



Achievement Orientation and Innovation in Small and Medium-Sized Enterprises (SMEs)

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ABSTRACT:

This paper offers a thorough review of the existing literature on the relationship between achievement orientation and innovation in small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs). Drawing on the McClelland Theory of Needs, which stresses the role of achievement motivation in steering individual behavior, the paper investigates how achievement-oriented individuals within SMEs add to innovation efforts. The review studies several dimensions of achievement orientation, as well as the need for achievement, and its influence on promoting innovative thinking and behaviors within SMEs. The findings suggest that individuals and SMEs with a high demand for achievement are most likely to participate in innovative activities such as creating and applying new ideas, taking risks, and vigorously seeking opportunities for improvement and growth. Also, the review underlines the importance of creating a helpful organizational culture that encourages and compensates achievement-oriented behaviors in order to stimulate innovation in SMEs. The implications of this study draw attention to the significance of recognizing and fostering achievement-oriented individuals within SMEs and applying strategies to influence their motivation in nurturing a culture of innovation. This paper contributes to the literature by providing a wide-ranging understanding of the role of achievement orientation in driving innovation within SMEs, and offers practical understandings for managers and policymakers in search of enhancing innovation practices in this context.

KEYWORDS:

Achievement orientation; Innovation; Small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs); Organizational behavior; Need for achievement; Motivation.

Introduction

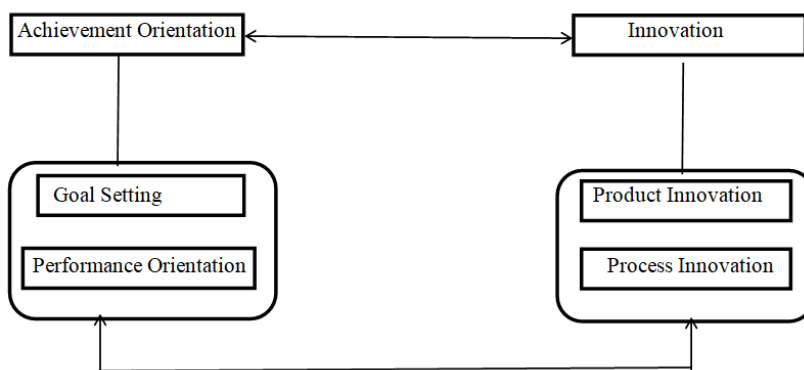
More often businesses are put away due to the laxity in innovatively doing things by remaining in the traditional ways of doing business while others have moved on carrying out their businesses with new technologies, processes, and or marketing in a customer-oriented manner. This requires the introduction of new and improved types of machinery, equipment, raw materials, adoption of newly developed and modernized methods of carrying out their production activities or finding new methods or reaching out to customers and getting more loyalties and patronages(Pindado, Sánchez, &Martínez, 2023).

Makanyeza et al. (2023) posited that innovativeness in a firm would greatly require the abilities of the human elements in that firm to think outside the box and fashion out what can be able to drive the firm better and give them competitive advantage in the industry they are competing. Upadhyay et al. (2023) on the other hand argued that one's ability is no longer required in injecting innovativeness; however, they posited that the use of modern technologies such as Artificial Intelligence and other modern technologies in use can inject a higher level of innovativeness than the human knowledge.

In an actual sense, it still requires the willingness of the entrepreneur or the organization to set goals and these goals and their attainments depend strongly on the entrepreneur's business orientation. It involves features such as goal orientation, being proactive, self-motivation, risk-taking, and persistence which are vital for innovation and growth. Entrepreneurs that are high in these entrepreneurial traits are likely to embrace change, take calculated risks, and continuously seek improvements in their activities.

Small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) play a vital role in influencing economic growth and creating jobs, and innovations. However, many SMEs face challenges in effectively piloting the intricacies of the business atmosphere and leveraging innovation to preserve their competitive advantage. It is pertinent to note that there are many cases of collapse of these businesses that are of immense benefits to the economy and as such we seek research that can assist them succeed in a very turbulent and highly dynamic, characterized by harsh economic regulations, and other factors that impede business growth especially the economies of developing countries that Nigeria is one of them.

There has not been enough literature in this area showing clearly how organizations need to operate to help SMEs pull out of the trouble zone and see how they can engender innovativeness into their business which is a panacea to the demise of their businesses. It is in light of this that the research seeks to understand how achievement motivation can engender innovation in SMEs so that the country can reap the resultant benefits from these businesses.

