EXPLORING THE RELATIONSHIP AMONG ORGANISATIONAL CULTURE, CUSTOMER SATISFACTION AND PERFORMANCE IN MULTINATIONAL CORPORATIONS IN NIGERIA.

UDEGBE, SCHOLASTICA EBAREFIMIA, PhD
Department of Business Administration and Management Technology, (Marketing Unit), Faculty of Management Sciences, Lagos State University, Ojo, Lagos, Nigeria.
scholasticudegbe@yahoo.co.uk

AFOBUNOR, S.A.N
Department of Business Administration and Management Technology, (Marketing Unit), Faculty of Management Sciences, Lagos State University, Ojo, Lagos, Nigeria.

UDEGBE, MAURICE INIEDEGBOR
Department of Business Administration and Management Technology, (Marketing Unit), Faculty of Management Sciences, Lagos State University, Ojo, Lagos, Nigeria.

ABSTRACT

This study explores the moderating role of National culture and organisational characteristics in the relationship between organisational cultural values and organisational performance in multinational corporations in Nigeria. It is suggested that the relationship between specific organisational values and organisational performance (i.e. Customer satisfaction and business performance) should vary across National cultures. Likewise, it is anticipated that the relationship between specific organisational cultural values and organisational performance are likely to be greater when the cultural values of organizations are consistent with those of the host country's technology, economic, political and growth characteristics. Repeatedly, it would be interesting to discover if foreign firms (such as MNCs) tend to maintain the organisational culture of their home countries, if MNCs in Nigeria are incapable of adopting vastly different cultural system, because of differences in values, and if national culture moderates the organisational culture and outcome relationship; and most especially if organisational culture will depend on the national culture. Data for the study was obtained with the aid of questionnaire, seven copies of which were administered in each of the 100 MNCs that served as sample. The selected 100 MNCs were stratified into categories of service, manufacturing and others while the respondents were conveniently selected. Data were generated from the 600 useable questionnaires returned. The response rate was 86%. The data were analysed using descriptive statistics and t- test analysis. The research instrument showed high reliability and validity. Majorly, the study found that culture influences work practices, culture has a profound impact on the way customer perceive the organisation, MNCs in Nigeria tend to maintain the same organisational culture of their home country, and that there is a relationship between organisational culture, customer satisfaction and organisational performance. The study suggests further studies from a market intelligence perspective.

Keywords: *Relationship, Organisational culture, National culture, Performance, Market orientation, Multinational Corporation, Satisfaction, and Nigeria*

INTRODUCTION

Generally, the interest of researchers and scholars in how multinational corporations operate within different cultural value contexts in the last decades can be described as overwhelming. This might not be unconnected with the associated effects of national culture and their important implications. In most cases, the values that characterize organizations are likely to be different from those of the national culture in which the organisation operates. Hence, the MNCs cultural values from their own home countries when compared to that of Nigeria is likely to be different. Multinational corporations (MNCs) according to Kotler (2002) are firms with operating capacity in more than one country and controlling headquarter and parent company in a single country, each entity working independently but reporting to the parent company.

Although MNCs are important to national and world economic development, most of the aspects of their business management practices in developing countries are not clear. There are scholarly arguments pertaining to their practices in developing economies especially in areas resulting from cultural implications. To fill this gap, this study was designed to investigate; if culture influences work practices, if culture has a profound impact on the way customers perceive the organisation, if MNCs in Nigeria tend to maintain the same organisational

culture of their home countries and finally, if there is a relationship between organisational culture, customer satisfaction and organisational performance.

HYPOTHESES

Four hypothese were tested. Stated in null form, these are:

1. Culture does not influence work practices
2. Culture has no profound impact on the way customers perceive the organization.
3. MNCs in Nigeria do not tend to maintain the organisational culture of their home countries in their host countries.
4. There is no relationship between organisational culture, customer satisfaction and organisational performance.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Narver and Slater (1990) defined Market orientation as the organisational culture that most effectively and efficiently creates the necessary behaviour for the creation of superior value for buyers and thus continuous superior performance for business. Organisational culture has received much attention from researchers (Narver & Slater, 1990; Desphande, Farley & Webster, 1993; Desphande & Webster, 1989) because of the key role it plays in determining levels of organisational performance.

