

## **Examining the Entrepreneurial Perspective and Performance of ‘Indigenous’ Domestic Manufacturing Firms in Kano State, Nigeria**

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**Abstract:** Indigenous domestic manufacturing firms (IDMFs) perform below the expectation compared to non-indigenous domestic manufacturing firms in Kano State, Nigeria. The objective of this study is to examine the IDMFs’ entrepreneurial perspective (EP) and their performance. A survey method was adopted. A structured questionnaire instrument was distributed to a census-based sampling of 179 IDMFs. 152 copies (84.92%) of the administered questionnaire were returned. However, in the course of data screening and cleaning, 27 copies were removed from the data set as outliers. Hence, 125 copies of the questionnaire (69.83% of the total copies distributed) were used for the analysis. A multiple regression model was used in data analysis. Out of the examined EP dimensions, strictness to routine was found to have a significant relationship with the performance of the IDMFs. Statistically, it influences the IDMFs’ performance by 57.3%. This shows that IDMFs in Kano State, Nigeria focus more on routine and convenience, instead of being curious about what makes business works in every situation. While the finding of the study indicates the insignificant relationship between the IDMFs’ performance and other EP dimensions-business for personal satisfaction, inept skill in the present-future match, narrow view of business, fragmented vision and modeling future after present-day)-it suggests that the dimensions are interrelated and intertwined. Therefore, for a firm to experience the positive impact of EP, it must imbibe and institutionalise the EP dimensions in total. Additionally, investigating the relationship between the EP and the closed IDMFs, in the same study area is highly suggested by this research.

**Keywords:** Entrepreneurial perspective, Performance, Indigenous, Domestic Manufacturing Firms

### **1. Introduction**

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Domestic manufacturing firms are the key to nations' sustenance. Without domestic manufacturing, local materials as well as indigenous labour utilisations are hampered. Thereby, resulting in socioeconomic crises (Doza *et al.*, 2020; Impalure & Dore, 2020). Thus, manufacturing remains the defining feature of nations' development, while its performance is the antidote to socioeconomic crises (Andreoni & Gregory, 2013).

Firm performance is a function of efficacy and efficiency, manifested in vigour and vitality (Taouab & Issor, 2019; Selvam *et al.*, 2016). However, environmental changes have exposed the business to negative performance experiences (Ehinomen & Adeleke, 2012). Thereof, to salvage a firm's performance, entrepreneurial perspective (EP) is inevitable (Gerber, 2016). It posits a firm's preference for entrepreneurship and leads to superior performance outcomes (Kuratko & Hornsby, 2018; Kiyabo & Isaga, 2020; Indriarti, Mulyadi & Hendrayati, 2020). Basically, it is the business concept that differentiates firms (Kiyabo & Isaga, 2020).

Regardless of mixed results on manufacturing performance in Nigeria, the sector is one of the best sectors with 9.2 % contribution to GDP (Uchenna, 2019). However, the sector is relatively not doing well in the North, despite the potentials for viable indigenous manufacturing performance (Sagagi *et al.*, 2017). It has fallen short of expectation, as significant progress has not been observed (Sani, 2017); especially, among indigenous domestic manufacturing firms (IDMFs). For example, while the effect of environmental factors is common to businesses particularly, those that operate in the same market (Tsauni & Adamu, 2016), ironically, non-indigenous manufacturing firms flourish and are getting headlines far with IDMFs in the same local market (Sani, 2017; Maiyaki, 2013); and the menace has persisted (African Development Bank, 2019). Impliedly, the situation calls for the need to examine the IDMFs' EP due to its relationship with firm performance, as highlighted above. Thus, this paper seeks to investigate the EP of the IDMFs in Kano State, Nigeria, to examine the relationship with the performance of the subsector.

Kano is chosen as the focal of this study because it is the commercial hub and the most industrialised state of the North, as well as the largest non-oil and gas economy of Nigeria. In addition, for centuries, it has served as the economic nerve centre of the whole of western Sudan. Thence, it is the replica of the Northern economy (Liman, 2017; Sani, 2017). Moreover, it is a 'victim' as well. It has lost over 50% of manufacturing industries and those in operation are faced with low-level capacity utilisation (Kano State Industrial Survey, 2019; Agbede *et al.*, 2020).