Conceptual Framework

Source: Tan, S. H., & Pang, J. S. (2023) – (Goal setting and performance orientation)
 Afewerki, S., Asche, F., Misund, B., Thorvaldsen, T., & Tveteras, R. (2023) – (Product innovation and process innovation)

The conceptual framework shows the relationships between achievement orientation and innovation of SMEs. The predictor variable achievement orientation was adopted from the study conducted by Tan, and Pang (2023) and its dimensions while the criterion variable Innovation was adopted from Afewerki, Asche, Misund, Thorvaldsen, and Tveteras (2023) and their measures, product innovation, and process innovation. This is an opinion paper and therefore does not require statistical analyses. The findings and conclusions will be used in journals, papers, online publications, etc. of other authors.

Conceptual Review**Achievement Orientation**

Achievement orientation refers to an individual's motivation and drive to set and attain meaningful goals. It involves a strong desire for personal accomplishment and the willingness to exert effort, take risks, and persist in the face of challenges (Nicholls, 1989). People with a high achievement orientation tend to be focused, proactive (Lumpkin & Dess, 1996), self-driven, and on continuous learning and improvement (McClelland et al., 1953). These individuals often set high standards for themselves and make every effort to surpass expectations. Achievement-oriented individuals are motivated by both inherent factors, such as personal fulfillment and a sense of achievement, as well as extrinsic factors, like rewards, recognition, and promotions. Gopalan, Bakar, Zulkifli, Alwi, and Mat (2017) posited that motivation is a critical element for the success of the learning process and is linked directly to learning activities and encourages people to enthusiastically carry out challenging tasks that can spur the business to greater heights. Umdjon and Madina (2023) defined it as a drive that moves one and others in an organization to perform activities aimed at achieving certain results and also added that the driving force of achievement motivation is determined by its subjective importance or the ratio of the subject to the need in the system of other needs and its subject. Hajiali, Kessi, Budiandriani, Prihatin, and Sufri (2022) argued that achievement motivation strengthens employee competencies directed toward career development. Xue, Qian, Qian, and Li (2021) further in their study revealed that an entrepreneur's achievement orientation has a very significant effect on implicit and explicit commitments and also that the achievement motives are related to conscious or unconscious motives. Rezeki and Hidayat (2021) in their study revealed that there is a direct influence of achievement orientation on employee performance such that a change in achievement motivation (X) of one point will result in a change in employee's performance (Y) 0.586. Murad,

O. (2021) agreed that achievement orientation is a key that affects individual behavior and forms one's personality but it cannot be observed directly and they further revealed in their study that achievement orientation plays a very significant role in enhancing personal achievement and production and also interpreting individual differences in a workplace. Adekanmbi and Ukpere (2021) posited that managers and entrepreneurs should always look out for those psychological factors of their employees that will enable management to know the practical measures and conditions that will be useful in the enhancement of achievement orientation in their organization. Werdhiastutie, Suhariadi, and Partiw (2020) argued that it raises hope in the people in the organization so that it can manage the mindset of people and create work ethics and values in the organization and they also revealed that without achievement orientation, the individual is not satisfied with the result of the work and that achievement orientation is required to develop long term goals.

i. Goal setting

Stevenson and Playford (2023) defined goal setting as the set of activities that a person or group should attain within a specified period and also stated that the skills or set of skills that are required in the attainment of the goals should be considered. Shir and Ryff (2022) argued that the process of entrepreneurship implies a self-motivated, organizational approach to the psychological and behavioral processes of goal setting which is envisioning and commitment, and goal striving which is implementation and persistence in pursuit of a personal vision. Wong and Chan (2022) undertook a study on goal setting and found out that aspects of performance – financial, innovation, and growth are directly related to the entrepreneurs' ability to set desired goals. Kah, O'Brien, Kok, and Gallagher (2022) revealed in their study on goal setting of entrepreneurs in developing countries that they are faced with some challenges such as insufficient finance and unskilled staff – and contextual limitations such as political change, limited government reforms, high taxes, high business costs, and market uncertainty. Barsky (2008) added that goal-setting has become a very popular and motivational tool and also that practitioners have utilized it over time and for goal-setting to enhance the performance of an organization, it must come at a cost of the organization's ethical behaviors. Ogbeiwi (2021) in a study conducted in the United Kingdom on SMEs performance observed poor goal-setting practices and managers when asked, reported, that goal-setting has been on an informal level instead of being formal. Devarajan, Maheshwari, and Vohra (2018) in their study of some multi-national organizations where customers' requirements were constantly increasing and the tasks were constantly changing also observed that goal-setting was the tool used to cater to the evolving customer needs, reducing delivery cycle time, and improving the quality of their product to align the employees to the increasingly dynamic business priorities. Redman (2018) concluded in his study on harnessing sustainable development goals for businesses that goal-setting is a tool that can effectively be used to integrate sustainability into businesses so that they can have a real impact on the pathway toward a shared global goal.

