing to be fired; keep the best interests of the company and its customers in mind while bending the rules; be true to their goals, but realistic about how to achieve them; under-promise and over-deliver and honour and educate their sponsors (Samuel, 2012).

The common intrapreneurial management strategies include sharing the business strategy, communicating the enterprise's vision for the future while opening the door for all employees, regardless of level to assist in achieving the vision's goal; creating implementation channels that are unobstructed and safe to ensure broad idea distribution; supporting intraprise launch, by providing a corporate sponsor (manager) for the intrapreneur, who will have responsibility for cutting through the red-tape and non-constructive politics, getting resources for the idea, helping establish achievable milestones, providing intrapreneurial training, sheltering the intrapreneur when he/she makes original mistakes, being part of the intraprise and ensuring that the project remains intact and gets proper recognition (Samuel, 2012). Other strategies are diagnosis and improvement of innovation climate. Innovation is much more efficiently accomplished when done in a supportive environment. This will entail the creation and maintenance of organizational attitudes such as corporate vision acceptance, risk, mistake and failure tolerance, innovation cooperation, customer focus acceptance, organizational community acceptance and honest and transparent communication acceptance.

## 2.5. Sustainable Competitive Advantage

Competitive advantage is sustainable when rival firms give up plans to imitate the resources of the competitors (Barney 2001, Haberberg & Rieple 2008, Grant 2010) or when barriers to imitation are high (Hill & Jones 2009). When the imitative actions have come to an end without disrupting the firm's competitive advantage or when it is not easy or cheap to imitate, the firm's competitive strategy can be called "sustainable". Hill and Jones (2009) observe that the pursuit for sustainable competitive advantage has been the primary objective in the study of a firm's competitive strategy and generation of superior profitability. Porter (2004) considers the term sustainable as encompassing the protection of resources for longer period of time into the future (Haberberg & Rieple 2008, Grant 2010). Nigeria manufacturing firm need to build their competitive strategy using the available resources in order to achieve their corporate objective. It is by this they can operate within the hostile environment, whereby competition is keen and people are penetrating to enter the market.

The concept of sustainable competitive advantage can also be understood along the dimensions of durability and imitability (Grant, 2010; Haberberg & Rieple, 2008; Wheelen & Hunger, 2010). Durability determines how long the competitive advantage is sustainable and is considered in terms of the ability of competitors to duplicate or imitate through gaining access to the competitive resources and competitive capabilities on which the competitive advantage is built. Wheelen & Hunger (2010) postulate that durability represents the pace at which a firm's underlying competitive resources, competitive capabilities or core competencies depreciate or become obsolete or irrelevant, owing to causes including new technology and innovations. Hill & Jones (2009) postulate further that the longer it takes for the competitors to achieve an imitation, the greater is the chance for the successful firm to improve on the core competencies or build new core competencies, to stay a number of steps ahead of the competition (Grant, 2010; Hill & Jones, 2009; Thompson et al., 2012). Thus, the firm's ability to delay imitations or duplication of its competitive resource base is essential to derive maximum benefit from any competitive advantage.

While other sources of sustained competitive advantage exist, core competencies are the direct source of sustainable competitive advantage on which most scholars widely agree (Grant, 2010; Hill & Jones, 2009; Hitt et al., 2007). Lynch (2009) explains that core competencies are special skills and technologies that enable a firm to provide a specific value added to the customers, as they provide the foundation of core products and services which are at the centre of a firm's activities.

Process performance provides an alternative to the financial performance measure and can be a more appropriate way to measure sustained competitive advantage (Ray, Barney & Muhanna, 2004). At least two rationales support this argument. One is that the process performance measure conforms to the underpinnings of RBV and thus enables researchers to avoid those drawbacks associated with the financial performance measure, which has been discussed earlier. The other reason is that multiple business processes themselves are a source of SCA and therefore process performance is the direct measure of SCA (Barney, 1991).

