THE EXTENT OF ADOPTION OF STRATEGIC MANAGEMENT ACCOUNTING PRACTICES IN SELECTED NIGERIAN CONSUMER GOODS COMPANIES

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Abstract

The place of Strategic Management Accounting (SMA) in contemporary business organizations cannot be over-emphasized. Research has shown that organizations that employ the tools of SMA tend to remain competitive in their industry of operation. Therefore, this study examines the adoption of Strategic Management Accounting Practice in selected Nigerian Consumer Goods Companies with a view to establishing the extent of the adoption of this practice. The study made use of primary data obtained from structured questionnaires administered to concerned managers of the companies. Purposive sampling technique was used to obtain a sample size of 18 firms because of the technicality of the subject matter as well as the availability of required respondents. The data generated was analyzed using descriptive statistics. It was found that all 21 SMA practices examined were adopted with Benchmarking having the highest mean statistics of 4.73 and theory of constraint is the least adopted with an average of 3.36. The study concludes that there is a high rate of adoption of the SMA practices and consequently recommends that the others like theory of constraint and kaizen costing that have relatively lower rate of adoption should be considered by companies that are yet to.

Keywords: Management Accounting Practices, Strategic Management Accounting Practices, Consumer Goods Companies, Competitive Advantage

INTRODUCTION

The increasing evolution in business information has led to the need for organizations to be intensively dynamic and increasingly unpredictable in recent decades. Consequently, the management of business organizations has become more demanding. Timely and effective information is essential for an organization to make efficient decision, bearing in mind that this will yield financial and non-financial benefits to the organization. To achieve competitiveness, companies apply different strategies. Management accounting is used as one of the main supporting system for strategy implementation within an organization (Ramljak & Rogošić, 2012). The inclusion of information about the business environment in order to implement the company's strategy transforms management accounting into Strategic Management Accounting.

Acceptance of Strategic Management Accounting is still experiencing low reception from inception to date despite its benefits. History shows that Cost Accounting developed much earlier than Management Accounting (Kaplan, 1984). Cost Accounting transformed into management accounting in the period between 1945 and the 1960s (Langfield-Smith, 2008). Traditional Management Accounting focuses only on financial information; the business context in which decisions are made and implemented is not included. Management Accounting identifies, collects, measures, and reports information useful in planning, controlling, and making decisions (Hoque, 2003). Financial and non-financial information

generated from management accounting are used by managers in planning, controlling, and making decisions. Financial information is provided as a means to enable the manager conduct his or her statutory managerial functions in order to achieve the set goals of the organization. Non-financial information enables the organization to understand competition and gain an edge above the competitors in order to stand out.

Companies are facing global competition that necessitates them to have a strong strategy in order to succeed at the market (Brewer, Petter, Garrison, Ray, Noreen & Eric, 2010). The business environment is both dynamic and complex as it is influenced by social, technology, economy, cultural, political and other factors. In order to be able to survive this complex business environment, an organization has to reconsider its strategic philosophy and the role of internal management accounting in making strategic decisions that gives the organization a greater advantage against competitor and its various activities

Strategic Management Accounting (SMA) came into existence as a result of the failure of Management Accounting to address issues that have to do with organizations' external environment. The traditional Management Accounting practices aim at the provision of information that will assist managers in making decisions internally. Consequently, the Management Accounting systems developed were internally oriented. The complex nature of contemporary business environment makes it necessary for managers to be provided with more reliable and relevant information that is needed to make decisions that will propel businesses to achieve greater competitive advantage. The information provided by SMA is market-driven, customer focused and externally oriented providing managers with series of tools and techniques to be employed to enhance strategic or long-term decision making (Emiaso & Amaechi, 2018). These notwithstanding, studies like Langfield-Smith, K.(2008) and Kiewheong, Heang, Said and Teng (2013) found low adoption rate of SMA as attributed to lack of understanding of the subject matter and technical knowledge required for its implementation. Consequently, this study seeks to investigate the extent of adoption of SMA practices in selected Nigerian consumer goods companies.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Conceptual Clarification