According to Denison (1984), "a common hypothesis about the role of organisational culture is that if an organisation possesses a 'strong' culture by exhibiting a well-integrated and effective set of specific value, beliefs and behaviours, then it will perform at a higher level of productivity. Given the influence of an organisation's culture on its productivity, the development of theory to guide the study of the forms and consequences of organisational culture is of primary importance to improving organisational performance. In an effort to understand the forms and consequences of organisational culture, researchers have explored how various internal processes, such as individual and organisational selection and socialization and characteristics of powerful members, such as an organisation's founder or groups of members influence the content and intensity of and the consensus that exists about organisational values (Harrison & Carroll, 1991; Schneider, 1987; Schein, 1985 amongst others). It appears that researchers have generally adopted the assumption that organisations develop a culture of their own that is distinct from the national and industry contexts in which the organisation is embedded, thus ignoring the potential impact of external environmental factors on organisational culture. Despite concern with achieving improved business productivity through focusing on the development of a cohesive organisational culture, the literature to date is characterized by this narrow, internal focus, rather than looking to the external, cultural context within which organisations exist (Webster, 1994); Turner & Spencer, 1997; Slater & Narver, 1992; Narver & Slater, 1990; Selnes et al., 1996; Sathe, 1983; Pelham, 1996; Lorsch, 1986; Kotler and Heskett, 1992; Homburg & Pflesser, 2000; Dunn et al., 1994; Deshpande & Webster, 1989; Deshpande & Farley, 2004; amongst others).

In addition to internal factors, features present in the external environment in which the organisation operates are likely to affect the suitability of an organisation's culture. The national culture and industry characteristics are likely to determine which organisational values lead to superior business outcomes. In other words, the parameters of the relationships between specific organisational values and outcomes will logically differ for firms in vastly different cultures and in industries using vastly different technologies.

Deshpande & Webster (1989) posit organisational culture as a "pattern of shared values and beliefs that help individuals understand organisational functioning and thus provide them with the norms for behaviour in the organisation". Narver & Slater (1990) in their study of market orientation from a culturally based behavioral perspective, proposed a conceptualization of market orientation into three behavioural components. These are: (1) Customer Orientation, (2) Competitor Orientation, and (3) Inter-functional Coordination. They defined market orientation as the organisational culture that most effectively and efficiently creates the necessary behaviors for the creation of superior value for buyers and thus superior performance of the business continues. Following these and other authors such as Chatman & Jehn (1994), organisational culture is conceptualized and quantified in terms of widely shared and strongly held values. The elements of organisational culture range from fundamental assumptions through values and behavioral norms to actual patterns of behavior (Rousseau 1990). Values typically act as the defining elements of a culture, and norms, symbols, rituals, and other cultural activities revolved around them (Enz 1988).

According to Weiner (1988), when the members of a social unit share values, an organisational culture or value system can be said to exist. Harris & Morgan (1987) states that culture provide consumers with an understanding of acceptable behaviour within their respective societies. Furthermore, culture influences work

practices and has a profound impact on the way consumers perceive the organisations from which they purchase. Repeatedly also, past research shows that national culture is not something apart from business, but determines its very essence (Maher, 1994; Rhody & Tangi, 1995). According to Yen (1995), a study which surveyed over a thousand managers from U.S and Japanese firms showed that corporate values reflect those of the national culture. These cultural differences lead to specific behaviours within organisations. Thus, it is expected that the relationships between specific organisational values and outcomes (both customer satisfaction and business performance) should vary across national cultures. It is expected that organisations whose cultures match those of their home country will experience lower outcome levels when they operate in other countries with vastly different cultural orientations. This is because the consumers in other countries with cultural orientations different from those of the organisation may not completely understand and assimilate the operational procedures of the foreign subsidiaries, creating somewhat weaker impression about the firms from other countries. Thus, the cultural mismatch may lead to lower customer satisfaction and business performance. For example, USA organisations whose cultures reflect those of the USA will experience lower outcome levels when their subsidiaries operate in Japan than when they operate in the U.S.A.

RESEARCH METHODS

The research is a survey and it used a structured questionnaire as the primary data collection instrument while secondary data were obtained from extant literature and MNCs records. The questionnaire was operationalised into variables of organisational culture, national culture and performance measures in section A; and demographic profiles of the respondents in section B. Variables were measured through a six-point Likert scale ranging from "very high extent (6)", to "no extent at all (1)". 7 copies of the questionnaire were administered to each of the 100 MNCs that served as sample. The respondents were selected based on convenience sampling method. The use of convenience sampling method has been found relevant in previous studies (Hall & Lockchin, 2000). The selected 100 MNCs were stratified into the categories of services, manufacturing and others. Out of the total sample of 700, 600 useable questionnaires were returned, (a response rate of 86%). The questionnaire had earlier been pre-tested on a group within the research population in order to reinforce the questionnaire content validity, and based on the pre-test, few adjustment were made on the questionnaire before final administration. During the pre-test, a series of personal interviews were carried out involving relevant academics and professionals in marketing, and this helped in the modification of the instrument.

