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Original Article

Learning Organisation as a Means to Market Growth of Small and Medium-Scale Enterprises in Nigeria

[1]Ajike, Emmanuel O., [2]Ariyo, Oluwajuwon G., [3]Akpa, Victoria A., [4]Nwankwere, Idowu A., [5]Akande, Folorunso Ilesanmi

[1,2,3,4] Department of Business Administration and Marketing, Babcock University, Ilishan Remo, Ogun State, Nigeria.
[5]Department of Finance, Babcock University, Ilishan Remo, Ogun State, Nigeria.

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Abstract: *Learning organisation is utterly relevant in developing a nation, as it aids skill improvement, decision-making capacity and people's knowledge, hence it is a watchword for organisational success and longevity. In other words, a successful business is a business that integrates, invest intentionally and take necessary interventions to encourage continuous learning through task enhancement (Budhiraja, 2022; Chukowry et al., 2021). The failure generally of SMEs in Nigeria adopting and embracing dimensions of learning organisations which has propelled poor performance of their businesses makes this a gap in the study. Nigeria's small and medium-sized businesses have been labelled as having barriers to success and bankruptcy as a result of numerous dangerous issues, including a decline in market growth which is as a result of low-demand products and services. Cross-sectional survey method was employed, as it captured a single point in time of collecting data from a study group. Simple random sampling technique was most suitable for the relatively homogeneous population. All scales validated through confirmatory analysis, and they showed adequate reliability. Consequently, SmartPLS Version 4.0 was used for analysis to run the algorithm and bootstrapping basically on two-tailed method. The findings in this study significantly proved the effect of learning organisation dimensions on the market growth of small and medium-scale enterprises in Nigeria. The implication of the study is that it would assist organisational managers and management in being well informed on learning organisation and deploying same towards attaining its corporate objective and gaining competitive advantage in their industry. This study not only reveals a more holistic understanding of the contextual effects of learning organisation and market growth but also offers substantial practical implications for organisational decision makers regarding how to address employees' continuous knowledge gathering to foster a desired market expansion.*

Keywords: *Market growth, Learning organisation, Nigeria, Business.*

I. INTRODUCTION

Globally, there is growing distressed about the deteriorating state of small and medium-sized businesses due to obstacles and challenges such as poor market growth that have constantly been dragging this sector backwards (PwC, 2020). Small and medium-scale enterprises (SMEs) though they form a significant part of recognised businesses worldwide, it has not become an important pillar and the primary source of growth, success, and sustenance to the point of being able to create beyond the economic impact and contributing to resolving domestic social challenges such as poverty eradication, job creation, equality distribution, and solving other numerous urbanisation problems (Ionescu et al., 2011; Matthews et al., 2017). Furthermore, it is noticed that SMEs generally fail to adopt and embrace dimensions of learning organisation, which has been responsible for the poor performance of these businesses. Specifically, inability to strategically lead the organisation, absence of a system to capture knowledge for redistribution, failure to connect business to its environment, absence of inquiry and dialogue, refusal to empower employees to perform to optimum, lack of room for continuous learning coupled with deficiency in the area of team learning and collaboration are all found chiefly to be the underline causes of SMEs problem worldwide; hence the need for learning organisation (PwC, 2020).

Despite the SMEs' potential ability in Africa, they are still underdeveloped, unstable and less productive due to several problems confronting them (Nwokocha & Nwankwo, 2019). African SMEs have progressively displayed poor profit margins, an inability to meet market demand, less product quality and market share gains (Agwaniru, 2023; Kippa, 2022). GAIN & Partners, Scaling Up Nutrition-Business Network, and World Food Programme(2020) found that 52.6% of African SMEs have difficulty and experience hardship in various forms, which include deteriorating market trend. The state of SMEs in Nigeria is not different from the happenings in the entire globe, as the business in the sector could instead be described as a patient who is wheezing for breath and could not be ascertained living or dying (Amah & Oyetuunde, 2020; Pulka et al., 2021). Meanwhile, considering the ability embedded in SMEs, which can raise the nation's well-being, in contrast, the contribution made to the

