SSRG International Journal of Humanities and Social Science
ISSN: 2394 – 2703 /doi:10.14445/23942703/IJHSS-V8I2P115

Volume 8 Issue 2, 104-110, Mar-April, 2021

Poultrepreneurial Technological Capability And The Growth of Selected Poultry Businesses In Ikorodu, Lagos State, Nigeria

Adefulu Adesoga. D[1], Arigbede Temitope Oluwaseun[2], Nwankwere Idowu. A[3]. & Nnorom Kelechi Goodluck [4]

[1]*Associate Professor of Business Administration, Department of Business Administration and Marketing, Babcock University, Illisan-Remo, Ogun State, Nigeria*
[2] *P.hD. Student Department of Business Administration and Marketing, Babcock University, Illisan, Sagamu, Ogun State, Nigeria*
[3] *Lecturer, Department of Business Administration and Marketing, Babcock University, Illisan-Remo, Ogun State, Nigeria*
[4] *Lecturer, Department of Business Administration and Marketing, Babcock University, Illisan-Remo, Ogun State, Nigeria*

Received Date: 10 March 2021
Revised Date: 22 April 2021
Accepted Date: 24 April 2021

Abstract
Poultry businesses in Nigeria have continuously faced a number of growth challenges such as declining volume of goods sold, yearly product turnover, asset growth, and valuation. Despite the increasing number of poultry businesses established, these numbers have not translated to better growth within the industry. There is, therefore, the need for poulterers to harness their resources and exploit their technological capabilities in order to gain growth advantages. Hence, this study investigated the relationship between poultrepreneurial technological capabilities and the growth of selected poultry businesses in Ikorodu, Lagos State, Nigeria. The study employed a cross-sectional survey research design. The target population comprised 64 registered PAN members in Ikorodu, Lagos State, Nigeria. A total enumeration technique was adopted. Findings revealed that there was a significant and positive relationship between poultrepreneurial technological capability and the growth of selected poultry businesses in Ikorodu, Lagos State, Nigeria. The study concludes that there is a relationship between poultrepreneurial technological capability and poultry business growth. It is recommended that poultrepreneurs should evolve dynamic business models that will enhance adoption of technological capabilities flexibility in order to grow across all spheres of their poultry business.

Keywords: *Technological Capability, Growth, Poultrepreneur, Poultry business, PAN.*

I. Introduction

Poultry business growth is evidently an integral component of the economic growth and development of a country. The poultry business is one of the major sources of livelihood and employment in developed and developing countries. Bishop, Mason, and Robinson (2009) posited firm growth as the ability of a firm to succeed in building up distinctive resources, capabilities, and structures over time which permit them to offer superior product performance and/or lower prices that are difficult and/or costly for other firms to duplicate or imitate. The experience and technical know-how of international and local poultry technologies may increase the need for poultry businesses to continuously adapt, improve, and exert efforts, especially that is capable of translating into improved growth rates. The poultry businesses that apply greater technological capability will be more successful in responding to changing environments and developing new capabilities to appreciable growth rates. In this era of globalization and intense competition, especially in the poultry industry, poultry businesses without adequate and appropriately relevant technological capability might affect their growth rates.

In developing countries, especially African countries, the outlook for the poultry industry growth is positive amid difficult operating and economic headwinds. Ensuring consistent growth patterns has been a major challenge for poultry businesses in Africa. Technological incapability has placed considerable pressure on achieving targeted growth of poultry businesses among the African countries. Sectorial growth as so far mainly benefitted large commercial producers while small-scale poultry producers have been unable to grow limited to subsistence, village alternative production systems (Aiders, Besbes, Gueye, & Thieme). The inability to explore modern poultry technologies among poultrepreneurs in their poultry businesses has translated into low industry-wide growth rates in Nigeria. RVO (2020) has emphasized that the majority of poultry businesses in Nigeria have recorded a decline in growth due to a lack of sector capabilities, knowledge sharing, technologies, skills, and knowledge.

The majority of scholars (such as Chukwuigwe, Owen, & Week, 2008; Evbuomwan & Okoye, 2017; Gupta, Guha, & Krishnaswami, 2013) have examined how capabilities affect firm efficiency in different sectors; but most of these

studies have never investigated how poultrepreneurial technological capability affect the growth of poultry businesses in Ikorodu, Lagos State, Nigeria. Considering the problems and gaps identified, this study examined (i) the relationship between poultrepreneurial technological capability and the growth of selected poultry businesses in Ikorodu, Lagos State, Nigeria.

