



PACKAGING AND SALES PERFORMANCE OF SMALL AND MEDIUM SIZE EXPORTING FIRMS IN SOUTH-SOUTH, NIGERIA

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ABSTRACT

The study investigated the relationship between packaging and sales performance of food and beverage exporting Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) firms sector in South-South, Nigeria. The study adopted a descriptive survey research design, with the questionnaire as the major instrument for primary data collection from a population involving 160 firms involved in exporting food and beverages. A copy of the questionnaire was administered to the sample made up of managers and owners of the firms. The questionnaire was validated by experts while the reliability test result using Cronbach Alpha produced a value of 0.814. Both descriptive and inferential statistical tools were employed to analyze the data with SPSS (version 21.0). The statistical result showed that packaging had a positive and significant relationship with sales performance. Based on the results, it was concluded that packaging is an important branding strategy that could influence significantly the marketability of Nigerian products in the international marketplace. It was therefore recommended that Nigerian SMEs that are exporting food products should package their food products in quality containers so as to avoid damages during transit or shipment. The use of quality and protective packages will ensure the safe delivery of goods to their destination and increase sales turnover and repeat patronage.

KEY WORDS

Packaging. Repeat Purchase. Nigeria. Sales Turnover. Exporting SMEs.



INTRODUCTION

Many Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) in recent years are embracing exporting as a way of sustaining their businesses and ensuring growth and survival (Patel & D'Souza, 2009). The advantage of engaging in exporting is to take advantage of opportunities in a foreign market. Other merits include the opportunity to acquire international experience, overcome impact of demand fluctuation as well as enhance performance (Lages & Montgomery, 2004)

However, Okpara and Koumbiadis (2009) assert that the poor performance of many SMEs could be attributed to their wrong approach to marketing which lead to decline in business growth. Okpara and Koumbiadis (2009) further observed that many SMEs including those in export operations find it quite challenging to offer high quality products with good packaging at competitive prices that are convenient to the target market. This will likely results in low sales turnover and decline in profit margin. Besides, the position of prior studies by Okpara and Koumbiadis (2009); Tesfom and Lutz (2006); Ibeh(2004), reveal that research efforts on sales performance, particularly export related sales performance have been directed at large organizations and in developed nations with very little emphasis on SMEs in developing nations. Specifically, till date no attention has been directed at linking value creation and sales performance of SMEs in Nigerian food and beverage export sector. Many business operators have become more desperate than ever in their bid to increase their sales volume and achieve growth in sales. In fact, achieving better sales performance has become the major concern of retailers because it is believed that increased sales leads to increased profit and increased profit leads to business growth. Thus, the battle to increase sales has intensified as many business operators have increased their efforts to outcompete others in order to better their sales level

Perhaps, this could explain why SMEs in Nigeria and particularly those in our food and beverages export sector are still struggling to improve their performance despite the growth potentials and resounding government supports over the years, as there seems to be paucity of research recommendations on how to improve sales performance of exporting SMEs. This gap informs the need for research to be conducted in this direction so as to identify and recommend possible ways to enhance the sales performance of SMEs in Nigerian food and beverage export sector. It is pertinent to note that companies may be taking huge risk by not adopting requisite marketing practices that will constantly create superior value for customers. Furthermore, Ibeh(2004) observed that the rate at which businesses fail including those in Nigerian food and beverage export sector is high. This is worrisome and indeed disturbing.

Considering the role of marketing as a veritable key to unlock the door of success for any business outfit, it is likely that most SMEs in Nigeria fail due to inability to adopt necessary marketing approaches to create value for customers in running their business ventures. Perhaps, this may account for the reason why many Nigerian entrepreneurs often experience consistent decline in sales as many of them seem to be lacking a sound knowledge of what creates value in the marketplace and how value creation can impact on sales performance. The beverages exporting SMEs The specific objective was to determine the relationship between packaging and sales performance of food and beverages exporting SMEs in Nigeria.