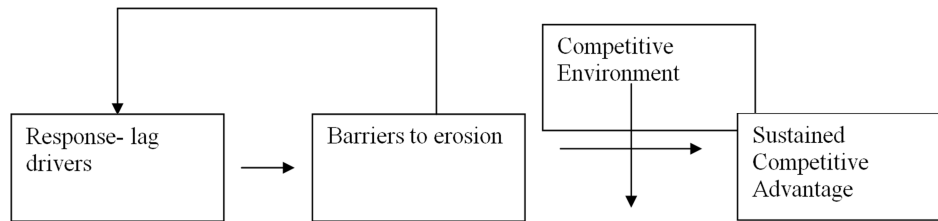
There are three main classifications of business processes: managerial process, operational process, and supportive process. Among them it is suggested that operational and supportive processes deliver performance while managerial processes sustain performance in the future (Bititci et al., 2011). Operational processes are processes that constitute the core business, e.g., getting order, manufacturing product, marketing and sales service. Supportive processes provide support to the core processes, e.g., personnel support, technical support, and facilities, etc. Managerial processes are the processes that govern operation of a system, e.g., setting direction, managing strategy, building organizational competence, managing performance, and managing change. Therefore, operationalizing process performance needs to take into consideration of balance among the different

classifications.

#### *Models and Theories of Competitive Advantage* *Response Lag Model*

According to Macmillan, 1989, response lag is the time it takes competitors to respond aggressively enough to erode a competitive advantage. Chen and Miller (1994) are of the opinion that sustainability of competitive advantage is

affected by competitive response as well as the cycle speed of the ecology in which the firm competes (Hidding, 2001). Piccoli and Ives (2005) utilized the above findings in their "IT- dependent strategic initiatives and sustained competitive advantage study and constructed a model in which the competitive environment provides a moderating role.

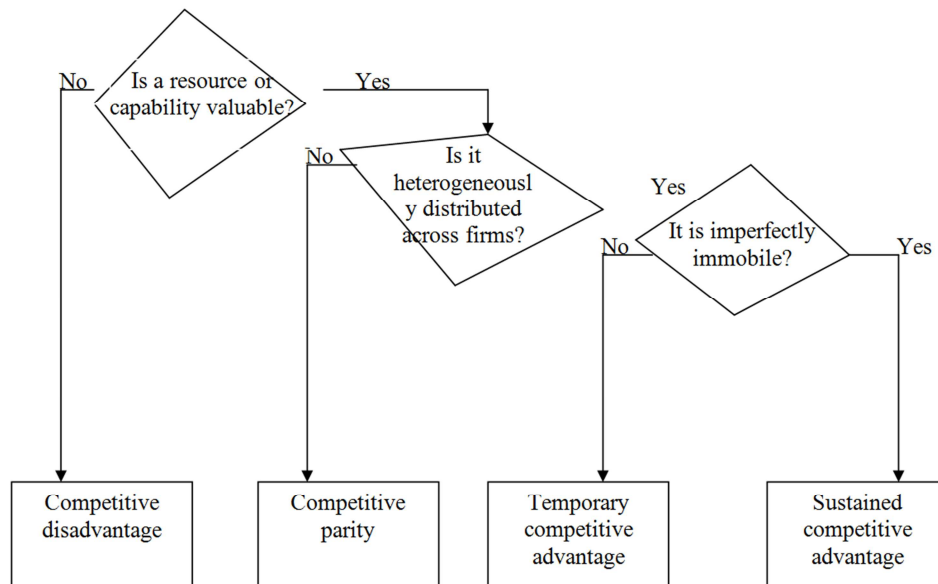


**Figure 1.** Theoretical framework of sustained competitive advantage.

Source: Piccoli and Ives (2005: 751).

Macmillan (1988, 1989) argue that competitive imitation is thought to occur in stages and that once competitors recognize that a company has achieved a position of advantage, they begin to scrutinize it in an effort to identify its sources. Causal ambiguity may exist with respect to these sources, making it difficult for imitators to mount a response (Reed and Defillippi, 1990). Some rivals will move with different speed and with different degrees of success and their entrance will dissipate some of the leaders' advantage. However, barriers to erosion impede complete dissipation of

the advantage, even for easily imitable products, in industries with minimal barriers to entry (Makadok, 1998). This model of competitive advantage suggests that four barriers to erosion fully capture the determinants of sustainability in the context of IT- related innovations (Piccoli & Ives, 2005). These are IT resources barrier, complementary resources barrier, IT project barrier and preemption barrier. These barriers to erosion, underpinned by their respective response-lag drivers, contribute independently, or in combination with one another to enable a firm sustain a competitive advantage.