Consumer Goods

Consumer goods are goods that are fully utilized and replaced over a relatively short period. This period can be days, weeks or months. They are different from durable goods whose lifespan covers number of years and as such are not often replaced as consumer goods are. Consumer goods have a short shelf life because demand for them is high or they are highly perishable (Reddy, Reddy & Kumar, 2018). These goods are also referred to in literature as Fast Moving Consumer Goods (FMCG). Companies that deal with the production of such goods are called consumer goods companies and a collection of such companies makes up a consumer goods sector or industry. It is known as a matter of fact that the FMCGs sector is a sizable part of the global manufacturing organization. Sakshi and Karoly (2018), report that the consumer goods sector ranks fourth in the economy of India having a market size of forty-nine billion United States Dollars thereby immensely contributing to the overall gross domestic product of India. Products offered in this sector include: drinks, foods, electronics, personal care products, household goods etc. (IBAN 2016 cited in Binuyo, Ekpe & Binuyo, 2019). Although the prices of these products are not dear, there is a high degree of sales for the products. The reason for this is not far -fetched. The nature of Fast Moving Consumer Goods is such that they are products consumed by households and the frequency of consumption is high (Pradhan & Misra 2014, KPMG, 2016; cited in Binuyo et al., 2019). Despite the

fact that sales volume for such products is high, there is low profit margin per unit sold. Consequently, the sector is one that operates on a profit margin that is low (Bijuna & Sequeira, 2012). Notable among the features of consumer goods is that there is a very high degree of product substitution in the industry/sector. This high degree of substitution is brought about by either the activities of competitors or even change in the taste of consumers. This notwithstanding, an enormous portion of the budgets of households and individuals is spent on these goods.

Considering the complicated nature of the operations of FMCGs as evidenced by the rate of turnover, it is recognized globally that low income earners account for a greater percentage of the earnings of FMCGs companies; hence, they are important to their sustainability and long run survival. However, this category of consumers are greatly sensitive to high prices and therefore, can easily switch to products that serve as substitutes any moment such opportunity presents itself. Therefore, consumer goods companies need to strategically manage their operations in order to stay abreast of the competition that obtains in the business and industry as a whole (Binuyo *et al.*, 2019).

Strategic Management Accounting

Management Accounting System provides managers with useful and relevant information that will guide them in informed decision making which promotes the competitiveness of their organizations. Increased competition has led to sudden drop in the lifecycle of products. As a result, businesses have to go extra miles to bring in new ideas to develop new services and products, increasing the probability of cost recovery and profit generation before the service or product reaches the decline stage. With advanced technology, customers are more informed leading to effective decision making about choice of products/services. This has led organizations to review their Management Accounting Practices (Emiaso & Amaechi, 2018). SMA techniques were developed and used in relation to information that is external to an organization in order to be able to face environmental uncertainties and for strategic decision support at various levels (Cinquini & Tenucci, 2007). Cadez (2006) cited in Ajibolade (2010) re-iterates that the generation of a well- defined list of practices that make up Strategic Management Accounting will certainly create problems as there is no agreement on the framework of concepts that actually constitute SMA. He emphasized that practices that demonstrate strategic orientations are regarded as SMA and subsequently he listed seventeen different management accounting techniques that constitute SMA Practices. These are: Competitor Position Monitoring, Attribute Costing, Customer Profitability Analysis, Competitor Appraisal based on Financial Statement, Quality Costing, Strategic Pricing, Strategic Costing, Benchmarking, Value Chain Costing, Integrated Performance Management, Brand Valuation, Target Costing, Life cycle Costing, Competitor Cost Assessment, Valuation of Customers as Asset, Capital Budgeting and Life Time Customer Profitability Analysis. Ramljak and Rogosic (2012) also list SMA techniques to include Activity Based Costing and Kaizen Costing. The thoughts and actions of managers are driven by information. Where these information are inaccurate and irrelevant, the managers would lack the capacity to formulate and implement business strategies that guarantee competitive advantage. The conventional management accounting system which serves to provide accounting information needed for formulation of strategy and making decision looks within the organization and has just the financial data as its focus. Consequently, this hinders its ability to generate information that are external in nature such as relates to an organization's competitors and customers. The development of Strategic Management Accounting was brought about by the inability of the conventional Management Accounting to provide information that will be more reliable and relevant for competitive advantage (Akenbor & Okoye, 2012). Simmonds (1986) in Akenbor and Okoye (2012) explains that:

Strategic Management Accounting is the collection of Management Accounting information about a business and its competitors for use in developing and monitoring the business strategy. It enables a firm to generate more relevant and accurate information to effectively design its competitive strategies for competitive advantage within the industry.