ii. Performance orientation

Lepori, Reale, and Spinello (2018) defined performance orientation as the extent performance in the organization is encouraged and rewards innovation, high standards, excellence, and performance improvements. Performance orientation is also defined as a learning approach in that individuals prefer to get high scores and praise and also in societies where performance orientation is valued more than interpersonal relationships, balancing work and life demands may be less realistic than in societies that are low in performance orientation (Ollier-Malaterre, 2023). Performance orientation may include some attributes such as the need for feedback for improvements, the expectations of

high-demanding tasks, and also a high emphasis than it has on the people in the organization and also it should have a balance as the human elements are the most important resource every organization has (Masood, Cherifi, & Moalla, 2021). Bartels, Geelan, and Kulgemeyer (2019) revealed that in the global rating, the United States is ranked 11th on performance orientation and that a performance culture is just not transparent with goals and direction but provides the employees the necessary learning tools to achieve their desired results. Kotiloglu, Blettner, and Lechler (2023) organization's culture is one of the intriguing parts of an organization's system and as such an organization that has performance orientation as part of its culture reflects a working environment where efforts and success are acknowledged and rewarded and that rewards must not be only financial gifts but also include recognition of their efforts and other non-financial rewards.

Innovation

On the other hand, according to McLoughlin and Harris (1997), innovation is the process of introducing new ideas, methods, products, or services that create value and contribute to positive change. It involves creative thinking, confronting existing norms, and solving problems in new ways (Edquist, 1997). Innovation can take place in various areas, such as business practices, technology, social systems, and more (McLoughlin & Harris, 1997). It necessitates individuals and organizations to be adaptable, open-minded, and willing to take calculated risks. Innovators are inquisitive, and imaginative, and have the readiness to experiment and learn from failures. Achievement orientation and innovation is closely related, as they both involve a forward-thinking mindset and a desire for growth and success (Zakara, 2015). Individuals with a strong achievement orientation usually display innovative thinking and behaviors. They are inspired to push limitations, explore new ideas, and find better and more efficient ways of doing things. Their drive for achievement drives them to seek innovative solutions to problems and challenges which they meet along their path. Also, innovation can enhance achievement orientation by increasing the possibilities and opportunities open to individuals. Through innovation, individuals can identify unexploited potential, create new opportunities for advancement, and achieve goals that were hitherto considered unattainable (McLoughlin & Harris, 1997). Hölzle (2022) argued that innovation can spring up in four ways: unexpected occurrences, results from conscious efforts, purposeful search for opportunities, and social potential. Rao, (2021) revealed that innovation involves creative thinking, planning, and implantation of new ideas to constitute innovation and that it can be in three forms which are business model, product, or marketing innovation. Innovation also inspires and motivates individuals by presenting new challenges, enabling personal development, and creating a sense of purpose. In this way, achievement orientation and innovation form a virtuous cycle, where one fuels and supports the other in a continuous cycle of growth and progress.

i. Product Innovation

Magrini et al. (2023) defined product innovation as the process of creating new products or improving the features of an existing product to make it appeal to customers to give the organization a competitive advantage. Meiners and Yang (2022) argued that production innovation is essential in creating new opportunities and creating business expansions by opening new markets and assisting businesses in delving into new customer groups. Reguia (2014) revealed in his study that product innovation is important because it creates a new way of working, living, and co-existing and also identified two types of product innovation which are radical and incremental, and that it can come in two phases such as research and development.

Molina-Morales et al. (2021) posited that product innovation includes initiatives, methods, techniques, and processes that can be used for making incremental improvements to existing products and services and that the main aim is to have a competitive advantage among others in the same industry having a unique value proposition. Mahmoud et al. (2016) defined product innovation as the solving of problems that a high number of consumers have. It involves the development of new products through the use of new raw materials, changing the design of existing products, or creating entirely a new product of service that means the demands of the target consumers.