Responses to section A and hypotheses were analysed using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS). The data were analysed using descriptive statistics and t-test statistical method (analysis not recorded). The Cronbach Alpha reliability was used to test for reliability (Cronbach, 1947). Cronbach reliability coefficient measured 0.8962 and having exceed the 0.70 threshold, suggests adequate reliability.

The findings from the research are presented in table 1. The values corresponding to the codes they contain are defined in the appendix.

FINDINGS

Table 1: Desciptive statistics to explore the relationships among organisational culture, national culture and performance in Nigerian MNCs (**N = 589**)

Variables	Mean	S.D (standard deviation)	Skewness	Kurtosis
A1	5.09	0.89	-0.61	-0.49
A2	4.91	0.88	-0.42	-0.10
A3	4.90	0.89	-0.21	-0.88
A4	4.18	0.82	-0.63	-0.38
A5	4.89	0.77	-0.20	-0.42
A6	4.85	0.89	-0.24	-0.48
A7	4.86	0.89	-0.40	-0.27
A8	3.94	0.90	-0.43	-0.42
A9	2.30	0.64	-0.63	-0.38

A10	4.83	0.92	-0.53	-0.50
A11	2.32	0.74	-0.57	-0.27
A12	4.88	0.92	-0.45	-0.13
A13	4.88	0.89	-0.24	-0.48
A14	4.86	0.87	-0.08	-0.71
A15	4.88	0.87	-0.08	-1.03
A16	2.10	0.61	-0.53	-0.27
A17	4.83	0.91	-0.17	-0.79
A18	4.81	0.87	-0.10	-0.82
A19	2.32	0.71	-0.57	-0.27
A20	4.87	0.93	-0.29	-0.62

Source: Field survey, 2010.

Table 1 shows the descriptive statistics of the extent of effect of the relationship among organizational culture, national culture and performance. From the statistical table, variable A1 with a mean value of 5.09 and the highest value signifies a very high extent. It shows that almost all the respondent to a large extent agreed to the definition of culture i.e. culture can be seen as the values, ideas, attitudes and symbols people adopt to communicate, interpret, and interact as members of a society. The second highest mean value is A2 with a mean value of 4.91. This mean value signifies that the respondents believe that culture influences work practices. The next ranked mean value is A3 with a mean value of 4.90 i.e. culture has a profound impact on the way customer perceive the organizations from which they purchase. It is also observed that, the above average mean value, ranked in the following order respectively A5, A12, A13, A15, A20, A7, A14, A6, A10, A17, A18 and A4, with mean values of 4.89, 4.88, 4.88, 4.88, 4.87, 4.86, 4.86, 4.85, 4.83, 4.83, 4.81 and 4.18 respectively. The respondents supported above average, that is to a reasonable extent, the research variables which the defined variables above represented. These are:

A5 - The organization's national culture and industry characteristics are likely to determine the organizational values,
A12 - The values that characterize your company is different to those of the national culture in which the organisation operates,
A13 - Cultural values from your company's home country as compared to that of Nigeria are different,
A15 - Your company develop a culture of its own that is distinct from the national culture in which the organization is embedded,
A20 - There is a relationship between national culture, organisational culture, customer satisfaction and organisational performance,
A7 - Your company tend to maintain the same organisational culture of your home country,
A14 - Your company internal organisational culture affect the organisational values and outcomes,
A6 - Your company develops a culture of its own that is distinct from the national and industry context in which the business is located,
A10 - Companies whose culture matches those of their home country will experience lower outcome levels when they operate in other countries with vastly different cultural orientations,
A17 - Cultural mismatch may lead to lower customer satisfaction,
A18 - Cultural mismatch may lead to lower business performance,
A4 - Features present in the external environment in which the organisation operates are likely to affect the suitability of an organisational culture.

From the descriptive statistics above of the degree to which Multinational Corporations in Nigeria attach importance to specific organisational culture, national culture and performance indices, it can be observed from the means stated above that almost all the above indices were significantly agreed with. However, as with a mean value of 3.94 (your company is adapting successfully to the different cultural system in Nigeria), even

though low, also have a mean value which is significantly above the average score of 3.5. Also worthy of mentioning are the least mean indices of A11, A19, A9 and A4 with mean values of 2.32, 2.32, 2.30 and 2.30 respectively. There are:

A11 - The national culture in Nigeria moderates your company's culture,

A19 - The national culture in Nigeria affects your organisational performance,

A9 - Your company's corporate values reflect those of the national culture in which the organisation operates,

A4 - Features present in the external environment in which the organisation operates are likely to affect the suitability of the organisation's culture. All the findings are in line with extant literature, and it shows that there is a relationship between organisational culture, customer satisfaction and performance.