## 2. Literature Review

### 2.1 Firm Performance

Performance indicates functioning. It is used to determine business accomplishment and fulfillment. Without it, business survival is periled (Taouab & Issor, 2019). Thus, performance becomes the objective of every firm. Though, the term remains relative (Selvam *et al.*, 2016), it defines the wellness of a firm and results in profitability; market expansion; customer satisfaction; increase in sales; employee satisfaction, and social performances (Selvam *et al.*, 2016; Zanotti, Reyes & Fernandez, 2018). Failure to perform generally jeopardises a firm's survival.

Profit generation is the key result of business performance (Velyka & Zasukha, 2019). It becomes the pillar and critical to a firm's existence (Gitman *et al.*, 2018). Specialisation, differentiation, segmentation, concentration, focus and cost consciousness are paramount for firm to significantly grab its share in the market (Tracy & Tracy, 2014). Market share and business profitability are significantly related (Etale, Bingilar & Ifurueze, 2016).

Market expansion signifies growth. Without growth, business is condemned to obsolescence (Maxwell, 2003). Flexibility is the key to growth. It influences the continuous flow of changes, differentiation and helps in overcoming limitations with regard to resources and other technical insufficiencies (Olusola, 2012; Tracy & Chee, 2013).

Customer satisfaction and increase in sales represent relevance. Relevance posits value, which to customer is the utility of business offer (Tracy, 2015). It is primarily a psychological phenomenon (Wilson, 2016). Therefore, for business offer to have value and customer acceptability, affective and cognitive effect on customer problem is indispensable. This enhances customer satisfaction, wellbeing and revisit intention (Chan, 2019). Therefore, firm needs to position itself in a way that customer perceives effectivity of what it offers (Tracy, 2015).

Employee satisfaction implies employee's positive feeling on a job (Robbins & Judge, 2007). It has direct influence on customer decision in dealing with firm's offer (Chung & Yazdanifard, 2014). Thus, satisfied worker is akin to satisfied customer. Employee satisfaction significantly relates to service quality and to customer satisfaction (Yee, Yeung & Cheng, 2008). Meanwhile, satisfied employee is more productive than unsatisfied employee (Robbins & Judge, 2007). Lack of satisfaction negatively affects employee commitment, resulting to absenteeism, turnover and deviant workplace behaviour (Ahmad & Raja, 2021). Training, variety, independence and control stimulate satisfaction to most employees (Robbins & Judge, 2007).

Social performance is doing business in line with accepted social values. The selected activities associated with social performance dimension include safe environmental practices, enhanced product quality and safety, ethical advertisement, employment to minority and development of social projects (Selvam *et al.*, 2016).

## 2.2 Entrepreneurial Perspective (EP)

Not all firms are 'truly' entrepreneurial. Thus, two mutually exclusive perspectives shape enterprise attitude. They are the technician perspective (TP) and EP (Gerber, 1995). EP involves firm's recourse to high sense of responsibility and internalization (Robbins & Judge, 2007). It is the perspective that enhances firm's creative ability to shape and influence business environment, instead of being passive and constant wishes for good (Muro & Turner, 2018; Smith, 2008). EP induces change and progress and stimulates direness to go forward. TP on the other hand, inhibits change and promotes status quo (Gerber, 2016). EP firms consistently search and assess problems and persistently devise means to solve the problems, minimise risks and seize opportunities. Despite variable belief systems, EP firms take primacy in entrepreneurial model to engage in search and actions, to potentially disrupt existing systems (Smith, 2008).

EP generally posits firm's preference to entrepreneurship. Entrepreneurial spirit is institutionalised within a firm's framework and manifested on firm's environment (Kuratko & Hornsby, 2018). It exposes firm to bold opposition to routines and strictness, and excites vigour, 'entrepreneurial' intelligence and ambitions (Basso & Alain, 2010). EP firms therefore, consider boldness as the foremost of business (Sands, 2018; York, Sarasvathy & Wicks, 2013). It often thrusts management's readiness to embrace new challenges and restart, even when firm confronts a failure (Beech, 2018). EP is therefore, the panacea for the creation of a great, growing business (Gerber, 2016).