Literature Review

Conceptual Review

Packaging

The importance of packaging has grown in recent times in view of its possible ability to increase sales and encourage repeat patronage. Packaging involves the activities of designing and producing the container or wrapper for a product (Oladele, et al 2015). It helps to stimulate consumer buying behaviour and increase sales. Oladele et al (2015) maintain that packaging is utilized as a marketing tool to get the consumer's attention, to promote and convey messages about the products attributes to consumers while it is still on the shelf or at the point of sale. Packaging helps firms to differentiate their product from other competing brands. It also provides adequate information about a company's product as it contains the ingredients used in producing the product, nutritional value, as well as the directions on how to use the product. This information together with the uniqueness of the packaging can boost sales volume and sales turnover.

Kesinro, Ojo, and Adenugba (2015) defined packaging as the container for a product, encompassing the physical appearance of the container and including the design, colour, shape, labelling and materials used. It also includes the brand names, brand logos, pictures of the product, different kinds of information on the labels such as ingredients, manufacturing and expiry date, warnings, price, method of usage of the product, company name, company place etc. The main function of the packaging is to easily and safely distribute the products. Sajuyigbe, Ayanleke & Ola (2013) described packaging as all materials firms use for the containment, protection, hard delivery and presentation of goods. Packaging is about the fundamental function of protecting, containing and preserving the product (Ola, Ajayi & Olaoye, 2015). Packaging plays a major role when products are purchased; after all, it is the first thing seen before making purchase choices (Oladele et al, 2015). It communicates certain quality image to consumers (Oladele et al, 2015).

Packaging helps consumers to choose from a wide range of similar products; and it also stimulates customers buying behaviour (Oladele et al, 2015). When food products are arranged in shelves, it is the packaging that first influences consumer buying intention. Packaging is one of the fundamental elements to consumer acceptance of the food product. The importance of packaging ranges from protecting the product to ensuring that it will be delivered to the point of sale in good condition (Shahram, Seyed & Fatemeh, 2013). In international trade, protective packaging plays a key role in ensuring safe delivery of goods. Protective packaging is best utilized for foods products because they are perishable in nature (Ladipo & Rahim, 2013). In this regards, it is important for SMEs exporting food products to use better protective packaging for their food products to avoid damages during transit.

Sajuyigbe, Ayanleke & Ola (2013) believes that better protective packaging is especially important to manufacturers and wholesalers, who may have to absorb the cost of goods damaged in transit. Moreover, goods damaged in shipment may cause lost sales (Sajuyigbe, et al, 2013). Therefore, the use of good packaging can boost the exportation of food products. SMEs exporting food products to other countries can attract more international customers by packaging their food products in good containers (Shahram, et al 2013). Given the dynamic nature of the business environment especially at the international arena, it is necessary for SMEs in the food industry to be more dynamic and innovative in packaging their products especially those that are exported to other countries. This means that SMEs operating in the international market must monitor and change product packaging on a regular basis to ensure continuous and increasing appeal to target audiences (Oladele, et al, 2015). Sajuyigbe, et al (2013) stated that a better box, wrapper, can or bottle, may even enable a relatively small, unknown firm to compete successfully with the established competitors. A new package often creates a (new) product by giving either the regular customers or new target markets the existing product in a new form or quantity that is more satisfactory (Sajuyigbe et al., 2013). This will help in creating competitive advantage for the products in the global market (Olawepo & Ibojo, 2015).

Sales Performance: This is a measure of the contributions of sales activities to corporate goals. That is, sales performance has to do with the outcome of sales activities of firms. Sales performance can as well be considered as a measure of contributions of a company's sales activities to its set objectives. Generally, performance is behaviour evaluated with respect to its contributions to the overall goals and objectives of an organization (Mc Lellan, 2013). Sales performance has to do with the outcome of sales activities of firms (Servais & Jensen, 2012). This outcome manifests in the firm's sales growth, market share and profits (Okpara and Kumbiadis 2009). Sales performance can as well be considered as a measure of contributions of a company's sales activities to its objectives. A sale is the act of selling a product or service in return for money or other compensations (Kotler & Armstrong, 2004). Sales may also be seen as the process of transferring ownership of goods to consumers in exchange for money (Servais & Jensen, 2012).

There are so many controversies in literature regarding what criteria is most appropriate for measuring the sales performance of an organization. Hence there is no generally accepted variable (s) in literature to measure the sales performance of an organization as business and marketing scholars come up with different criteria depending on the organization studied. However, most marketing scholars used variables such as sales volume,

sales turnover and sales growth to measure the sales performance of manufacturing organizations. This implies that sales performance could be measured using various criteria. However, the criteria used in one study may be deemed inadequate for another study because different authors use variables that suit their analysis. In this study, the author used sales turnover and repeat purchase to measure sales performance.