TEST OF RESEARCH HYPOTHESES

Research Hypotheses 1

With the generation from the mean value in Table 1 which shows the descriptive statistics of the degree of support to the research questions by the surveyed Nigerian MNCs, the first hypothesis in the study was put to test for veracity. The hypothesis states:

H_0: Culture does not influence work practices

From the mean column in Table 1, it can be seen that A2 (culture influences work practices) and A10 (companies whose culture matches those of their home country will experience lower outcome levels when they operate in other countries with vastly different cultural orientations) with mean values of 4.91 and 4.83 respectively, experience more than average support for the researchable questions. Based on the above findings, it can be concluded that culture influences work practice. Hence the null hypothesis is rejected and the alternative hypothesis is hereby accepted.

Likewise in the t- test analysis (not recorded here), for the first hypothesis, tested at 5% level of significance, the tscore value = 6.116 and the ttable value = 1.96. Since the tscore value of 6.116 exceeds the ttable of 1.96 values, therefore the null hypothesis was rejected and the alternative hypothesis was accepted. Hence, culture influences work practices.

Research Hypotheses II

From the mean column in Table 1, and considering variable A3 (culture has a profound impact in the way customers perceive the organisations from which they purchase) with mean value of 4.90, experiencing more than average support for the research question, it can be concluded that culture has a profound impact on the way customers perceive the organisation.

Hence the null hypothesis below was rejected and the alternative hypothesis accepted.

H_0 - Culture has no profound impact on the way customer perceive the organization.

For the t-test analysis (not recorded here), hypothesis II was tested at 5% level of significance, and it was found that the tscore value = 3.96 and the ttable value = 1.96. Therefore, since the tscore value of 3.96 exceeds the ttable of 1.96, the null hypothesis is rejected and the alternative hypothesis accepted. Hence it could be said that culture has a profound impact on the way customers perceive the organisation.

Research Hypotheses III

From the result in Table 1, the third hypothesis in this study was also put to test. The hypothesis states that;

H_0 - MNCs in Nigeria do not tend to maintain the organisational culture of their home countries in their host countries.

The mean values of the variables related to the above hypothesis are A6 = 4.85, A7 = 4.86 and A9 = 2.30 respectively. A6 (your company develops a culture of its own that is distinct from the national and industry context in which the business is located) and A7 (your company tends to maintain the same organisational culture as your home country) experience more than average support for the research question. Also A9 (your company corporate values reflect those of the national culture in which the organisation operates) with mean value of 2.30 received very low support (below average) for the research question. This signifies that to a high extent, MNCs corporate values does not reflect those of the national culture in which the organisation operates. This is in line with extant literature. Hence the null (Ho) hypothesis was rejected and the alternative hypothesis (H_1) accepted.

Likewise, in the t-test analysis (not recorded here), the hypothesis was tested as 5% level of significance, and it was observed that the tscore value = 8.77 and the ttable = 1.96. Since the tscore value of 8.77 exceeds the ttable value of 1.996, therefore the null hypothesis is rejected and the alternative hypothesis which states that MNCs in Nigeria tend to maintain the same organisational culture of their home countries is accepted.

Research Hypotheses IV

From the result in Table 1, the fourth hypothesis in this study was also put to test. The hypothesis states that:

H_0 - There is no relationship between organisational culture, customer satisfaction, and organisational performance.

From the mean column in Table 1 and considering the mean values of the variables related to the hypothesis that is, A20, A17 and A18 with mean values of 4.87, 4.83 and 4.81 respectively, and all the research questions experiencing more than average support.

A20 - There is a relationship between organisational culture, customer satisfaction and organisational performance,

A17 - Cultural mismatch may lead to lower customer satisfaction,

A18 - Cultural mismatch may lead to lower business performance), signifies that to a high extent, there is a relationship between organisational culture, customer satisfaction and performance. Thus, the null (Ho) hypothesis was rejected and the alternative hypothesis accepted.