Gerber's (2016) finding shows that, EP and TP firms vary on the tendency to strictness to routine, which suggests resorting to convenience, comfort zone, inflexibility and less creative in business undertaking (Lehmann-Ortega & Schoettl, 2005); doing business for personal satisfaction i.e., business to produce inner-directed results such as, primarily doing business for money making (Gerber, 2016; Sani, 2019); skillfulness in present-future match, that involves starting a business with well defined

future and work to change the present to correspond the future (Gerber, 2016); narrow view of business, exhibiting firm's inability to envision business in entirety, less in dynamism and innovativeness (Gerber, 2016; Ratten, 2020); fragmented vision narrates shifts in a focus of business interest (Chater & Vlaev, 2021); and future-present modeling, that involves designing the present after a firm's vision (Gerber, 2016).

Thus, Gerber (2016) differentiates EP and TP firms from the following six ways:

- i) EP looks for how must business work (flexibility and creativity); TP focuses on work that has to be done (routine and convenience).
- ii) To EP, business is a system for producing outer-directed results; TP sees business as a place to produce inner-directed results.
- iii) EP starts with a picture of a well-defined future and then works to change the present to match the future. TP starts with the present, sees the future as uncertain, and hopes to keep the future much like the present.
- iv) EP envisions business in entirety first, and then derives the parts from that. The TP sees the business first in its parts and then puts them together to form a whole.
- v) EP has an integrated vision of the world. TP maintains a fragmented vision.
- vi) In EP, present-day world is modeled after entrepreneur's vision. In the TP the future is modeled after the present-day world.

### 2.3 Hypotheses Development

This current research has reviewed previous work on the relationship between EP and firm performance. However, the studies view EP from varied dimensions (Smith, 2008, Sani, 2019; Basso & Alain, 2010). Nonetheless, Gerber (2016) attempts to conceptualise the EP, taking into cognisance of other studies. Therefore, to achieve the objective of the study, this study adapts Gerber's (2016) description of EP firms. Thus, the following hypotheses are formulated:

1. Strictness to routine has a significant relationship with Kano IDMFs' performance.
2. Doing business for personal satisfaction significantly affects IDMFs' performance in Kano.
3. Inept skill of present-future match has a positive effect on Kano IDMFs' performance.
4. Narrow view of doing business has relationship to Kano IDMFs' performance.
5. Fragmented vision among IDMFs in Kano has significance to performance.
6. Modeling business future after present-day significantly affects Kano IDMFs' performance.