Sales Turnover: Sales turnover refers to how often a company sells its entire inventory to target customers. It may be described as the total amount of goods a company sells within a specific period of time, usually on yearly basis. Sales turnover refers to how often a company sells its inventory (Kennan, 2015). Different time-frames can be used to measure the sales turnover of a company. Organisations chooses their time-frame to measure sales turnover. For instance, some companies may decide to measure their sales turnover weekly or monthly while others yearly (Pendharkar & Pandey, 2011). In accounting, sales turnover of a company is usually measured yearly. A firm's competitiveness impacts on profits via sales turnover rate. Sales turnover rate is therefore a significant indicator of market performance, particularly sales performance of a firm (Sajuyigbe, et al, 2013).

Repeat Purchase: Repeat purchase is the desire of a customer to patronize a product brand or company service repeatedly. In other words, repeat purchase is the willingness of a customer to make repeat purchase from a particular firm. Servais & Jensen (2012) defined repeat purchase as a behaviour whereby a customer patronizes a company's product or services repeatedly. In international trade, the quest for repeat purchase is very high. It will bring a number of benefits to the customers such as, personal recognition, preferential treatment, discount, credit facilities, and time-saving (Chin, 2014; Garga & Bambale, 2016). To the company, repeat purchase can make an organization to achieve market share growth and increase its revenue (Sharp & Sharp, 2008). Firms exporting products to other countries strive to maintain good relationship with their international customers in order to increase repeat purchase.

Theoretical Foundations

Distinctive Competency Theory

Entrepreneurs and managers of organizations are aware that developing competencies in key strategic areas constitute the framework for organizational performance. Michael and Ireland (1985) posited that the capability of an organization manifest in its demonstrated and potential ability to accomplish whatever it sets out to do. They observed that what a firm can do, to a large extent, is a function of the resources at the disposal of the company and not just the opportunities it confronts. They opined that the veritable tool to a company's success has to do with its ability to find and or create a competence that is truly unique. Distinctive competences are those peculiar things that a firm or its units can do better when compared to its competitors. According to Michael and Ireland (1985) a firm can develop distinctive capabilities in such areas as general administration, operations, finance, R&D, marketing, personnel, etc. It can be added that distinctive competence can help a firm to be better positioned to create value that can enhance performance. Competencies represent major factors which can give rise to success in organizations (Levina & Ross, 2003). Distinctive competencies can be considered as uncommon abilities a company enjoys in an industry and which serves as a platform to create value for customers which in turn lead to competitive advantage. An SME that develops distinctive competence in packaging of its products will definitely enjoy patronage by customers especially in the foreign markets.

Packaging and Sales Performance

Some empirical studies have been conducted to show the influence of packaging on sales performance indicators like repeat patronage, consumer brand commitment, brand loyalty etc. For instance, Oladele et al (2014) empirically examined product packaging as a predictive factor of consumer patronage of toothpaste in Ado-Ekiti, Nigeria. The researchers utilized questionnaire as their instrument for data collection and used Pearson product moment correlation and multiple regression analysis to determine the relationship between packaging and patronage of toothpaste. They found out that product packaging has a significant influence on patronage and re-patronage of toothpaste brands in Nigeria.

Also, Kesinro, Ojo and Adenugba (2015) carried out a study on product packaging and customer brand commitment in food and beverage markets of Lagos State, Nigeria. They employed a descriptive survey design to examine consumers of packaged food products in Lagos State using questionnaire for data collection. The Pearson product moment correlation (r) and simple regression analysis was used for data analysis. The result of their analysis showed that product packaging significantly influence consumer brand commitment.

Dhurup, Mafini and Dumasi (2013) also studied the impact of packaging, price and brand awareness on brand loyalty using evidence from the paint retailing industry. The authors used a quantitative survey approach to examine consumers who purchased various paint brands. They used regression analysis and one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) to test the impact of product packaging on brand loyalty. The result indicated that product packaging has a significant relationship with brand loyalty. In another survey on the impact of product packaging on consumer buying behaviour, it was reported that product packaging has significant influence on repeat patronage (Mazhar et al, 2015).