Though Strategic Management Accounting is recently receiving public attention as a new area of knowledge that provides financial as well as non-financial information for long-term positioning and initiatives, there exists dearth of literature in accounting and studies on its adoption in Nigeria (Akenbor & Okoye, 2012). SMA allows managers to make informed decisions through the provision of information that are relevant and applicable to an organization and its competitors in order to develop and monitor the strategies of the organization. This enhances efficient design of competitive strategies and leads to industry competitive advantage (Egbunike, Egolum & Agwaramgbo, 2015; Ojua, 2016). Thompson, Strickland and Gamble (2009) submit that adopting SMA techniques has the tendency of providing an organization with an advantage that is competitive and sustainable over its contemporaries. The needs of Management Accounting have developed gradually from ordinary historical information report especially the analysis of variance, to participation in the long-term planning process of businesses. Thompson *et al* (2009) further argues that:

"skills involved in Strategic Management Accounting are applied actively in the environment of business where both market intelligence is sought, evaluated, strategic decisions are made and competitive strategies put in place".

SMA adoption is one of the ranges of contemporary Management Accounting techniques that can be utilized to meet the challenges that are confronting businesses (Simmonds, 1981, cited in Vap, Lee, Said & Yap, 2016). This notwithstanding, prior studies have revealed that the rate at which conventional Management Accounting practices are adopted is higher than SMA practices (Sulaiman, Ahmad & Alwi, 2004).

Empirical Review

Langfield-Smith (2008) in his study reviewed empirical works on the origin and assessed the extent of adoption and success of SMA 25 years after introduction and found low adoption of SMA techniques. This low adoption was as a result of lack of understanding of the subject matter. Similarly, Kiewheong, Heang, Said and Teng (2013) in assessing the adoption, benefits and challenges of SMA practices in Malaysian companies also found low rate of SMA usage driven by top managers' inability to understand the requirements to implement the practice. Ajibolade and Oboh (2017) also added to literature on this subject matter by investigating the extent of adoption and place of SMA in Nigerian banks' strategic decision making using a sample size of 20 banks. Data were analyzed using simple regression technique and Pearson chi-square. They found that SMA techniques are practiced in Nigerian banks as principles on which their operations are based and that the techniques significantly contribute to strategic decision making. Investigating the degree and factors influencing SMA adoption in Czech Republic, using a quantitative approach, Petera and Soljakova (2019) found that strategic planning and budgeting, customer accounting and target costing are the most widely used SMA techniques while strategic pricing and activity based costing are among the least used SMA techniques. From the findings of their study, it was expected that there would be an increase in the extent of use in the succeeding three years. Hashim, Binti, Embong and Sharif (2018) also examined the impact of SMA adoption on the effectiveness of

organizations in Malaysia. Using a sample size of 376 firms, they found that at least one SMA practice is used in each firm with electrical firms applying SMA practices the most. It was also revealed that SMA has a significant positive influence on the effectiveness of organizations in Malaysia.

METHODOLOGY

This study was conducted utilizing primary data obtained through structured questionnaires administered to respondents in the selected Nigerian consumer goods sector. The population of this study consists of all Management Accountants/Controllers, as well as Sales and Marketing managers in quoted Consumer Goods Sectors of Manufacturing Companies which had head offices in Lagos. Out of the twenty-nine (29) firms listed on the Nigerian Stock Exchange under the consumer goods sector, eighteen (18) firms formed the sample of the study. This represented 62% of the population. Purposive sampling technique was used in selecting the target respondents (management accountants, sales and marketing managers) as a result of the technicality of the subject matter which involves sales, marketing and creative reporting which is the essence of Strategic Management Accounting Practices.

The entire population of the Management Accountants or Controllers (as some organizations refer to their management accountants as controllers), Sales and Marketing Managers could not be ascertained for this study because the organizations did not present the breakdown of their human resources in their Financials. Two (2) questionnaires were administered to the management accountants/controllers, two (2) questionnaires to the Sales manager and two (2) to the marketing managers of each of the 18 selected consumer goods manufacturing companies, making a total of 108 questionnaires out of which only 104 questionnaires were returned. The questionnaires elicited responses on the extent of adoption and usage of SMA practice using a 5-point likert scale ranging from 'Not at all', 'to a little extent, to a fair extent, to a large extent, and to a great extent.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

A reliability test was conducted on the 21 practices using Cronbach's Alpha coefficient reliability test. However, the reliability test for this questionnaire is 99%, which shows that the variables and data employed in the study are reliable to a great extent and there is no much difference if a particular SMA practice is deleted. The practice by practice reliability analysis is illustrated in table 4.1 and summarized reliability statistics in table 4.2.