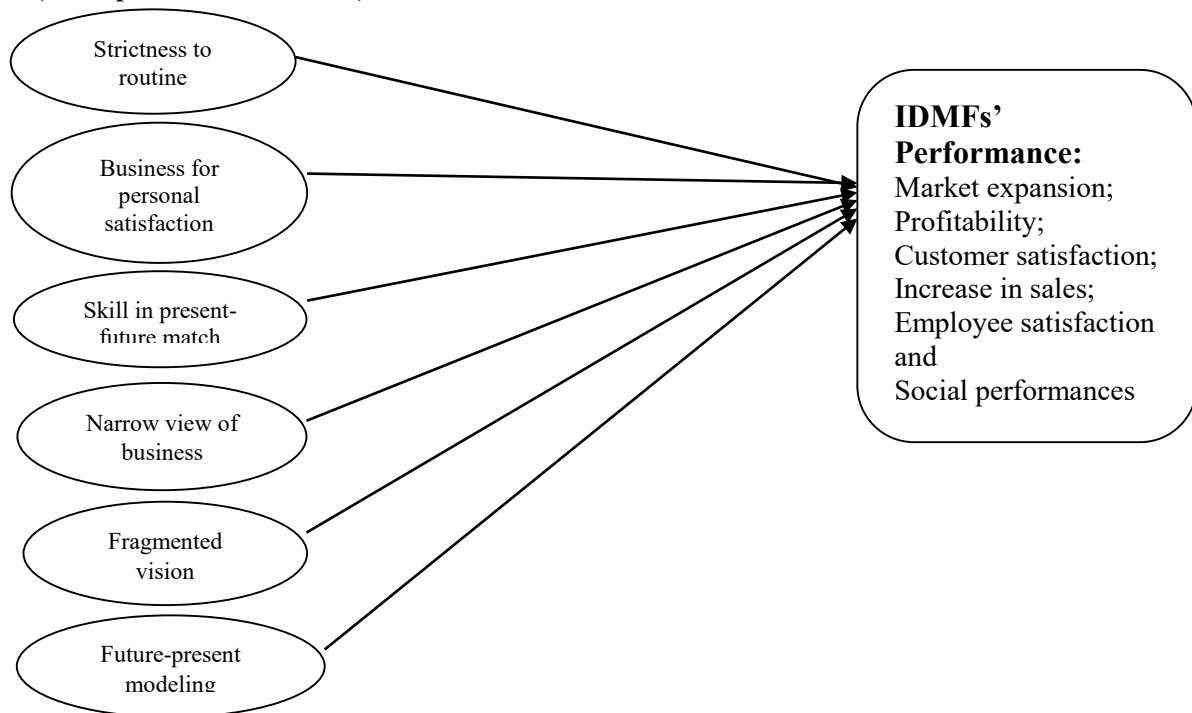
### 3. Research Methodology

The study examines the relationship:  $Y = f(X_1 X_2 X_3 X_4 X_5 X_6)$ . Where  $Y =$  IDMFs' performance (dependent variable (DV)). It was measured by market expansion, profitability, customer satisfaction, increase in sales, employee satisfaction and social performances. EP (IV) was examined by  $x_1, x_2 \dots x_6$ .  $X_1 =$  strictness to routine;  $X_2 =$  business for personal satisfaction;  $X_3 =$  inept skill in present-future match;  $X_4 =$  narrow view of business;  $X_5 =$  fragmented vision and  $X_6 =$  modeling future after present-day.

Diagrammatically, it depicts as in Figure 1.

**IV (Entrepreneurial Practice)**

**DV**



**Figure 1: Conceptual Framework**

**3.1 Research Design**

Cross sectional survey design was adopted by the study. The population of the study consists of the operating 179 IDMFs listed by Kano State Industrial Survey (2019). It is the current compilation that officially reveals the industrial businesses that have operated in Kano. Census based sampling technique was used. The technique was considered, because it increases confidence level in research hence, often used especially, if population is few and limited (Hillman & Kaliappen, 2015). Consequently, a total of 179 copies of questionnaire were administered to managing directors (MDs)/chief executive officers (CEOs) of the entire 179 IDMFs. MDs/CEOs are generally responsible for managing the overall firm performance.

**3.2 Data Collection**

A structured questionnaire instrument was employed for data collection from the sampled 179 IDMFs. 152 copies (84.92%) of the administered questionnaire were returned. The high response rate may not be unrelated to the strategy employed by the research team in the course of distributing and retrieving the questionnaire instrument. Three research assistants were employed. Part of their assignment was to personally administer the questionnaire and follow up the return.

To determine the reliability of the scale, Cronbach’s alpha coefficient was applied. It indicates an average correlation among items (Zar, 2010). Therefore, strictness to routine, business for personal satisfaction, skill in present-future match, narrow view of business, fragmented vision and future-present modeling have 13, 6, 3, 4, 2 and 2 respectively.

**Table 1: Reliability of the Construct Using SPSS Version 20**

Construct	Number of Items	Cronbach Alpha's Value
Strictness to routine	13	.825
Business for personal satisfaction	6	.846
Skill in present-future match	3	.857
Narrow view of business	4	.725
Fragmented vision	2	.768
Future-present modeling	2	.793

Source: Pilot study, 2022

According to Table 1, the reliability coefficient of the variables is strong; all have attained high reliability coefficient, based on the recommended yardstick of 0.70 (Sekaran & Bougie, 2010). For the validity, Lawshe's method for determining construct validity by use of subject matter expert raters (SMERs) was employed. The SMERs were asked to respond to the following question for each item: Is the skill or knowledge measured by this item essential?; Useful, but not essential?; or Not necessary to the performance of the construct? 88% of the SMERs indicated essentiality of the constructs. Large number of SMERs' acceptance to item essentiality indicates eminence in construct validity (Shuttleworth, 2009).