GDP by these businesses is relatively low due to their underperformances (Isichei et al., 2020). In Nigeria, dilemmas that cause death and impede the growth and development of SMEs include declining market trends, growth barriers, and a high death rate (PwC, 2020). Nigeria's Small and medium-sized businesses have been labelled as having barriers to success and bankruptcy as a result of numerous dangerous issues, including a decline in profitability ratio combined with low-demand products and services (Audu, 2022; Ekren et al., 2022; Iloh & Nosiri, 2022; Johnny & Simeon, 2021; Okoi et al., 2022; Olujide, 2022; Olusayo & Jonny, 2021; Oyelaran-Oyeyinka, 2020).

A performing organisation is one whose market is growing (Menon & Mohanty, 2012; Siddique, 2018a; Zaridis et al., 2021). However, the case of small and medium-scale enterprises in Nigeria depicts a backward growth trend (Olujide, 2022). Pieces of evidence that shows poor market share, lack of sales growth, inability to generate revenue, and less demand for product and service keep characterising the Nigeria SMEs hence the dwindling market growth (Olaore et al., 2021; Rakshit et al., 2023). Furthermore, some of these SMEs not only lack profit margin, which could have been possible if the market had grown but also suffers situation where debt stare at the faces of the owners (Audu, 2022; Ekren et al., 2022; Iloh & Nosiri, 2022). Inability to lead strategically, create an environment where inquiry and dialogue could take place, lunch a system where knowledge could be captured for further usage, constantly aid continuous learning, and the rest of the dimensions of the learning organisation could have been the sustenance of the market growth problem in the Nigeria SMEs. Statistically, 22% reported poor sales growth and demand for products and services, 33% had issues generating and growing revenue, and 22% were under pressure for a price reduction from customers, eventually affecting the profit margin and overall market growth (PwC, 2020).

A central tenet of the Human Capital Theory (HCT) is that human capital stocks are seen to be equivalent to other means of production, with investments in employees' learning capacity, such as training and education to improve and better their skills, thereby yielding future productive output for economies, organisations and individuals (Dobbins et al., 2014; Fix, 2018; Gillies, 2017; Marginson, 2019; Tan, 2014). Meanwhile, according to Weatherly (2003), as cited in Pasban and Nojedeh (2016), human capital is considered a collection of features, life trade, knowledge, creativity, innovation, and energy, which people invest in their work. HCT thereby sees training and skill acquisition within the organisation as an investment that increases productivity or the present employment, the earnings of the employees, and future employment (Dobbins et al., 2014; Gillies, 2017; Tan, 2014).

The current study makes several contributions to the body of research. First, this study applies Human Capital theory to generate insights into how investment into employee could improve the performance of organisations especially small and medium scale enterprises in Nigeria by examinig the impact of learning organisation on market growth Nigeria SMEs. Additionally, expanding on its antecedents, our research adds to the body of knowledge on market growth and learning organisation and its dimensions. Third, we offer empirical evidence on the relationship of learning organisation with market growth. This study not only reveals a more holistic understanding of the contextual effects of learning organisation and market growth but also offers substantial practical implications for organizational decision makers regarding how to address employees' continuous knowledge gathering to foster a desired market expansion.

II. THEORETICAL BACKGROUND AND HYPOTHESIS

A) Market Growth

Although market growth has been essential to nearly every strategic marketing model created in the past decades, the idea remains ambiguous (Bharadwaj et al., 2005). Market growth also refers to the degree of growth in the demand for products and services and future opportunities for new products and services in the industry (Zhang & Song, 2019). Substantially, market growth is the increase in goods and services sales alongside chances to promote or launch other products in the market. Meanwhile, Bharadwaj et al. (2005) noted that any organisation that does not pay attention to market growth or expansion concerning its competitive position would not be around to taste the growth. Furthermore, market growth will increase when there is an increase in demand for products and services (Zhang & Song, 2019). Also, when comparing market status in growth, the one with high market growth compared to industries with low market growth, industries with high market growth tend to have several appealing prospects for future growth, as well as a plethora of new technology and product development due to marketing efforts (Zhang & Song, 2019). Over time, the concept of Market growth has gained attention from scholars in four main areas: market share, resource advantage theory, diffusion, and primary demand/ advertising effects models.