Table 4.1

	Scale Mean if	Scale Variance	Corrected	Cronbach's
	Item Deleted	if Item Deleted	Item-Total	Alpha if Item
			Correlation	Deleted
Balance Scorecard	78.79	474.770	.915	.990
Throughout	78.78	456.659	.959	.989
Accounting				
Kaizen Costing	78.88	456.220	.957	.989
Quality costing	78.02	494.310	.776	.991
Attribute costing	78.64	460.367	.980	.989
Benchmarking	77.52	497.883	.772	.991
Strategic costing	78.37	474.564	.965	.989
Strategic pricing	77.69	496.448	.853	.991
Brand valuation	78.10	472.282	.954	.989
Activity Based Costing	78.29	459.062	.955	.989
Integrated	78.76	457.757	.945	.990
performance				
measurement				
Value chain costing	78.27	475.441	.965	.989
Theory of constraint	78.89	456.620	.960	.989
Target costing	78.70	464.270	.967	.989
Capital budgeting	77.89	471.474	.838	.990
Just in Time	78.73	468.199	.921	.990
Lifecycle costing	78.62	469.792	.940	.989
Competitor cost	77.96	482.833	.942	.990
assessment				
Customer profitability	78.16	476.934	.948	.989
analysis				
Competitor position	78.04	475.241	.955	.989
monitoring				
Competitor Appraisal	77.89	476.581	.914	.990
based on published				
financial statement				

Source: Author's Computation, 2020

Table 4.2: Reliability Statistics

Cronbach's	Cronbach's Alpha Based	d on
Alpha	Standardized Items	N of Items
.990	.992	21

Discussion of Findings

Table 5.1 shows the descriptive statistics of the extent of Adoption of SMA practice in selected Nigerian consumer goods sector. The mean ranges from 3.36 to 4.73. Benchmarking and strategic pricing were found to be the most highly used SMA practices with a mean of 4.73 and 4.56 respectively. Competitor appraisal based on published financial statement and capital budgeting were found to have equal rate of adoption with a mean statistics of 4.36. These were followed by competitor cost assessment (4.29) and quality costing (4.23). Competitor position monitoring had a mean of 4.21 and customer profitability analysis was 4.09. Theory of constraint and Kaizen costing were found to have the least adoption rate with a mean of 3.36 and 3.37 respectively. They were followed by integrated performance management (3.49) and just in time costing (3.52) while target costing was 3.55 and life cycle costing 3.63. This result disagrees with the findings of Langfield-Smith (2008) and Kiewheong, Heang, Said and Teng (2013) where a low rate of SMA practice adoption was found. While this study found strategic pricing and target costing to be the second most widely used and among the least used practice respectively, they were found to be among the least and most widely used practice in the work of Petera and Soljakova (2019). The very high adoption rate of benchmarking and strategic pricing shows the importance of performance comparison and pricing strategy in the sector.

Table 5.1 Descriptive Statistics

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Balance Scorecard	104	1	5	3.46	1.114
Throughout Accounting	104	1	5	3.47	1.501
Kaizen Costing	104	1	5	3.37	1.514
Quality costing	104	1	5	4.23	.740
Attribute costing	104	1	5	3.61	1.382
Benchmarking	104	2	5	4.73	.642
Strategic costing	104	2	5	3.88	1.064
Strategic pricing	104	2	5	4.56	.620
Brand valuation	104	1	5	4.15	1.130
Activity Based Costing	104	1	5	3.96	1.448
Integrated performance measurement	104	1	5	3.49	1.494
Value chain costing	104	2	5	3.98	1.043
Theory of constraint	104	1	5	3.36	1.500
Target costing	104	1	5	3.55	1.306
Capital budgeting	104	1	5	4.36	1.299
Just in Time	104	1	5	3.52	1.269
Lifecycle costing	104	1	5	3.63	1.207
Competitor cost assessment	104	1	5	4.29	.889
Customer profitability analysis	104	1	5	4.09	1.025
Competitor position monitoring	104	2	5	4.21	1.058

Competitor Appraisal					
based on published	104	2	5	4.36	1.070
financial statement					
Valid N (list wise)	104				

CONCLUSION

This study has examined the extent of adoption of 21 SMA practices in selected companies in the Nigerian Consumer Goods Sector and found that all 21 SMA practices examined are widely used. This high degree of adoption is reflected in the mean statistics that ranges from 3.36 -4.73. This is far above the minimum for each of the practices. This high rate of adoption shows the importance of strategic management accounting in the sector. Consequently the study recommends that SMA practices like theory of constraints, Kaizen costing and others with relatively lower rate of adoption should be considered by organizations that are yet to adopt them.