II. Literature Review

A. Conceptual Review

a) Poultrepreneurial Technological Capability

Technology capability was defined by Alejandra (2009) as the specific knowledge and skills in technology required efficiently setting up, operating, diversifying, and expanding an industrial operation. Furthermore, to explain where technological capability is centered on, in this vein, according to Reichert and Zawislak (2014), technological capability is the firm's ability, based on its accrued knowledge, to perform a set of activities that results in new technological knowledge development to achieve positive economic results. This definition was of the view that every technological knowledge seeks to bring about economic gains and the result of this is innovation. Economic returns arise through the development of new products and processes, which they believe there is a market for its goods and services.

Technological capability is composed of four (4) components: the capability to access specific labor technology expertise, capability in accessing new technology, skill in conducting applied R&D, and the ability to upgrade existing products (Arostegui, Bustinza, Herrero & Parry, 2015). Similarly, Abubakar and Salisu (2019) asserted that technology capability involves: identifying, acquiring, developing, and utilizing state of the art in products, process, and technologies so as to produce the most superior product that best satisfies the current requirement of the market and improve the organization performance.

Moreover, some of the advantages of technological capabilities are technological capabilities have been emphasized in several strains of economic literature as major engines that helps firms to increase their ability to apply technical knowledge in creating and delivering innovative products that consumers may value; and thus affect the overall business performance and new product development performance of a firm (Latip, Salleh, Omar, & Yaakub, 2013; Lo, Wang, Xue, & Zang 2006; Nwankpa & Roumani, 2016). Also, technological capabilities allow firms to gain sustainable competitive advantage (Akbari, Hajihoseini, Imamoglu, Nargesi & Razavi, 2016; Abubakar & Salisu, 2018; Fracasso & Gammarro, 2018). Finally, Abubakar and Salisu (2019) posited that technological capability enables the firm to identify, acquire and apply new external knowledge to develop operational competencies, which leads to the attainment of superior performance.

b) Poultry Business Growth

Gupta, Gua, and Krishnaswami (2014) referred to firm growth as a vital indicator of a flourishing enterprise. They also posited that there are many precursors which allow a firm to move from one stage to another. This definition is a simple one that does explain the indicator of growth. Due to this conceptual gap, Bishop, Mason, and Robinson (2009) define firm growth based on either threshold measures (growth rates above a certain percentage level) or relative measures (e.g., firms in the upper decile of growth rates of a given population of firms). In the case of firms adapting to the changing needs of the consumer or the society, the aforementioned definitions fall short of such premise. Scholars such as Anderson and Eshima in 2017, from an adaptability capability perspective, posited firm growth as a growing firm that acquires new resources and with it the possibility to combine new and existing resources in new value-creating ways. Firms exploit these new opportunities by expanding their entrepreneurial activity. However, these definitions explain how firm growth occurs or is attained. As regards this conceptual gap, Shepherd and Wiklund (2003) posited that growth implies radical changes in the business characteristics. Similarly, Bishop, Mason, and Robinson (2009) posited firm growth as the ability of a firm to succeed in building up distinctive resources, capabilities, and structures over time which permit them to offer superior product performance and/or lower prices that are difficult and/or costly for other firms to duplicate or imitate. According to Child and Lou (2015), firm growth means achieving compositional advantage, which involves creatively combining market intelligence, organization resilience, creative use of imitation, and entrepreneurial ability of the firms in order to generate impressive speed and efficiency, particularly to develop superior price value-ratio (i.e., the higher value provided to customers per unit of price or cost).

In addition to the definitions, this concept is characterized by its function, being that small business growth is a function of the small business manager's personal abilities. Concerning small firms, the ability of top management is to expand his or her business is dependent on his or her ability to secure the resources needed for growth as well as the capability of developing the organization (Shepherd & Wiklund, 2003). The mechanism through which this process occurs is the firm's adaptive capability which is the firm's proficiency at altering its understanding of market expectations which increases as a result of increasing firm boundaries (Davidsson, Girma, Lockett & Wicklund, 2011). However, in light of the canonical firm dynamics model, the fraction of firms with positive productivity growth did not necessarily have to correlate with the cross-country variation in aggregate growth, but the intensive margin of productivity growth may also matter, and within-country heterogeneity along this margin can potentially shape aggregate growth (Caunedo & Yurdagul, 2019).