B) Learning Organisation

The concept of Learning organisation (LO) has its depth in management, but it is more of a discourse in Human Resource Development and it is marked by creating, acquiring, and transferring knowledge for improvement (Kiani & Gillani, 2014; Kim & Han, 2015; Malik & Garg, 2017a). It emerged in the early 1990s in the works of Senge where the art and practice of the LO were explored (Durrah et al., 2018). Since then, the construct has piqued academic and practitioners' curiosity, which is clear from the constant study efforts in recent years to gain competitive advantage and outstanding organisational performance (Kiani & Gillani, 2014; Malik & Garg, 2017a). Meanwhile, as observed, learning organisations are of utmost relevance in developing nations since they aid in improving skills, people's knowledge, and decision-making capacity (Bhaskar & Mishra, 2017); hence, it has become a watchword for organizational success and long-term viability (Malik & Garg, 2017a). LO is extensively utilised in businesses, particularly those trying to stay afloat in a competitive environment (Hussein et al., 2016).

Wakins and Marsick (1996) opined that learning organisation is characterised by seven dimensions and instruments: continuous learning, inquiry and dialogue, team learning, embedded system; the system connects, empowerment and strategic leadership (Bhaskar & Mishra, 2017; Boccia & Cseh, 2021; Chawla & Lenka, 2015; Ellinger et al., 2002; Hussein et al., 2016; Yoonjeong Kim & Han, 2015; Kyoung Park, Hoon Song, Won Yoon, & Kim, 2014; Malik & Garg, 2017b; Milić et al., 2017; Pokharel & Ok Choi, 2015; Salehzadeh et al., 2014; Song et al., 2018; Subiyakto et al., 2020; Xie, 2020; Yin Yin Lau et al., 2020). According to Budhiraja et al. (2019), the instrument has gained international acclaim, with over two hundred organisations from various nations endorsing the model. Thus, it will be explored in this study as well.

C) Continuous Learning

Continuous learning is not a novel phenomenon, but it is becoming increasingly important in portraying a lifelong learning ideological position and consolidating formal and informal educational opportunities (Chanani & Wibowo, 2019; Näykki et al., 2021). It has become a vital part of a human's life because constant learning is required to have a secure future to cope with the rapidly expanding industries (Chukowry et al., 2021). The organisation, therefore, attempts continuous learning to generate learning opportunities for all employees (Hussein et al., 2016). Thus, an organisation can create an avenue where individuals get to know more while in the line of their duty by inscribing learning into the work. In the meantime, procedural memory, which is the foundation of continuous learning strategy, is obtained through the practises and structures that organisations put in place by developing a set of standard rules and procedures for dealing with customers, suppliers, partners, and employees have stayed long in an industry (Cegarra-Navarro et al., 2020).

A continuous learning culture is essential to establish because it provides significant benefits to a learning organisation; however, this is only possible if there are support systems informing members of motivation, opportunities and amenities to learn (Chanani & Wibowo, 2019). It is clear that successful businesses that have integrated invest intentionally and take appropriate interventions to encourage continuous learning and enhance employee empowerment and performance through task enhancement (Budhiraja, 2022; Chukowry et al., 2021). Continuous learning, however, regards employees or individuals as self-motivated, directed and proactive personalities who believe self-development is a core component of their lives; though such learning can be partly formal training with credits and sometimes certificates, it is usually regarded as a life attitude and a system of informal learning (Näykki et al., 2021). Meanwhile, an organisation's resources that motivate employees to adhere to organisational rules, norms, and procedures are required for continuous learning (Cegarra-Navarro et al., 2020). As a result, employees must realise that to stay competitive and innovative and sustain existence, they must constantly learn because the hurdles will never be static; hence learning culture should be instilled in individuals or organisations as a requirement throughout daily existence (Chanani & Wibowo, 2019).