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Appendix

Summary of Selected Quoted Consumer Goods Manufacturing Companies

S/N	Names of all quoted manufacturing Companies	With Head Office in Lagos
1.	7-UP Bottling company Plc.	Yes
2.	Cadbury Nigeria Plc.	Yes
3.	Champion Breweries	
4	Dangote Flour Mills Plc.	Yes
5.	Dangote Sugar Refinery Plc.	Yes
6.	DN Tyre and Rubber Plc.	Yes
7.	Ella Lakes	
8.	Flour Mills Nig. Plc.	Yes
9.	FTN Cocoa processors	
10.	Golden Guinea Breweries	
11.	Guinness Nigeria Plc.	Yes
12.	Honeywell Flour Mill Plc.	Yes
13.	International Breweries Plc.	Yes
14.	Livestock Feeds	
15.	McNichols	
16.	Morison Industries	
17.	Multi-Trex Integrated foods	
18.	Nascon Allied Industries Plc.	Yes
19.	Nestle Nigeria Plc.	Yes
20.	Nigerian Brew. Plc	Yes
21.	Nigerian Enamel Ware Plc.	Yes

22.	Northern Nigeria Flour Mills	
23.	Okomu Oil Palm	
24.	Presco	
25.	P Z Cussons Nigeria Plc.	Yes
26.	U T C Nig. Plc.	Yes
27.	Unilever Nigeria Plc.	Yes
28.	Union Dicon Salt Plc.	Yes
29.	Vitafoam Nig. Plc.	Yes
	Total = 29	18

Source: Nigeria Stock Exchange, 2020

Distribution of Respondents on Extent of Adoption of Strategic Management Accounting Practices (%)

SMA Practices	NA	LE	FE	LGE	GE
Your firm makes use of Balanced Scorecard technique while preparing and presenting its financial statement	1.9	20.2	30.8	24	23.1
Throughout Accounting procedure is used by your organizations in its managerial decision making process	17.3	6.7	27.9	7.7	40.4
Kaizen Costing is engaged by your firm in obtaining small, incremental cost reductions during the production.	15.3	18.3	18.3	10.6	37.5
Quality costing is put in place at every level of the organizations to improve quality performance	1.0	3.8	1.0	59.6	34.6
Your organizations adopts attribute costing to enhance customer's service	14.5	4.8	21.2	25.0	34.6
Benchmarking is used by your firm to compare its performance with competitors	0.0	1.9	4.8	11.5	81.7
Strategic costing utilization makes your firm to establish an overall cost relationships and to benefit from it	0.0	16.3	13.5	35.6	34.6

Strategic pricing is adopted by your firm in ensuring good pricing for your product even amidst competition	0.0	1.9	1.0	36.5	60.6
Brand valuation is adopted by your organizations to enhance brand position, market support and protection	1.0	11.5	16.3	13.5	57.7
Activity Based costing is adopted by your firm to know the true cost of products, activities and customers	14.4	1.9	13.5	13.5	56.7
Integrated performance measurement of acquiring knowledge based on customer requirements and non-financial measures is adopted by your organization	10.6	26.0	7.7	15.4	40.4
Values chain costing is adopted by your firm to provide better service to its customer	0.0	14.4	11.5	35.6	38.5
Theory of constraint is used by your organizations in determining those factors that limit the firm profit	15.4	18.3	17.3	13.5	35.6
Target costing is a tool used by your firm in reducing the overall cost of a product over its entire life cycle	12.5	4.8	27.9	25.0	29.8
Your organizations efficiently uses capital budgeting in taking decision on investment	11.5	0.0	2.9	12.5	73.1
Just in Time modern performance management technique is used for inventory management by your institutions	2.9	30.8	5.8	32.7	27.8
Lifecycle costing is being used by your firm to appraise costs along all stages of a product or service life	2.9	24.0	7.7	37.5	27.9
Your organizations always assess competitor cost to know its current and long term effect on the organizations	1.0	1.9	17.3	26.9	52.9
Customer profitability analysis is used by your firm to assess the customer base and customer lifetime value	1.0	12.5	4.8	40.4	41.3
Competitor position monitoring is used by your organizations to monitor trends in competitor sales, market share, volume, unit price in the industry	0.0	13.5	6.7	25.0	54.8
Competitor Appraisal Based on published financial statement is one of the major tools used by your organizations to gauge competition	0.0	13.5	4.8	32.7	49.0
	l	L	l	1	

NA = Not at all, LE = to a little extent, FE = to a fair extent, LGE = to a large extent