According to Carrisossa (2007), firm growth is crucially important due to the following: First, firm growth is related very closely to firm survival. Specifically, firm

growth is positively correlated with the likelihood of survival. Hence firms that experience continuous growth will have a higher probability of surviving in the market. Second, firm growth has consequences for employment. A positive rate of growth implies a net creation of new jobs, while a negative rate implies the net destruction of jobs. Job creation and job destruction are closely related to the ability of incumbents and new entrants to grow. And, obviously, the evolution of employment, therefore, has obvious impacts on the government budget. The third factor behind the importance of firm growth is its effect on economic growth. Backward and forward linkages will be higher or lower depending on the evolution of active firms. If we look at the general effect on an economy, an increase in firm growth may increase its demand towards other sectors, thus producing an increase in the economic activity of a region. This dynamism in the economy can lead to major growth. On the other hand, a decrease in the number of employees in a firm may indicate or cause a crisis, and finally, firm growth is a way to introduce innovation and technological change.

One major setback of firm growth is the clarity on whether strongly liquidity-constrained firms enjoy less volatile size distributions. Thus, the negative impact of liquidity constraints on firm growth, which was quite strong in our pooled sample, becomes more ambiguous when one disaggregates across years, and this was argued based on the fact that an explanation for this result can be rooted in the way firms perceive liquidity constraints over the business cycle (Fagiolo &Luzzi, 2004). Finally, firm growth is a fundamental driver of wealth creation, employment creation, and economic growth and development in every economy around the world (Neneh & Zyl, 2017).

B. Theoretical Foundation

The theory underpinning this study is the Resource-Based View (RBV). The RBV which was originated finding its origin in the works published by Penrose (1959), Wernerfelt, B. ("the resource-based view of the firm"), Prahalad and Hamel ("the core competence of the corporation"), Barney, J. ("firm resources and sustained competitive advantage"). The use of the term resources can be traced to the work of Penrose (1959), who conceptualized the firm "..... as a collection of productive resources, the disposal of which between different uses and overtime is determined by administrative decisions." Penrose's conceptualization is in typical classical economics mode to view resources as land, labor, capital, and information but not in terms of strengths and weaknesses. Wemerfelt (1984) defined resources as ".....anything which could be thought of as a strength or weakness of a given firm." The resources, capability, competence are also referred to as the inside-out perspective. Wemerfelt (1984) extended Penrose's ideas, and in which he proposed that examining a firm from a resource perspective helps us in understanding it differently in comparison to the traditional product perspective, resources that help a generation of high profits can be identified.

According to Barney (1991), the RBV rests on three (3) assumptions: that firms seek to earn above-average returns; that resources are asymmetrically distributed across competing firms; and that differences in resources lead to differences in product or service characteristics that result in variations in firms' performance. The theory also assumes that individuals are inspired to make maximum use of economic resources available and rational choices that a firm makes, which are shaped by the economic framework (Barney, 2007). The resource-based view of the firm believes that most of the recommendations of the perspectives on the competitive position of the enterprise are short-term in nature, and the real strength and advantages emerge from the resources within the firm. The interaction between tangible resources, intangible resources such as methods of doing business, and human resources of an organization develop a set of organizational processes. These, in turn, help the creation of products and services (Winterfelt 1984).

However, some scholars have criticized the assumption of RBV. For example in a paper presented by Butler and Priem (2001) argued that RBV might be limited in explaining a firm's competitive advantages in changing environments since it is a rather static theory. Although the RBV recognizes different types of resources, for example, physical capital, human capital, and organizational capital (Barney, 1991), it treats them all in the same way (Barney et al., 2001; Peteraf, 1993). RBV fails to establish the borders within which specific resources and capabilities are significantly important; there are many generalizations about the advantages of certain resources without addressing the setting within which these resources may be valuable to the firm (Miller & Shamsie, 1996). Hart (1995) posited that commitment to a competent resource base makes it difficult to acquire new resources. In a study conducted by Miller and Shamsie (1996), they argued against advantages of better specifying the unique firm resources, those resources with the capacity to produce returns that are beyond normal.

Despite these criticisms, some scholars (such as Cervera, Fidel & Schlesinger, 2015; Kim, Min & Mccann & Shinkle, 2014) are in agreement with the assumption of the theory. For instance, Kostopoulos, Prastaos, and Spanos (2002) asserted that KBV and extension of the RBV by showing new directions for strategic management through which coordination/integration, learning, and transformation are the fundamental dynamic capabilities that serve as the mechanisms through which available stocks of resources (e.g., marketing, financial and technological assets) can be combined and transformed to produce new and innovative forms of competitive advantage.

C. Empirical review and hypothesis development

In establishing the relationship between technological capability and firm growth, many studies within and outside the Nigerian context were empirically reviewed. Most empirical findings as regards the relationship between technological capability and firm growth has been

mixed. Some studies exert. Also, Agarwal *et al.* (2009) revealed that when industries evolve, entrepreneurial entry into emerging product markets is as important to firm survival as are technological capabilities. . Ahmad and Otham (2014) revealed that technological capability plays a major role in the growth of manufacturing industry.