Generally, socialising and discussing with others, learning from someone else, pondering through action, experimenting, participating in leisure activities, and looking for solutions to confronted challenges are all day-to-day tasks that provide occasions for individuals to work collaboratively and build professional learning communities (Näykki et al., 2021). However, to realise these opportunities for continuous learning, learners must have a set of learning skills to control their learning process actively (Näykki et al., 2021). Continuous learning, however, is difficult to quantify because it is a continual activity that can be about almost anything (Chanani & Wibowo, 2019). More importantly, Workers must be ready and invest in ongoing learning processes to complete current and future obligations (Anggara et al., 2019). The learning-oriented context, however, enables employees to enhance their professional identity and ability to adapt to organisations, allowing them to be in charge of their careers: as a result, promoting continuous learning as a critical resource for developing diverse careers within institutions becomes imperative (Oh & Koo, 2021). Meanwhile, maintaining the sustainable growth of professional mastery is an essential part of continuous learning (Liu et al.,2020).

H1: continuous learning has no effect on the market growth of small and medium scale enterprises of Nigeria.

D) Inquiry and Dialogue

As posited by several authors and widely used, inquiry and dialogue (ID) are organisation designs strategies to promote the culture of questioning and raising views, receiving feedback and conducting experimentations (Kiani & Gillani, 2014; Lim et al., 2019; Murphy et al., 2017; Narzary & Palo, 2020; Tunyi, 2019; Yin Yin Lau et al., 2020). Also, an inquiry process entails curiosity, speculation, asking questions, experimenting, challenging, investigating, analysing, conjecturing, and imagining (Bound, 2010). Similarly, though it has been consistently argued that inquiry and dialogue is an institutional way of life that encourages questioning, feedback, and experimentation; however, it helps learners or employees to develop productive reasoning skills to express their opinions as well as the capacity to pay attention through listening to and inquire about the views of others (Song et al., 2009).

Consequently, the attention paid through listening is always expected to come to giving honest feedback, finding out what other people think and spending time establishing trust (Kiani & Gillani, 2014; Lim et al., 2019; Murphy et al., 2017; Narzary & Palo, 2020; Song et al., 2009; Tunyi, 2019; Yin Yin Lau et al., 2020). Scholars, however, clarified that ID is a two-way interaction between the workers and the management of the organisation (Kiani & Gillani, 2014; Lim et al., 2019; Murphy et al., 2017.; Narzary & Palo, 2020; Tunyi, 2019; Yin Yin Lau et al., 2020). In genuine dialogue, however, open minds, curiosity and communication are required; inquiry likewise entails questioning that simultaneously challenges assumptions, presumptions, and judgement and avoids launching attacks or attacking the individual (Mbassana, 2014; Song, 2008). Both inquiry and dialogue are inseparable because the processes are unified; hence, inquiry cannot occur without dialogue (Bound, 2010). Frequently, inquiry and dialogue are used within the active learning environment, a student or learner-centred pedagogy marked by experiential learning, which challenges them to consider the meaning of their experiences (McPherson, 2020).

Chawla and Lenka (2015) opined that inquiry and dialogue mean questioning the insights. In another like statement, it is said to create a culture that supports questioning and offers employee feedback (Malik & Garg, 2020). Considering the scholars' opinion, the culture of inquiry and dialogue gives room to challenge the views in an organisation, unlike the situation where whatever the organisational management puts forth remains unquestionable. Supervisors or leaders are questioned and attentive to the employee, fostering learning, trust, innovation, debate, and dialogue resulting from the feedback (Hannachi, 2016; Yin Lau et al., 2020). Also, inquiry and dialogue foster mutual understanding, encourage personal meaning creation and ensure participation (Bound, 2010). In furtherance of the definition, Boccia and Cseh (2021) express the meaning of inquiry and dialogue, where employees can express their views and constructively question work practices.