The study conducted by Shahram, Seyed and Fatemeh (2013) also found similar result as Mazhar et al (2015). Shahram, et al (2013) studied the effect of packaging quality on performance of Saffron Export. The researchers focused on firms that export saffron in Khorason Razavi province. They employed questionnaire as the major instrument for data collection and used the SPSS software to perform a multiple regression analysis on the study variables. The result indicated that packaging quality has a significant effect on patronage of firms exporting saffron products in Khorasan Razavi Province.

From the foregoing, importance of packaging in increasing sales performance of firms cannot be overemphasized. According to Gangar (2015), packaging is used as a promotional tool to boost product sales. A good packaging attracts consumers and boosts their purchasing intentions. DeliyaandParmar,(as cited in Mazhar et al,2015) posited that packaging will influence consumers and hence change their buying behavior towards that brand which will help company to generate revenue. Ola, Ajayi and Olaoye (2015) argued that packaging can increase sales by such promotionally-oriented moves as offering smaller or larger sizes more multipacks, better pictures of the product itself, illustrations of the product in use and more effective use of color.

Studies have shown that most consumers purchase products with attractive packaging than those with less attraction (Oladele et al, 2015). A study conducted by Kesinro, Ojo &Adenugba (2015) showed that 62% of the consumers visiting selected supermarkets in UK revealed that they are often attracted to purchase products with beautiful packaging while 38% indicated that they are less attractive to packaging. Thomas (2015) in a study reported that buyers trust in a product or brand declines steadily when its packaging is damaged. As Dhurup, MafiniandDumasi (2013) stated, good packaging attracts consumers to a product and increases sales performance of firms. Before a consumer can test a product, he or she must be attracted to it first before deciding to purchase it. Packaging plays a vital role in attracting consumers towards any product (Mazhar et al, 2015). Many consumers purchase product with more stylish and attractive packaging. Therefore, it is important for companies to use a good material and wrapper to enclose their products. It should also be stated that the material and wrappers used to enclose products have significant effect on sales. According to them, if a firm uses a good packaging material and wrapper to enclose their products, it will build a strong impression in the minds of the consumers as they will believe that the product is of high quality and consequently purchase it. But where the product is packaged with low quality material or wrapper, it will send a negative message to the consumers that the product is of low quality and consequently affects the sales of the product.

Mazhar et al (2015) noted that consumers purchase more quantities of products if they are attracted to the packaging. Ola, et al (2015) studied the impact of packaging on organizational sales turnover and found that packaging has significant effect on sales turnover. They further revealed that packaging and other factors such as brand name, pricing and promotion jointly predict organizational sales, which accounted for 98% variation in sales turnover. Their study concluded that a specific package must be developed for each product because variations in packaging can make a product saleable in various target markets (Ola, Ajayi & Olaoye, 2015). Packaging can also play a significant role in increasing repeat patronage as it influences consumer's perceptions

about the product (Olawepo&Ibojo, 2015). A study by Ola, et al (2015) reported that most consumers judge a product by its packaging before buying. After purchasing the product for the first time, they are most likely to re-patronize the product or brand if they feel satisfied with it. A firm that packages its products in attractive manner will likely draw the attention of consumers to the product and increase sales turnover and repeat patronage.

Good and attractive packaging may add value to the product and attract a trial from first time customers who may do a repeat purchase (Scott as cited in Oladele et al, 2015). Attractive packaging helps to increase sales turnover and repeat patronage because it showcases the uniqueness and originality of the brand. Packaging helps to build brand image and increase repeat purchases. In the food and beverage industry, packaging plays a crucial role in increasing sales and repeat patronage. It serves as an advertisement to the product and helps to boost sales and customer loyalty (Olawepo&Ibojo, 2015). Gangar (2015) noted that packaging is a crucial factor in stimulating repeat purchases and boost sales performance. According to them, when products with similar functions are arranged in shelves, it is the uniqueness of the individual product packaging that first attracts consumers to the product and thereafter command patronage.