ii. Process Innovation

Diez-Martinez et al. (2023) defined Process innovation involves the changes in the inputs, activities, or resources of a process and also the introduction of new technologies, standards, and practices in making a product or service better than it used to be by appealing to the target customers. They further posited that process innovation can lead to an increase in productivity, reduced costs, and improved customer satisfaction. Nguyen et al. (2023) defined process innovation as a new or significant in doing thing in a business that will significantly increase production level and decrease the cost of production. Aloini et al. (2023) posit that a process innovation approach adopts the combination of a process view of the business with the application of innovative actions in the key process of production. Blöcher and Alt (2021) revealed in their study that for a process innovation to be effective, it must have leveraged the benefits of a new and improved technology that can assist the innovative act. Pindado et al. (2023) agreed that process innovations are very crucial for the sustainability of an organization and also identified five challenges businesses face in process innovation which are resource mobilization, piloting strategy, innovation leadership tensions, tensions in managing shareholders' expectations, and product-process innovation tension which is a unique situation when a company implementing a radical process innovation and simultaneously pursues the path to commercialize it as product innovation. Zhang (2022) argued that for an organization to be a leader in their industry in process innovation, it must have a very efficient R&D department that is well-equipped with modern technology and a very efficient research team.

Theoretical Framework

This study is hinged on the Achievement Motivation theory. McClelland's Theory of Needs, also known as the Achievement Motivation Theory, was developed by psychologist David McClelland in the 1960s. It is also known as the Learned Needs theory or Acquired Needs theory. The theory focuses on the needs that propel individuals to achieve success and how these needs influence behavior, particularly in the workplace.

According to McClelland, three key needs motivate individuals:

- i. **Need for Achievement (nAch):** This need refers to the desire for excellence, accomplishments, and surmounting challenging goals. Individuals with a high need for achievement seek out tasks and situations where they can set and achieve challenging objectives. They make every effort for personal success and actively seek feedback and recognition for their accomplishments.
- ii. **Need for Power (nPower):** The need for power signifies the wish to influence others, make an impact, and be in control. Individuals with a high need for power are obsessed by the desire to lead, influence decisions, and have a sense of authority. They seek positions of authority and go all-out for status and recognition from others.
- iii. **Need for Affiliation (nAff):** This need represents the desire to form and maintain interpersonal relationships, belong to groups, and be liked by others. Individuals with a high need for affiliation

give precedence to cooperation, teamwork, and harmonious interactions. They look for social approval, and their motivation is mainly influenced by their relationships with others. McClelland believed that the strength of these needs could differ among individuals, and that the presence of particular needs in the workplace may perhaps greatly influence employee motivation and behavior. He argued that organizations should identify and make provision for these needs to promote employee engagement and performance.

In the context of this paper, McClelland's Theory of Needs suggests that individuals with a high need for achievement are more likely to drive innovation within their organizations. Their desire to fix stimulating goals, struggle for excellence, and seek recognition for their achievements can lead them to pursue innovative ideas and take risks in order to distinguish themselves from competitors.

Understanding the needs of individuals in an SME can help recognize those with a high need for achievement and provide them with opportunities to add to innovation efforts. Cultivating a culture that encourages goal-setting, recognition of achievements, and supports risk-taking can help improve achievement orientation and promote innovation within SMEs.

Generally, McClelland's Theory of Needs provides valuable insights into the role of achievement orientation and individual needs in driving innovation, making it an appropriate framework to consider in the context of SMEs and their innovation practices.

David McClelland established this workplace motivational thinking, developing achievement-based motivational theory and models, and promoted improvements in employee assessment methods, advocating competency-based assessments and tests, arguing them to be better than traditional IQ and personality-based tests.

Empirical Review

Nie (2023) analyzed the effects of goal-setting on product innovation. They adopted the questionnaire method and data was collected from 42 respondents of Mitra company, the data was analyzed using Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS), and it was observed that goal-setting influences product innovation and warned that for this to be very effective, the human elements in the organization must be well-trained and be battle ready for the job as well have enough information of what is expected of them.

Shkarin et al., (2023) researched innovation related to goal-setting and management of innovation. They employed a survey method in their data collection and found that goal-setting about good planning, organization, and control, will influence innovation in the organization with a high level of manageability and a clear relationship with strategic goals can engender product innovation.

Shekarian and Ramirez (2022) conducted a study on goal-setting and technology and corporate sustainability on innovation in an organization. They employed the use of a questionnaire in data collection from 225 persons in manufacturing and service companies and found that goal-setting alone cannot influence process innovation, however, the use of technology and good innovation management skill can influence process innovation.

Lui et al. (2023) undertook a study on the influence of clarity of goals on innovation (process, product, and market innovation), they tested 150 retail staff of an apparel company and were tested with two separate surveys, one to store managers and one to store staff. The data collected was analyzed with a moderation mediation regression analysis. They found that clarity on goal-setting can

influence innovation but can do that when they have a dedicated team with information power that has the required training to take the bull by the horn.