The ability for leaders to express through their actions and desire to entertain different cum alternative views and the capacity to listen and respond in a welcoming manner without attacking individuals will propel new ideas, options, learning from others, productive reasoning skills, an opportunity for questioning in conjunction with understanding others opinion and building cognition among the workforce (Hughes, 2012; Kiani & Gillani, 2014; Marjanović et al., 2017; Pokharel & Ok Choi, 2015). All efforts must be made not to avoid provocative facts, as these subjects tend to facilitate both intellectual and emotional responses (Pace, 2013). On the other hand, leaders must be able to hold emotions and opinions, knowing fully well that different ideas bring the discussion to life (Pace, 2013). Questions are asked chiefly to challenge assumptions held for a while within the organisation and to clarify perceptions (Bound, 2010).

Adopting inquiry and dialogue as a dimension of learning organisation in any business establishment, however, helps people gain creative thinking skills, share their opinion, breed the capacity to listen and inquire more into the views of others, and creates an atmosphere that endorses questioning responses and experimentation (Mbassana, 2014). Likewise, Innovativeness, opportunities for employees to aid in recognising problems, effective communication, and reduction of employee resistance and ambiguity alongside a highly competitive advantage will occur in an organisation that promotes a principle of inquiry and dialogue(Malik & Garg, 2017b; Subiyakto et al., 2020). Also, ID orchestrates mutually responsive learning by fostering an inferential understanding that moves learners from experience to knowledge construction and emphasises the prospects of cooperative group work and peer assistance (McPherson, 2020). In the meantime, an organisation's endeavour to develop a platform that allows discussions, reactions, and investigations among its members is called inquiry and dialogue (study's guide).

H2: Inquiry and Dialogue has no effect on the market growth of small and medium scale enterprises of Nigeria.

E) Empowerment

Employee empowerment practices have spread throughout the public and private sectors over the last three decades (Fernandez & Moldogaziev, 2013). It is, however, perceived bias in the place of work, with many decision-makers failing to recognise the importance of employee empowerment and its influence on the corporate outcome (Zaraket et al., 2018). However, global competition and intense pressure to continuously improve quality prompted many institutions, particularly in the United States, to implement employee empowerment programmes, possibly against their wish (Fernandez & Moldogaziev, 2013). In contrast, few managers implement this procedure because they assume it will lessen their intensity and prerogative (Zaraket et al., 2018).

Attaining strategic and more decisive leadership within the organisation creates an indivisible system that requires employee empowerment (Jyoti & Rani, 2017; Pokharel & Ok Choi, 2015). Therefore, empowerment is one of the seven dimensions of learning organisation to Wakins & Marsick (Xie, 2020). However, psychological or structural employee empowerment is a critical management decision used as part of a strategic plan for achieving the organisational goal though it is an essential internal incentive factor (Li et al., 2018; Marin-Garcia & Bonavia, 2021). Also, it is perceived as a motivational practice that aims to enhance performance by offering opportunities for participation and involvement in decision-making, primarily focusing on building trust, motivation, decision-making inclusion, and expelling any barriers between an employee and management (Hanaysha & Tahir, 2016).