**Figure 2.** A resource-based model of competitive advantage.

Source: Matal, Fuerst, & Barney (1995: 494).

#### *Resource-based model*

As discussed earlier, the creating process of corporate entrepreneurship entails several steps, such as the discovery and recognition of opportunities, information search and the acquisition and accumulation of resources (Gartner, 1985; Shane, 2003; Shane & Venkataraman, 2000; Ucbasaran,

Westhead & Wright, 2001). Put differently, this description suggests that we have to focus on the discovery, acquisition and accumulation of various kinds of resources if we are to understand the process of new value creation by firms. As such, it is intrinsically linked to the resource-based perspective of the firm. This perspective emphasizes firm-

specific assets and capabilities as fundamental determinants of different instances of firm performance and wealth creation (Galunic & Rodan, 1998; Teece, Pisano & Shuen, 1997). Although originating from strategic management, the resource-based view is also increasingly being used by entrepreneurship scholars to identify and explain persistent performance differences among firms (Barnett et al., 1994; Ireland et al., 2003). Competitive advantage lies upstream of product markets and relies upon resources (Teece et al., 1997). The more valuable, rare, imperfectly imitable and non-substitutable these resources are compared to those held by competitors, the more important the competitive advantage built on these resources will be (Ireland, Covin & Kuratko, 2003).

Although researchers have paid attention to resource issues in corporate entrepreneurship in the past, the resource-based perspective has not been adequately applied to corporate entrepreneurship. Most research seems to have concentrated on resource stocks, scarcity/availability or slack resources (Wiklund, 1999; Zajac, Golden & Shortell, 1991). A critical question remains unanswered: how can resources contribute to firms' competitive advantage through corporate entrepreneurial activities (Teng, 2003). Working towards answering this question requires having an eye not only for the resources themselves ('positions'), but also for the management of the resources ('managerial processes'). Implicitly, the resource-based view also invites consideration of managerial strategies and practices for developing new competitive advantage and wealth (Ireland et al., 2003; Priem & Butler, 2001; Teece et al., 1997).

In view of this discussion, the following hypotheses were proposed:

H<sub>01</sub>: There is a significant relationship between corporate entrepreneurship and sustained competitive advantage.

H<sub>02</sub>: Innovation has a significant impact on sustained competitive advantage in the Nigeria manufacturing firm

### 3. Methodology and Design

This study employed a cross sectional survey design to examine the relationships that exist between corporate entrepreneurship, innovation and sustained competitive advantage in the Nigeria manufacturing firms. The study applied a regression analysis which helps in predicting behaviours and examine whether or not a relationship exists

between the variables of study (Kerlinger, 1973; Bordens & Abbott, 2002). Data were generated from manufacturing firms on a wide basis relating to corporate entrepreneurship, innovation and sustained competitive advantage. The study populations considered were personnel of various manufacturing firms within Nigeria. Lagos was considered a good representation of the manufacturing firm from which the samples were derived. Therefore the population sample was taken from Lagos state. The questionnaires were administered to the personnel with the help of field research assistants.

The techniques used in the selection of participating manufacturing firms and respondents were simple random sampling technique. 300 questionnaires were administered to the manufacturing personnel however, 251 were completely filled and returned. This represents 83.67% response rate. Simple random sampling technique was employed to eliminate any bias which may occur as a result of individual preference (Bordens & Abott, 2002). Another justification is that it is particularly essential when one wants to apply research findings directly to a population (Mook, 1983). The participating manufacturing personnel constituted the analysis. The administration of the questionnaire was done on at least three senior managers or CEO, and middle level staff at each manufacturing firm surveyed. The use of primary data method is justified since according to Cowton, (1998), it is the quickest and simplest of the tools to use, if publication is the objective.

## 4. Variables and Measures

### 4.1. Corporate Entrepreneurship

For corporate entrepreneurship, a five-point likert scale involving six items developed by Covin and Slevin's (1989), Lumpkin and Dess (2001) was adapted. The scale, which ranges from "strongly agree" to "strongly disagree," was applied to assess corporate entrepreneurship in the Nigeria manufacturing firms. Respondents rating on all items were summed up and averaged to obtain corporate entrepreneurship index. Corporate entrepreneurship index is classified high when the index is equal to or greater than 4.0 and low when it is lower than 4.0. A reliability score of 0.79 was obtained from the Cronbach's alpha test using the adapted scale from Lumpkin and Dess (2001).