### 3.3 Data Analysis

Multiple Regression Analysis (R) with the aid of SPSS version 20 was the tool for data analysis. It appropriately predicts variable based on the influence of two or more other variables (Laerd, 2013; McDonald, 2009). In addition, it considers predictors' impact at once (Gallo, 2015). Out of the 152 returned copies of the administered questionnaire, in the process of data screening and cleaning, 27 copies were removed from the data set as univariate and multivariate outliers. Therefore, a total of 125 copies of the questionnaire (representing 69.83% of the total copies distributed) were used for the analysis.

## 4. Results and Discuss

**Table 2: Demographic Profile of the Respondents (n= 125)**

Characteristic	Frequency	Percentage
<b>Gender</b>		
Male	113	90.4
Female	12	9.6
<b>Age</b>		
Less than 35 years	12	9.6
35 to less than 45 years	27	21.6
45 to less than 55 years	49	39.2
55 to less than 65 years	32	25.6
65 years and above	5	4
<b>Educational attainment</b>		
Diploma/NCE or Equivalent	22	17.6
HND/First Degree or Equivalent	71	56.8
Masters/Postgraduate Certificate	32	25.6
PhD	56.8	0.0
Others	Nil	0.0
	Nil	

**Table 2: Demographic Profile of the Respondents (n= 125)(Cont'd)**

**Period in management position**

Below 15 years	37	29.6
15 and below 25 years	51	40.8
25 and below 35 years	32	25.6
35 and below 45 years	5	4
45 years and above	Nil	0.0

**Establishment of the firm**

Below 15 years	58	46.4
15 and below 25 years	34	27.2
25 and below 35 years	25	20
35 and below 45 years	7	5.6
45 years and above	1	0.8

**Nature of the firm**

Family business	34	27.2
Sole proprietorship	53	42.4
Partnership	5	4
Cooperative	Nil	Nil
Limited liability	32	25.6
Public liability	1	0.8

Field survey, 2022

The descriptive statistics shown in Table 2 above indicates that majority of the respondents are male (90.4%). This indicates domination of men in business and management positions in the study area. It may not be unrelated to culture and religion of the predominant people that make women stay mostly indoor. The age range of 45 to 55 years (39.2%) has the highest frequency. Meanwhile, 56.8% of the respondents have first degree or its equivalent. The duos reveal that the respondents are in active life stage and have the required experiences and education to understand the questionnaire and respond appropriately. Though, none of the respondents has PhD notwithstanding, each has at least diploma or equivalent. 40.8% have spent 15-25 years on management position, which further suggests that they have good knowledge of managing. Meanwhile, the statistics indicates short life of manufacturing business in the study area. Less than 1% of the examined IDMFs reached 45 years of existence and 42.4% are sole proprietors; which may contribute to their short life span due to limitations of sole proprietorship form of business.

**Table 3: ANOVA<sup>a</sup>**

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	18.462	6	3.077	10.383	.000 <sup>b</sup>
	Residual	34.971	118	.296		
	Total	53.433	124			

ANOVA provides global assessment of statistical difference in R statistics to indicate joint effect of variables, for acceptability of a model, or otherwise. F-value and level of significance are used to determine the effect. F-value ranges from 0 to discretionary large number. Higher F-value translates lower level of significance. Table 3 indicates higher F-value. Hence, P-value indicates significant relationship ( $P < 0.001$ ), which shows that the regression fit is acceptable.

**Table 4: Model Summary<sup>b</sup>**

Model	R	R square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	Change Statistics					Durbin - Watson
					R Square Change	F Change	df1	df2	Sig. F Change	
1	.588 <sup>a</sup>	.346	.312	.54439	.346	10.383	6	118	.000	2.375

According to Table 4, the predictors explain 34.6% variability in Kano IDMFs' performance. This shows substantial value (Gorondutse & Hilman, 2013). However, it indicates presence of other factors that account for variance on the DV. Meanwhile, the model indicates no autocorrelation, as it falls within the Durbin-Watson's acceptable range of 1.5–2.5.

In a nutshell, the tables above ascertain goodness of fit of the examined relationships. However, the results of the investigated relationships are shown in Table 5 below.