Conceptually, the dimension of empowerment implies that people in the organisation are involved in the setting, owning and implementing the collective vision of the organisation; people are also involved and held accountable for different decisions (Khamis Ali, 2012). Also, employee empowerment is a relational construct that describes how those in positions of power share authority, information, resources, and rewards with those who lack them (Fernandez & Moldogaziev, 2013). The meaning provided by these researchers says power is decentralised and not owned by a set of individuals within the organisation but distributed. In like manner, the organisation's practice produces and shares the vision that has been agreed upon and gets responses from its members to improve further the implementation of the new idea (Hussein et al., 2016). To further buttress the Hussein et al. view, Boccia and Cseh (2021) define empowerment as empowering people toward a collective vision whereby employees and leaders are jointly accountable for implementing that vision. Empowerment involves individuals' involvement in creating and implementing a collaborative vision and being responsible for its implementation (Milić et al., 2017). These views are closely related as they show that sharing the goal or idea with the employees makes it a collective purpose to be jointly held responsible and accountable while seeing its implementation together, creating a sense of belonging and ownership. Explaining these views, Bhaskar and Mishra (2017) opined that empowering individuals in the organisation is the main thing that produces initiative, a sense of ownership, and result-oriented employees. Slightly away from the above thoughts, Salehzadeh et al. (2014) said empowerment refers to establishing and sharing a collective vision and receiving feedback from its members about a gap between the present situation and a new concept.

Generally, scholars posited that employee empowerment could be psychological or structural (Li et al., 2018; Marin-Garcia & Bonavia, 2021), while others said it could be both psychological or managerial (Fernandez & Moldogaziev, 2013). Psychological empowerment is a microcosmic view of an individual's perception of work and their role in an organisation, i.e. employees' behaviours toward their work and organisational functions (Li et al., 2018). The scholars, i.e. Li et al. (2018) opined that psychological empowerment includes four cognitive experiences: meaning, competence, self-determination and impact. On the other hand, structural empowerment is attributed to an employee's work-life balance (Fernandez & Moldogaziev, 2013; Li et al., 2018). However, employees with access to empowerment structures are more likely to meet organisational goals than those without (Li et al., 2018). Therefore, structural empowerment theory suggests that when employees are provided empowering conditions such as training, infrastructure, support, and opportunities for professional growth, their work performance improves (Li et al., 2018). Consequently, the structural theory of organisational power describes how power is derived from three sources which are; lines of supply (essential resources in the external environment), lines of information (task-related knowledge, performance feedback, and other details concerning what goes on inside); and lines of support (top management support and discretion to engage in innovative behaviour) (Fernandez & Moldogaziev, 2013).

H3: Empowerment has no effect on the market growth of small and medium scale enterprises of Nigeria.

F) Embedded System

The embedded system, is how organisations capture knowledge, skill, and practices after maintaining them for further sharing through all management stages (Hannachi, 2016; Hussein et al., 2016; Wang, 2020). An embedded system helps capture and share learning to help individuals effectively access and gain required knowledge at any moment (Oh & Koo, 2021). Employee knowledge, therefore, is a critical asset for organisations, allowing them to maintain a sustainable competitive advantage over their rivals (Zammit et al., 2017).

In the current competitive and expanding global marketplace, the competitive edge belongs to those institutions that can create products of higher quality, durability, and performance while lowering costs and delivering the product to market sooner, which is easier to achieve with the use, reuse, and handling of information obtained from suppliers, catalogued, records of the previous achievement, and new technologies (Hicks et al., 2002). However, capturing and extracting knowledge is far from straightforward (Mourtzis & Doukas, 2014); it is difficult because knowledge is usually acquired through experience (tacit knowledge) and is difficult to transfer to others (Serkan et al., 2008; Zammit et al., 2017). Organisational learning could be chiefly attained when organisation members can acquire and apply relevant and valuable information, and then the management can convert this information to valued organisational knowledge through collective learning (J. Yang, 2004).

When an organisation needs to improve, generating and maintaining data surfaces, creating a system that will share the stored knowledge (Meshari et al., 2021), knowledge generated throughout a process, dealings, or project in an establishment must be captured and shared among people in the organisation for continuous improvement to avoid repeating previous mistakes (Tan et al., 2006). Meanwhile, failure to be proactive in doing the needful may result in losing critical knowledge and information due to time lapses in capturing knowledge, staff turnover, and people's unwillingness to share expertise (Tan et al., 2006). However, with the help of embedded systems, knowledge is collected, exchanged and reused (Fazekas, 2021; Kools et al., 2019; Malik & Garg, 2017a).