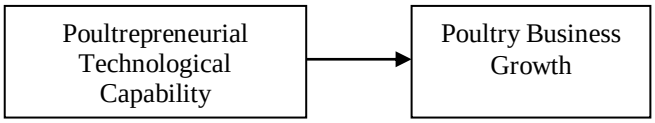
Considering several empirical studies reviewed, most of these studies have not investigated the relationship between poultrepreneurial technological capability and poultry business growth of selected poultry businesses, thus indicating an empirical gap which the study tends to fill. Based on the empirical gap identified on the relationship between poultrepreneurial technological capability and poultry business growth, this study, therefore, hypothesized that:

H_{01}: Poultrepreneurial technological capabilities have no significant relationship with the growth of selected poultry businesses in South-West, Nigeria.

D. Conceptual model

The researcher's conceptual model in figure 1 depicted the relationship between poultrepreneurial technological capability and poultry business growth. The researcher's conceptual model was anchored on the business theory, which shows poultry business owners or managers use the technological capability as resources to create and sustain poultry business profitability over other poultry businesses/ owners without technological capability. In relation to this study, we can assume that the resource-based view states that poultry businesses intangible resources could be poultrepreneurial technological capability in which for the poultry business to gain a reasonable level of growth, there must be the adoption of a strategic and innovative poultrepreneurial technological capability as a poulterer's resource so as to achieve overall growth benefits.

Fig. 1



III. Methodology

This study employed a cross-sectional survey research design to obtain field information on study variables in investigating the relationship between poultrepreneurial technological capability and growth of selected poultry businesses in Ikorodu, Lagos State, Nigeria. This research considered the 64 registered PAN members of the Ikorodu zone as the adjusted population of the study. The sample frame was the list of registered PAN members of the Ikorodu zone consisting of owners/owner-managers of the selected poultry businesses in Ikorodu, Lagos State (PANLAGSTATS, 2020). registered PAN members were used as a unit of analysis due to it being formed as one of the agricultural associations in Nigeria concerned with the interests of poultry farming in order to foster, expand production and boost the growth of poultry farming and the poultry industry (Ayanda, 2013). Secondly, PAN zones are located in each ADP zones in each state in Nigeria (Adamu, Alonge, Lawal-Adebowale & Owolade 2016), ensuring good coverage of poultry farmers within the government-specified area for easy dissemination of information and access to government intervention programs/projects.

The choice of Lagos State as the study's geographical location is because it is the commercial capital of the country as it contributes about 30% to the National GDP and accounts for over 60% of Nigeria's industrial investments, foreign trade, and commercial activities (LBS, 2019). Secondly, Lagos state boosts a population of over 20m Nigerians, thereby making it one of the potential largest consumers of poultry products (NPC, 2018). Thirdly, it is a city known with close proximity to Ogun state than any other states in Nigeria (Ndubueze, Nwosu, Odiboh & Olabanjo, 2019). Finally, Lagos state is ranked the highest amongst South Western states in Nigeria in terms of nominal GDP, standing at 29.8 trillion nairas (Babatunde & Iheagwam, 2019).

The primary source of data was used through a questionnaire in gathering data from the respondents (Arokodare, Asikhia & Makinde, 2019). Pearson correlation method of analysis was employed for this study. The questionnaire used was validated, and the reliability of the study variables was established (Onamusi, 2020). The reliability of the research instrument was ascertained based on the Cronbach Alpha measure of reliability which is greater than 0.5. In this study, profitability is the dependent variable, and market capability serves as the independent variable. For the dependent variable and the independent variable, a six (6)-point Likert scale type was used to elicit responses from every question in the questionnaire, and this covered; Very High (VH) – 6; High (H) – 5; Moderately High (MH) – 4; Moderately Low (ML) – 3; Low (L) – 2; Very Low (VL) – 1 for both sets of variables (Arokodare, Asikhia & Makinde, 2019).