**Table 5: Coefficients<sup>a</sup>**

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients Beta	t	Sig.
	B	Std. Error			
(Constant)	.306	.520		.588	.557
Strictness to routine	.843	.220	.573	3.834	.000
Business for personal satisfaction	-.028	.229	-.036	-.120	.904
Skill in present-future match	.101	.177	.099	.571	.569
Narrow view of business	.118	.251	-1.09	.471	.638
Fragmented vision	-.057	.112	-.059	-.506	.614
Future-present modeling	.096	.085	-.129	-1.129	.261

Table 5 confirms only the predicted relationship between strictness to routine and Kano IDMFs' performance. Thus, only hypothesis 1 is accepted. The result shows only strictness to routine has values that statistically determine relationship. The values are the t and significance (p). As the rule of thumb, t and p values must be  $\geq \pm 1.96$  and  $\leq .05$ , respectively. In this study, t-value is 3.834 and p .000. Meanwhile, presence of positive standardised Beta coefficient ( $\beta$ ) and positive t-value indicate the relationship is positive. The  $\beta$  argues that the strictness to routine affects IDMFs' performance by 57.3%. The finding of this study corroborates with the findings of Sani (2019), that says a firm may not necessarily be good at all the EP dimensions. Hence, the studied IDMFs are found to be good in the other EP dimensions, except in flexibility and creativity, which are vital in the contemporary business pursuit.



Therefore, the finding reveals that Kano IDMFs' focus is work that has to be done; basically, the routine and convenience. This implies they are prone to mundane and are stuck in comfort zone, instead of being curious, flexible and creative to what makes business works in all situations.

There isn't any surprise in this result. Curiosity, flexibility and creativity in business require some form of training and expertise. However, the data collected have indicated that 86% of the examined IDMFs do not frequent management trainings. It is through management trainings change management skills and new perspectives of business pursuit are learnt. Hence, while the findings of the study indicate insignificance between the IDMFs' performance and the other EP dimensions, it signals inflexibility alone could deter business from performing well in the market.

## 5. Conclusion

Contemporarily, sustained business performance is guaranteed only by EP. It is the perspective that influences firms to take charge and proactively transform business. Though, this study establishes only one relationship out of the six hypothetical relationships, notwithstanding, the model suitably explains why the studied IDMFs have not closed down business but, invariably with epileptic performance.

The finding of the study proposes interrelatedness of all the EP dimensions. Therefore, for firm to experience positive impact of the EP, it must imbibe and institutionalise all the dimensions throughout. Having an integrated vision or outer perspective for example, will not be enough unless firm implements the other dimensions. For example, going beyond the routine and comfort zone to proactively take actions and influence 'desired' outcome. Otherwise, a firm would undergo performance crises, mostly manifested in redundancy, distress and to some extent, total closure.

Therefore, to reverse the daunting performance of Kano's IDMFs, this study recommends the followings:

- i) IDMFs in Kano should know that change is the rule of today's business. Hence, managers globally live by the slogan *change or die!* Thus, they are not exceptional. Trying the unknown and going beyond comfort zone are part of the contemporary business. Therefore, each of the IDMFs in Kano should-on individual basis-strive to acquire change management skill. It facilitates learning on change initiations, proactiveness, exploring the unknown, risk taking and mitigation skills.
- ii) To be relevant in today's world of business, continuous learning and personal development to acquire flexibility skills and other managerial competencies are necessary. Thus, MDs/CEOs of IDMFs in Kano need to frequent management trainings to abreast new insights of business management. This can be achieved through regular organisation of seminars, workshops, conferences or symposiums by the IDMFs' associations such as the Manufacturers' Association of Nigeria (MAN) or National Association of Small Scale Industrialists (NASSI), as example.
- iii) People are responsible for their own fates and there is always power in number. Hence, IDMFs in Kano should join hands and wholly pursue policies-that promote, protect and favour private sector interests, at all levels.
- iv) All EP dimensions are interrelated and intertwine. The IDMFs should simultaneously adopt and practice all the dimensions in their business pursuit for greater effect on their business performance.

Study to examine relationship between the EP and the closed IDMFs, in the same study area is highly suggested by this research. The suggested study would provide lessons especially to existing businesses, so as to gain insight to avoid closure.

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