Empirically, many organisations face the dilemma of determining what knowledge and information to capture, and when that is determined, the problem of deciding what amounts or extents of acquisition are needed for the information or expertise to be truly useful (Hicks et al., 2002). Another challenge is that knowledge can be scattered across different technical aspects of the firm, while knowledge, particularly tacit regarding product, production, and other activities, can be complex (Mourtzis & Doukas, 2014). Likewise, verbal communication hinders recording experience and knowledge reuse (Mourtzis & Doukas, 2014). However, recording knowledge is attainable in the SME context due to the limited magnitude of operational processes and controllable information invasion (Mourtzis & Doukas, 2014). Sharing knowledge is crucial to achieving innovation and competitive advantage (Malik & Garg, 2017a). In the same view, knowledge is precious for organisations; therefore, optimum capturing, storage, sharing, and implementation is the only way for firms to achieve and maintain a competitive advantage (Hicks et al., 2002). However, knowledge capturing includes a fundamental qualitative element of knowledge management and organisational learning (J. Yang, 2004). Thence, ES for disseminating information is vital for individuals to freely and widely spread their implicit knowledge (Malik & Garg, 2017a).

Chawla and Lenka (2015) said embedded system refers to establishing methods to capture and share learning. Therefore, practical strategies for identifying, capturing, storing and reusing must be provided to best use this information and knowledge (Hicks et al., 2002). More elaborately and considered for this study, Hannachi (2016) defines an embedded system as showing structures, procedures and tools to capture and share information and knowledge. Supporting this view, Malik and Garg (2017) describe an embedded system as using an integrated approach to allow access to and sharing information. In the authors' opinion, it could be deduced that an embedded system is a deliberate act organisation must take and establish such a culture to achieve continuous passage of knowledge through storing information and creating means that ensure easy dissemination from one individual to another. Hence, a technological system is needed to support and promote such a structure (Milić et al., 2017). Meanwhile, dynamic systems are developed for embedded systems to capture and disseminate learning across the company (Khamis Ali, 2012).

Furthermore, knowledge must be collected in real-time in a collaborative environment while the project, experiment, or procedure is being carried out and presented in a template that will enhance its reuse both during and after the process, which is why embedded systems must be implemented (Tan et al., 2006). Also, a proper procedure for gathering insights is crucial in building a knowledge base that can be sustained and distributed, and this documentation should not simply be a system of regulations but a structure of process planning that can be controlled and tailored (Park, 2003). However, low-tech technologies should be utilised in an embedded system to make it efficient for examination through concentrated group talks (Meshari et al., 2021).

H4: Embedded system has no effect on the market growth of small and medium scale enterprises of Nigeria.

G) Team Learning and Collaboration

To compete in today's information-rich business climate, firms rely on team learning capabilities; hence, it is not surprising that immense efforts have been made over the last two decades to comprehend team learning (Wiese & Burke, 2019). consequently, an organisation's productivity and innovation success depends on how much it can transition from an individual's basic unit of work to teamwork, hence the need for cooperation and collaboration (Hannachi, 2016). Teamwork is ubiquitous in organisations; all through collaboration, teammates' learning can be shaped by the emotional responses of other team members; for teams to work effectively, members must engage in team learning (Watzek et al., 2019). Consequently, when confronted with high-complexity responsibilities, team members learn more efficiently than individual learners (Duan et al., 2022).