*Table 1. The independent variable.*

The Construct	The Variables	Contributing Author
Corporate Entrepreneurship	Competitive Aggressiveness	Covin and Slevin's (1989), Lumpkin and Dess (1996, 2001)
	Innovation	
	Autonomy	
	Proactiveness	
	Risk Taking	

Source: Developed for this study, based on available literature

#### 4.1.1. Innovation

For measuring innovation, this study adopts Morris (2001),

Zahara and Covin (1995), Drucker (1985), Pinchot and Pellman (1999), Robbins (1997) scale consisting of product and process innovation. The scale ranges from "strongly

agree” to “strongly disagree.” The scores of two items were summed up and averaged to determine the index of innovation. An index of less than 4.0 was considered as low while an index of 4.0 and above was considered as high. The scale has a reliability score of 0.67 generated from Cronbach’s alpha test.

**Table 2.** *The independent variable.*

The Construct	The Variables	Contributing Authors
Innovation	Product Innovation	Morris (2001), Zahara and Covin (1995), Drucker (1985), Pinchot and Pellman (1999), Robbins (1997)
	Process Innovation	

Source: Developed for this study, based on available literature

#### 4.1.2. Sustained Competitive Advantage

SCA is measured by the construct of process performance (PP) and this measure is grounded in the synthesized theories of resource based view (RBV) and business performance measurement system (BPMS), which has been discussed so far. Process performance (PP) is operationalized as 5 indicators, namely, order acquisition (Bititci 2011), external communication (C. Lee, K. Lee, & Pennin, 2001; Bititci et al., 2011), internal cohesion (Lee et al., 2001; Bititci et al., 2011), strategic adaptability (Wu, 2010), and cost control (Zhu, 2004). There is no widely accepted criterion to refer to for the selection of indicators of process performance. Selection of the 5 indicators in this study is based on two considerations, namely, business process (i.e., attribute and classification) and the research context (i.e., the Nigeria manufacturing industry).

**Table 4.** *Items Analysis, Construct Validity and Factor Analysis.*

	Factor loading	Cronbach alpha
Continuously improving the quality of the product to be competitive	.797	0.57
Our creativity is connected with increasing the profit of the organization/ enterprise	.738	
Supporting employees who come up with new products.	.727	
We Improve on our internal communication	.927	0.92
Frequently trial of new techniques of manufacturing products	.976	
Firm is creative in the methods of operation to reduce the time of production	.953	
We Improve on our time management	.962	0.84
Firm is creative in the methods of operation to reduce the time of production	.929	
Developing new types of product	.894	
We create a new specialized unit for creativity management	.775	0.59
Our company culture does not nurture risk	.833	
Frequently trial of new techniques of manufacturing products	.786	
Carrying out product improvement always	.853	0.66
Investing in developing appropriate technology to produce high quality goods	.809	
We engage in the creation of an innovation culture	.574	
Rewarding employees who come up with new products	.807	0.55
Identifying new markets to sale products	.547	
Facilitating free flow and capture of new ideas from employees	.950	
We implement management policy of the company	.858	0.86
Allowing employees to practice their skills freely without supervision to produce more	.810	
Recognizing individual risk takers for willingness to champion new projects, successful or not	.833	
We promote financial motivation	.489	0.86
Risk taking is a positive attribute to employees to work freely	.853	
Our creativity is connected with Increasing competitiveness	.809	

Reliability was derived from the cronbach alpha analysis the reliability is 0.899 cronbach alpha

Source: Survey 2016

**Table 3.** *The dependent variable.*

The Construct	The Variables	Contributing Authors
Sustained Competitive Advantage (SCA)	order acquisition	Lee et al., 2001; Bititci et al., 2011; Wu, 2010; Zhu, 2004
	External communication	
	order acquisition	
	Strategic Adaptability	
	Cost control	