Likewise, in the t-test analysis (not recorded here), the hypothesis was tested at 5% level of significance and it was observed that the tscore value = 2.81 and the ttable = 1.96. Hence, since the tscore value of 2.81 exceeds the ttable value of 1.96, therefore the null hypothesis (Ho) was rejected and the alternative hypothesis which states that there is a relationship between organisational culture, customer satisfaction and organisational performance accepted.

All the test results from the four stated hypotheses are in accordance with extant literature.

Table 2 shows the demographic statistics of the respondents with respect to: title of respondents, address, e-mail address, phone number, category of business, number of employed staff, educational qualification, professional qualification, gender and marital status.

Table II- Demographic Statistics of Respondents.

Variable	Percentage
Title of Respondents	
Manager	48.4
Officer	35.1
Supervisor	3.4
CEO/MD/Chairman	2.7
Security	0.2
Others	4.6
No response	5.6
Category of Business	
Service	63.5
Manufacturing	32.1
No response	4.4
No. of Employed Staff	
1 – 9	4.3
10 – 99	25.5
100 – 499	33.5
500 – above	36.7
Educational Qualification	
B.sc / HND	66.4

Masters		20.2
Doctorate		1.4
PGD		2.6
Others	7.4	
No response	2.0	
Professional Qualification		
Accounting	15.3	
Management	22.6	
Marketing		18.4
Banking and Finance	12.6	
Engineering	11.4	
Medicine		6.4
Others	4.6	
No response	8.7	
Gender		
Male	72.8	
Female		27.2
Marital Status		
Married		74.3
Not married	25.7	

The demographic profile of respondents seems to suggest that the research sample represents a rich data set with regard to age, working experience, type of industry, category of company and academic and professional qualifications.

CONCLUSIONS

This research has addressed all the objectives outlined earlier. That is we have empirically examined the relationship among organisational culture, customer satisfaction and performance in multinational corporations in Nigeria. We have also attempted to validate or falsify the four hypotheses earlier stated through tests. It was been found that culture influences work practices, culture has a profound impact on the way customers perceive the organization, MNCs in Nigeria tend to maintain the same organisational culture of their home countries within their host countries' operations, and that there is a relationship between organisational culture, customer satisfaction and organisational performance. We are of the view that these results should be of some use to both academics and business practitioners with interest in international business.

Characteristically, differences exist between categories of businesses that is services and manufacturing. If service oriented companies are combined with goods alongside manufacturing companies in the same research, it could lead to misleading research conclusions. (Cinnaris & Avlontis 2001). Therefore, the combination of service companies along side with goods manufacturing companies in the sample of companies in this research might have resulted into spurious conclusions. Another limitation of this study is that being a one-nation study conducted within the Nigerian business environment, the generalizability of its findings to other global markets is hindered.

In order to have more robust findings, we suggest that future research work on the subject should separate service from goods manufacturing companies and possibly attempt a comparative study of two or more developing countries. Furthermore, future research work should be undertaken from the market intelligence perspective so as to find the relationship between market intelligence generation emphasis, customer satisfaction and performance.

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APPENDIX

Key to research variables used in table 1

A1 - Culture can be seen as the values, ideas, attitudes and symbols people adopt to communicate, interpret, and interact as members of a society.

A2 - Culture influences work practices.

A3 - Culture has a profound impact on the way customers perceive the organizations from which they purchase.

A4 - Features present in the external environment in which the organisation operates are likely to affect the suitability of an organisation's culture.

A5 - The organisation's national culture and industry characteristics are likely to determine the organisational values.

A6 - Your company develop a culture of its own that is distinct from the national and industry context in which the business is located.
A7 - Your Company tends to maintain the same organisational culture as your home country.
A8 - Your Company is adapting successfully to the different cultural system in Nigeria.
A9 - Your company's corporate values reflect those of the national culture within which the organisation operates.
A10 - Companies whose culture matches those of their home country will experience lower outcome levels when they operate in other countries with vastly different cultural orientations.
A11 - The national culture in Nigeria moderates your company's culture.
A12 - The values that characterize your company is different from those of the National culture within which the organisation operates.
A13 - The cultural values from your company's home country as compared to those of Nigeria are different.
A14 - Your company's internal organisational culture affects its organisational values and outcomes.
A15 - Your company develops a culture of its own that is distinct from the National culture in which the organisation is embedded.
A16 - The national culture in Nigeria moderates your organisational culture and outcomes.
A17 - Cultural mismatch may lead to lower customer satisfaction.
A18 - Cultural mismatch may lead to lower business performance.
A19 - The national culture in Nigeria affects your organisational performance.
A20 - There is a relationship between organisational culture, customer satisfaction and organisational performance.