Yusr et al. (2022) conducted a study on the impact of performance orientation on product innovation of an organization among Malaysian SMEs. A quantitative approach was adopted with data collected from 141 manufacturing small and medium enterprises and a partial least square technique was used to test the data collected. They found that performance orientation standing alone cannot influence product innovation, however, they require the introduction of modern technology, consultancy services of experts in the field of the desired area of innovation, a well-trained staff, and a good innovation management team to effectively carry out an innovation on a product.

Limsangpetch et al. (2022) researched the impact of performance orientation on modeling knowledge management in Information Technology organizations with a mediating role in process innovation in Bangkok, Thailand. Data was collected from 200 employees of the Information Technology staff of an IT company and the findings revealed that knowledge storage, knowledge sharing, and knowledge application correlates to business performance and that process innovation can be achieved through a good management system with proper planning and management skills.

Findings

Findings from the extensive research and analysis of this study shed light on the relationship between achievement orientation and innovative capabilities in SMEs. The results highlighted a strong positive correlation between these two concepts, emphasizing the critical role that achievement orientation plays in fostering innovation within SMEs.

SMEs having a high achievement orientation show a strong motivation to set inspiring goals and achieve success. This intrinsic drive drives them to look for innovative solutions and strategies to surmount obstacles and take hold of opportunities. The findings indicate that a strong goal-setting context and a culture of constant improvement are essential in driving innovative capabilities within SMEs.

The study shows that SMEs with higher achievement orientation have a tendency to exhibit a greater inclination to take calculated risks. This propensity for risk-taking enables SMEs to try out new ideas, knowledge, and market strategies, thereby increasing their capacity to innovate. The findings stressed the significance of stimulating a supportive organizational environment that inspires risk-taking and recognizes the potential rewards of innovation.

High achievement orientation SMEs often have an entrepreneurial mindset, regarded as an opportunity-focused, proactive, approach. These SMEs aggressively try to find innovative ideas and solutions, accept change, and quickly adapt to market dynamics. The SMEs frequently make attempt for differentiation and competitiveness, allowing them to remain ahead in the market.

The findings in this study indicate that SMEs that are achievement-oriented consciously invest in attaining and leveraging resources and knowledge to stimulate their innovative capabilities. They have a tendency to proactively seek external collaborations, networks, and partnerships to obtain access to new ideas, technologies, and expertise. Furthermore, the findings underlined the importance of nurturing a learning culture within SMEs, allowing workers to constantly improve their skills and knowledge.

The findings of this study have significant implications for SMEs targeting to enhance their innovative capabilities. It is important for SME owners and managers to encourage a culture that is achievement-oriented within the organization. This can be achieved by setting elaborate, but

achievable goals, encouraging employees to take risks and accept change, and nurturing a learning environment that encourages the attainment and use of new knowledge.

Policy and support programs should be planned to enable the SMEs access to resources, funding, and networks that can allow and encourage innovation. Also, training programs and educational initiatives affecting SMEs can be introduced to improve their entrepreneurial attitude and innovation-related skills.

From the foregoing, the findings of this study underline the significance of achievement orientation in driving innovative capabilities within SMEs. SMEs that show a strong motivation to set challenging goals, take risks, and determinedly chase success are most likely to be innovative and competitive in today's fast changing business landscape.

Conclusion

Based on the findings obtained from this research, we, therefore, reached the following conclusions: Goal-setting on its own cannot influence the product innovation of SMEs, however, it requires other factors like technology, dedication, and well-trained manpower to be efficient and efficient innovation management skills in South-South, Nigeria. Goal-setting on its own cannot influence the process innovation of SMEs, however, it requires other factors like technology, clarity of the goal, training, and performance feedback from customers in South-South, Nigeria. Performance orientation on its own cannot influence product innovation but will need well-equipped R&D, the introduction of modern technologies, dedication, and a well-trained team to actualize it in South-South, Nigeria. Performance orientation on its own cannot influence process innovation but will also require feedback, clarity on customers' needs, and the introduction of technology in South-South, Nigeria. Achievement orientation cannot on its own influence significantly the innovation of SMEs in the South-South, Nigeria.

Recommendations

Based on the review of related literature and findings in this study, the following recommendations were hereby made:

- i. SMEs should endeavor to introduce modern technologies into their business so as to assist the growth of their activities in their desired area of innovation.
- ii. SMEs should employ the services of business consultants when they want to effect major innovations in their business.
- iii. Avenues for training and re-training should be made available for staff and management so as to be able to manage innovations in SMEs.
- iv. Management of SMEs should seek avenues to collaborate with others in the same industry, especially the industry leaders, and join chambers of commerce to enlarge their network.

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