Source: Developed for this study, based on available literature

#### 4.2. Items Analysis, Construct Validity and Factor Analysis

The results of CFA also give evidence for convergent validity of the constructs regarding to significantly ( $p < .01$ ) loadings of all the items to respective latent factors. Moreover, principle component analyses (PCA) have been employed to test the discriminant validity. PCA have shown that all constructs have been extracted to five respected factors of CFA with the cut point of Eigen value 1. The Bartlett test and Measure of Sampling Adequacy (MSA) and Bartlett test of sphericity supports that the correlation matrix has significant correlations can be factorized. Kaiser-Meyer measure of MSA was 0.89 showing a good sampling adequacy ( $KMO = .89$ ,  $\chi^2 = 5868.838$ ,  $df = 171$ ,  $p < .001$ ). The Principle Axis Factoring (PAF) with varimax rotation revealed a four factor structure explaining 71.52% of the variance produced. The factor loading for the items ranged from 0.895 to .485, which indicated that all the items loaded well on the factors precipitated.

In addition to validity and reliability analyses, standard deviations and means of each construct have been calculated



and found sufficient variance for further analyses. Cronbach's alpha test is conducted for each of the construct for the reliability analyses. The results of the reliability test have been presented in Table 2; all the alpha coefficients are bigger than the expected reference value of .70. The reliability was derived from the cronbach alpha analysis the reliability is 0.899 cronbach alpha With respect to corporate

entrepreneurship, innovation and sustained competitive advantage in the Nigeria manufacturing firms, the mean index of participating firms were 3.98, 4.21 and 4.11 respectively (see Table 3, 4 and 5).

H<sub>01</sub>: There is a significant relationship between corporate entrepreneurship and sustained competitive advantage.

**Table 5.** Pearson correlation matrix showing relationship between corporate entrepreneurship, innovation and sustained competitive advantage.

	Mean	S.D	$\alpha$	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Sustained Competitive Advantage	18.5665	6.02938	0.86	-	.125*	.635**	.545**	.591**	.463**	.496**
Competitive Aggressiveness	5.9468	2.50896	0.57		-	.172**	.200**	.121	.087	.058
Innovativeness	21.2167	5.64221	0.92			-	.717**	.747**	.476**	.578**
Autonomy	8.2624	2.57476	0.84				-	.692**	.422**	.502**
Proactiveness	6.9658	2.48099	0.59					-	.309**	.459**
Risk Taking	11.5627	3.40336	0.66						-	.381**
Innovation	15.3992	3.49868	0.55							-

\*. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

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

H<sub>01</sub> was tested through correlations coefficient test. Pearson's product moment correlations coefficient indicates that there is significant relationship between corporate entrepreneurship indices New Business Venturing (0.12\*), Innovativeness (0.64\*\*), Self-Renewal (0.55\*\*), Proactiveness (0.59\*\*), Risk Taking (0.46\*\*) and sustained competitive advantage in the Nigeria manufacturing firm.

Therefore, the null hypothesis of no significant relationship is rejected. Corporate entrepreneurship is positively correlated with the sustained competitive advantage in the Nigeria manufacturing firms.

H<sub>02</sub>: Innovation has a significant impact on sustained competitive advantage of Nigeria manufacturing firm

**Table 6.** Model summary of Multiple Regression Analysis Showing the Influence of Innovation, New Business Venturing, Risk Taking, Proactiveness, Self-Renewal, Innovativeness on Sustained Competitive Advantage.

Predictors	B	S.E	$\beta$	t	R	R <sup>2</sup>	F	S.E
(Constant)	-3.136	.524		-5.985**				
Competitive Aggressiveness	.011	.042	.005	.275				
Innovativeness	.378	.055	.354	6.837**				
Self-Renewal	-.377	.100	-.161	-3.767**	0.76	0.58**	115.69**	11.23
Proactiveness	.929	.063	.382	14.774**				
Risk Taking	.976	.041	.551	23.857**				
Innovation	-.068	.048	-.039	-1.414				