A. The Validity and Reliability Result

Table 1. KMO, Bartlett's test of sphericity and reliability result

Variables	**Number of questions**	**KMO**	**Bartlett test of Sphericity**	**Cronbach's Alpha**	**Average Variance Explained**
Poultry Growth Efficiency	4	0.674	73.049	0.810	0.562

Poultrenerurial Technological Capability	5	0.712	102.957	0.742	0.570

Source: Researcher's Computation (2021)

The result in Table 1 shows that the KMO values for poultry business efficiency and poultrepreneurial financial capability were 0.562 and 0.570, respectively, which is greater than 0.5. It means that the questions actually measure the variables in the study. The result of the Bartlett test of Sphericity was at 0.000, which is less than 5%, indicated that there is a highly significant relationship among variables in measuring the variables under study. In this study, the KMO test is greater than 50%, and the Bartlett test of Sphericity result is less than 5%, indicating that statements that comprised the research instruments of each variable actually measured what was intended to be measured. The result of the KMO and Bartlett test of Sphericity are shown in Table 3.1. The construct validity of the research instrument was further established through confirmatory factor analysis. Average Variance Extracted (AVE) greater than 0.5 was used as additional evidence of construct validity of all variables in the research instrument. The result of the Cronbach Alpha was greater than 0.70 for each of the variables, which indicated that the items used to measure study variables were reliable. The Pearson correlation method of analysis was used to determine the relationship between poultrepreneurial technological capability and the growth of selected poultry businesses in Ikorodu, Lagos State, Nigeria.

B. Model Specification

In this study, the dependent variable was poultry business growth; the independent variable was poultrepreneurial technological capability.

The model for the study was denoted as;

Y = Dependent Variable = Poultry Business Growth (PBG)

X = Independent Variable = Poultrepreneurial Technological Capability (PTC)

The model formulated for each of the hypothesis will be functionally written as:

$Y = f(X)$

Hypothesis

$Y=f(X)$

..... function 1

IV. Result and Discussions

Table 3. Correlation Results for Poultrepreneurial Technological Capability (PTC) and Poultry Business Growth (PBG).

Variables	PBE	PFC
PBE	**1**	
PFC	-0.229**	**1**

Source: Researcher's Computation (2021)

Table 3 gives the Pearson (r) correlation coefficient values as well as the P-values of significance, showing the degree and significance of the relationship between poultrepreneurial technological capability and poultry business growth. Table 2 shows a negative and significant ($r = -0.229$, $p < 0.05$) correlation between poultrepreneurial technological capability and growth of poultry businesses in Ikorodu, Lagos State, Nigeria. This means that increase in technological capability will lead to the increased in the growth of poultry businesses in Ikorodu, Lagos State, Nigeria. Considering this result, the null hypothesis ($H_0$1), which states that there is no relationship between poultrepreneurial technological capability and the growth of selected poultry businesses in Ikorodu, Lagos State, Nigeria, was rejected.

Gupta, Foroudi, and Nazarian (2017) have supported findings of this study that technological capability has a negative relationship with firm growth, especially in today's dynamic business environment in their study titled digital technology and marketing capability: achieving growth in SMEs found out that digital technology tangible and intangible assets perform the significant role of facilitator of a company's growth.

Based on the majority support for the findings of this study, the null hypothesis ($H_0$1), which states that there is no relationship between poultrepreneurial technological capability and the growth of selected poultry businesses, Ikorodu, Lagos State, Nigeria, was rejected.

V. Conclusion and managerial implication

Based on the findings of this study, it is concluded that technological capability has a significant relationship with the growth of poultry businesses in Ikorodu, Lagos State, Nigeria. Considering the findings, the study recommends that poultry businesses and poultreneurs should take seriously technological issues surrounding their business by developing skills and knowledge that would put them in charge of their finances and give them the edge in taking steps that would boost their survival chances. Similarly, poultreneurs should be conversant with poultry technologies in order to boost their poultry business. Furthermore, poultrepreneurs should put an emphasis on building up their technological capabilities as a precursor of a more holistic capabilities development in their businesses.

VI. Limitation of the study and suggestions for further study

This study was limited to poultry businesses; therefore, the findings of the study cannot be generalized for making decisions in other industries. Also, access to specific information and data was curtailed, and possible reasons for this could a result of the covid 19 pandemic and the insensitivity of the respondents to the subject matter at the point of distributing the research instrument. The study suggested that further study should: (i) employ study variables to carry out a comprehensive poultrepreneurial capability relationship on the performance of poultry businesses in major contexts of Nigeria where poultry businesses are situated; (ii) examine external factors that moderates the relationship between poultreneurial financial capability and poultry business performance in this zones and other PAN Zones; (iii) further study should examine the comparative study of how poultrepreneurial capabilities affect poultry business growth between different PAN zones or Nigeria and other countries of the world iv) a longitudinal survey design can be carried out to take charge of changes in the events that may occur from a business year to the other which might have an effect on the response of the respondents of this research instrument and also v) other forms of inferential statistics could be carried out for this study to aids its generalization.

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