Packaging is a crucial marketing strategy to increase patronage because it attracts consumers to products. Good packaging communicates certain quality image to consumers (Oladele et al, 2015). Sajuyigbe, Ayanleke& Ola (2013) posited that packaging is an important part of the branding process as it plays a role in communicating the image and identity of a company to consumers. A better and unique packaging will induce consumer to make repeat purchases and increase the sales performance of the brand. Kotler andArmstrong,(as cited in Dhurup et al, 2014) noted that with rising consumer affluence, consumers are often willing to pay a little more for the convenience, appearance, dependability and prestige of better packaging. Oladele et al (2015) argued that packaging influences consumers' perception for a particular product brand and consumers most times are attracted at first sight to the packaging style of a product.

Many international firms attach great importance to packaging because they believe that it helps to increase sales and repeat patronage (Wells, Farley, & Armstrong, 2007). According to Olawepo&Ibojo (2015), firms that packaged their products properly would not only prevent damages during transit or shipment but would also maintain good relationship with their international customers since goods are often delivered in a good condition, hence repeat patronage will be guaranteed. It could therefore be hypothesized that;
HO1: Packaging does not influence sales performance of food and beverages exporting SMEs in Nigeria.

Research Methodology

Research Design: The study adopted survey research design in order to establish the nature of relationship between packaging and sales performance of food and beverages exporting SMEs in South-South Nigeria. Sullivan (2001) believes that it allows for the use of both questionnaire and other data collection techniques like informal discussion, interview etc.

Area of the Study: The South-South geopolitical zone of Nigeria was the geographical area chosen for the study. At the moment this zone is made up of six (6) states which include The South-South zone covers about 70,000 square kilometers, 5000 communities, 50 ethnic groups with the Ijaws in majority and 250 dialects (NDDC Report, 2014).

Sources of Data: Primary source of data collection was used in this study through the field survey method of gathering information with questionnaire.

Pilot Survey: This study undertook a pilot survey in order to pretest the questionnaire with 20 respondents.

Study Population: The population of this study consisted of Food and Beverages manufacturing/exporting SMEs in South-South Nigeria, registered with Nigerian Export Promotions Council (NEPC). The study focuses on SMEs that manufacture and also export food and beverages and are based in South-South Nigeria. The

distribution was as follows: Rivers and Bayelsa 92; Akwa-Ibom and Cross River 92; Edo and Delta 51. A census study of the total population of 160 was undertaken.

Research Instruments: The Questionnaire was adopted as the research instrument. It was arranged in sections A and B. Section A dealt with the demographics of the respondents, while section B dealt with the study variables. The items were designed in a simple format to ease response. The items in section B were structured using five-point rating scale (Strongly Disagree, Disagree, Undecided, Agree, and Strongly Agree) which was rated 1 to 5 respectively.

Validity of the Research Instrument: The face and content validity of the research instrument was ascertained by experts in Marketing.

Reliability of the Research Instrument: A Cronbach's Alpha test was conducted on the measurement items to determine the reliability of the study instrument. The SPSS output shows the consistency of the instrument used in this study with a coefficient of 0.814 which surpasses Nunnally's (1978) benchmark of 0.7

Methods of Data Presentation and Analysis: The Pearson correlation was used to test the stated hypotheses and establish the nature of the relationship between the variables since the study intended to determine how price competitiveness as a dimension of value creation strategies could influence sales performance of food and beverages exporting SMEs in South-South Nigeria.

Data Analysis and Results

Questionnaire Administration and Responses

A total of 160 copies of the questionnaire were distributed amongst owners/managers of Food and Beverages manufacturing/exporting SMEs in South-South Nigeria, registered with Nigerian Export Promotions Council (NEPC). One (1) questionnaire was administered to a representative (owner or manager) of each firm studied for administration convenience. Out of the 160 copies of questionnaire administered, only 143 copies returned were considered useful. This accounted for 89.37% response rate. Due to obvious mistakes and incomplete responses, 5 copies accounting for 3.13% were dropped, while 12 copies representing 7.50% could not be retrieved due to misplacement and other reasons given by the respondents. Therefore, the total response rate that formed the basis of our analysis was 143 representing 89.37%.

Demographic Profile of Respondents: The abridged analysis of the demographic profile of respondents revealed how long the respondents have been involved in export operation. In specific terms, 49(34.3%) of the respondents affirmed that they had been in export operation for less than one year. Also, 38(26.6%) of the respondents had been in export operation for 1-3 years; 30(21.0%) have been in export operation for 4-6 years while 26(18.2%) had been in export operation for more than 6 years. On the category/designation of the respondents, the following were obtained: 102(71.3%) of the respondents are owners, 27(18.9%) of them were managers while 14(9.8%) include others.