Durbin Watson = 2.49, Dependent Variable: Sustained Competitive Advantage

\*\*p< 0.01

\*p< 0.05

Hypothesis (H<sub>02</sub>) was tested by a means of a Regression Analysis. The result of the regression analysis reveal that innovation has impact of the sustenance of Nigeria manufacturing firm, see Table 5. Table 5 shows the analysis of variance of the fitted regression equation in significant with F value of 115.69. This is an indication that the model is a good one. It shows a statistically significant relationship between the variables at 95% confidence level. The value of R<sup>2</sup> = 0.58 shows that positive relationship exist between innovation and sustained competitive advantage in the Nigeria manufacturing firm. The standardised coefficients (Beta) value in Table 5 reveals that the independent variable is statistically significant at 0.05 significance level. The variables accounted for 58% of the change observed in the reported Sustained Competitive Advantage. 58% of the variance or change observed in predicted Sustained Competitive Advantage. This revealed that the collective presence of corporate entrepreneurship and innovation has

significant influence on Sustained Competitive Advantage. The result revealed that risk taking, proactiveness, self-renewal, innovativeness were significant independent predictors of Sustained Competitive Advantage. While Innovation, New Business Venturing were not significant independent predictors of Sustained Competitive Advantage.

## 5. Conclusion and Implication for Management

This study examines the relationship between corporate entrepreneurship, innovation and sustainable competitive advantage in the Nigeria manufacturing firms. Findings reveal that there is significant relationship between corporate entrepreneurship indices competitive aggressiveness, Innovativeness, self-renewal, proactiveness, risk taking and sustained competitive advantage in the Nigeria manufacturing firm. It therefore shows that innovativeness,

self-renewal, proactiveness and corporate entrepreneurship and innovation has significant impact on the sustainability of the Nigeria manufacturing firms. This study contributes to corporate entrepreneurship, innovation and sustainable competitive advantage research in several respects. First, in studying innovation through a corporate entrepreneurship research lens, it builds on a new, recently developed theoretical framework (Maes, 2004; Shane, 2003; Shane & Venkataraman, 2000).

Moreover, the study is also quite unique in targeting newly and existing Nigeria manufacturing firms. Until now, most empirical research on corporate entrepreneurship or innovation seems to have been concentrating on larger, mature corporations. This paper looked at the effectiveness of corporate entrepreneurship and innovation as a tool to enhance competitive advantage. It concludes that corporate entrepreneurship and innovation is a key determinant of sustainable competitive advantage in the Nigeria manufacturing firms. Therefore, every Nigeria manufacturing firm seeking competitiveness and improved performance should consider the inclusion of appropriate corporate entrepreneurship and innovation strategies for the realisation of desired outcomes.

Literature indicates that corporate entrepreneurship and innovation are linked. For example, Hitt, et al. (2001) indicates that there is a strong interrelationship between innovation and entrepreneurship and Lumpkin and Dess (1996) argue that a key dimension of an entrepreneurial orientation is an emphasis on innovation. Ireland, et al. (2006) also contends that for innovation to happen, an entrepreneurial environment and mind set are important. Congruent with these empirical evidences, a model linking corporate entrepreneurial variables with

Accordingly, Correlation and regression coefficients were assessed and results have indicated that all the independent variables (corporate entrepreneurial variables) and (innovation) are positively associated with the dependent variable (sustained competitive advantage). The results also support the theoretical and empirical research findings on corporate entrepreneurship and performance of firms by Aktan and Bulut (2008); Zahra and Gravis (2000); Zahra and Covin (1995).

This paper has provided a sight into corporate entrepreneurship, innovation and sustainable competitive advantage in the Nigeria manufacturing firms and critical review of existing literature has demonstrated the relationship between corporate entrepreneurship, innovation and sustainable competitive advantage. It has been revealed that for any enterprise to grow and survive, in such a way to create value and provide good employment opportunities for economic development it must be dynamic and employ radical measures and transformational strategies for new product development, new method of production, new ways of delivering product, new process and new ways of delivering product, new process, and new ways of managing relationships within and outside the enterprise. These can be achieved through the process of sustainable competitive

advantage. Based on this theoretical exposition, it is suggested that for corporate entrepreneurship and innovation development to be enhanced and sustained, sustainable competitive advantage becomes essential. This finding implies that corporate entrepreneurship and innovation becomes a competitive advantage when it is based on in-depth understanding of customer needs, competitors' actions, and technological development. Given the ever-changing competitive environment, firms which fail to acknowledge such advantages may find it difficult to survive or stay at par with competitors. Therefore management need to adapt to the changing environment and have a sustainable competitive advantage in the industry in which it belongs.

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