Inferential Statistics

This section adopted Pearson's product moment correlation analysis and to undertake quantitative analysis of the relationships between the study variables. The quantitative analysis was facilitated through the use of SPSS version 21.0.

Correlation Analysis

In this section, vicariate analysis was carried out to determine the relationship between packaging as the dimension of value creation strategy and sales performance measured in terms of repeat purchase and sales turnover using the Pearson's Product Moment Correlation Coefficient.

Research Hypothesis One

HO1: Packaging does not influence sales performance of food and beverages exporting SMEs in Nigeria.

Table 1 Statistical Analysis for Hypothesis Six

		Package	Salesper
Package	Pearson Correlation	1	.875**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	143	143
Salesper	Pearson Correlation	.875**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	143	143

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

From the result of the above Table, the correlation coefficient ($r = 0.875$) between packaging and sales performance is very strong and positive. The coefficient of determination ($r^2 = 0.765$) indicated that 77% of sales performance can be explained by packaging. The significant value of 0.000 ($p < 0.01$) reveals a significant relationship. Based on that, the null hypothesis is rejected. Therefore, there is a significant relationship between packaging and sales performance of food and beverages exporting SMEs in Nigeria.

Discussion of Findings

From the result of the analysis carried out respecting the text of hypothesis six, it was discovered that a significant relationship exists between packaging and sales performance of SMEs in food products export. This finding was deduced from the result of the correlation analysis carried out on the sixth hypothesis which indicated that packaging has a positive relationship with sales performance and that this relationship is significant at 5% levels ($r = 0.875$; $0.000 < 0.01$). This finding implies that proper packaging of the export food products will attract international customers and this will increase the sales turnover of the firms and encourage repeat patronage. This finding is supported by Gangar (2015) who noted that packaging is used as a promotional tool to boost product sales. Mazhar *et al* (2015) also supported this claim as they remark that proper packaging attracts people towards a company's products, which help to boost the company's sales level. This implies that SMEs exporting food products can capitalize on the promotional ability of packaging to boost sales in the international market. The international market, specifically the food industry is very competitive and as such Nigerian SMEs must package their food products properly to ensure that food items ordered by international customers get to them safely and in good condition. Shahram, Seyed & Fatemeh (2013) agreed with the view that proper packaging is a good marketing strategy which can boost sales in the international market. This means that Nigerian SMEs that properly package their food products stand the chance of increasing their sales. This finding is also supported by Mazhar *et al* (2015) as they revealed that good and unique packaging will

remain in the mind of the consumers for a long period of time and by this, consumers will want to patronize products that are well packaged over and over again.

Gangar (2015) also agreed with the position of this finding as he noted that packaging stimulates sales turnover and repeat patronage. Breetz (2013) equally believes that proper packaging stimulates repeat patronage and enhances sales turnover. Therefore, the established fact is that packaging increases sales and this is a wakeup call for Nigerian SMEs operating in the international market. Small and medium scale firms in the food industry have to properly package their food products to ensure that they are delivered to their international customers in safe and good condition.

Conclusion

The study focused on the influence of packaging as a dimension of value creation strategies on sales performance. The adopted measures of sales performance are sales turnover and repeat patronage. From the study findings, it was revealed that packaging had a very strong relationship on sales performance (0.875, $P > 0.01$). The results of our study clearly demonstrate that, packaging was found to have a significant relationship with sales performance of SMEs in food products export sector. Based on the results, it was concluded that packaging is an important branding strategy that could influence significantly the marketability of Nigerian products in the international marketplace.

Recommendations

Based on the findings and the attendant conclusion, it was recommended that Nigerian SMEs that are exporting food products should package their food products in quality containers so as to avoid damages during transit or shipment. The use of quality and protective package will ensure safe delivery of goods to its destination and increase sales turnover and repeat patronage.

Suggestions for Further Studies

The findings of this study are limited to food and beverages exporting SMEs operating in South-South Nigeria with regard to packaging a value creating mechanism in the marketplace. Therefore, there is need for further research to be conducted using other dimensions of value creating strategies.

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