A team comprises at least two individuals who interact, share common goals and carry out tasks that must be completed interdependently (Watzek et al., 2019). Also, teams are social units embedded in organisational systems with features of social interaction, sharing common goals, and interdependency in accomplishing and performing corporate objectives (Watzek & Mulder, 2019). Team member diversity in skills and professional experiences can stimulate learning and increase the likelihood of intellectual growth such as team learning (Watzek & Mulder, 2019). Team learning, however, is essential for developing a learning organisation and achieving organisational goals and occurs when knowledge or skills alter due to group members' shared experiences (Watzek et al., 2019; Watzek & Mulder, 2019). The difficulty in explaining a construct like a team learning is an assumption of an easily visible teaching process; however, team learning is transient because it is a psychological orientation (Stewart, Dalsky & Tajino, 2019). Team learning has therefore called for a deeper understanding of how learning networks emerge in a business entity through the deployment of teams (Yeo, 2020).

Team learning is frequently the result of collaboration on a particular activity (Stewart et al., 2019). On the other hand, collaboration does not occur by chance in teams; it emerges from a deliberate effort to exchange ideas by coordinating activities because as teammates socialise, their discourse produces mutual understanding and, subsequently, shared cognition (Stewart et al., 2019). Scientifically, researchers have identified the complex nature of learning as a consequence of globalisation, which has resulted in cross-border collaborations between organisations, influencing their internal organisational structures (Yeo, 2020).

Team learning and collaboration are dimensions posited by Senge that focus on employees in an organisation aiming to learn together to attain the set objective (Hansen et al., 2020). It is no rigid process to improve things by sharing skills, insight, experience, and knowledge (Hutasuhut et al., 2021) due to a shared vision (Chawla & Lenka, 2015; Meshari et al., 2021). Also, the degree to which teammates enhance mastery by acquiring new skills and gaining knowledge through experience is called team learning (Duan et al., 2022). Relative to the above definition, Yang and Chen (2005), as cited in (Hutasuhut et al., 2021), explained team learning as a dynamic process in which team members work together, give and receive feedback, adjust, improve and change their behaviours to enhance their capabilities and gain innovative knowledge.

TLC promotes group work activities by accessing different thinking methods for utmost collaboration (Kiani & Gillani, 2014). Corroborating this meaning, Malik and Garg (2020) opined that TLC shows an organisation's endeavour to promote a concerted atmosphere and enable team members to get acquainted with diverse ways of thinking. However, though TLC focuses on the employees' collective learning process, it also emphasises the reflective aspect of learning (Yin Yin Lau et al., 2020). Meanwhile, team learning is a dynamic process that can be considered a compendium of various tasks, such as knowledge sharing, team reflection, and information storage and retrieval, with quantity, quality, and shared understanding as the characteristics (Watzek & Mulder, 2019).

Where TLC is adopted, aggregation and distribution of best practices among employees and different work units or departments are experienced (Hansen et al., 2020). Although TLC is much more than the aggregation of individual learning, it increases the members' ability to work in partnership, appreciate, and decrease individual condescension (Hutasuhut et al., 2021). Aside from this, team learning explains the benefits of variability in decision-making mechanisms and stimulates team members to transact, share, and incorporate task-specific details within the team (Chow, 2018). Also, TLC can yield a shared vision of personal mastery, prevent the employee from internal rivalry, and create an open environment for inquiry, conversation, and discussion (Hutasuhut et al., 2021; Meshari et al., 2021). Therefore, team learning and collaboration are adjured in this study, an ever-changing procedure in which team members cooperate, offer and receive feedback, evolve, enhance their skills, and alter their behaviours to increase their capabilities and gain new knowledge.

H5: Team learning and collaboration has no effect on the market growth of small and medium scale enterprises of Nigeria.

H) System Connection

One of the seven dimensions of a learning organisation, as Watkins and Marsick outline, is system connection (Marsick & Watkins, 2003; Prause & Venesaar, 2011; B. Yang et al., 2004a, 2004b). However, this dimension represents an organisation's connections to its internal and external environments and reflects global thinking (Birdthistle & Fleming, 2005; B. Yang et al., 2004a). Thus, workers scan their surroundings and use the information they gather to change their work habits; the organisation is connected to the community, and employees are assisted in seeing how their job affects the overall firm (B. Yang et al., 2004a). Also, any organisation's ability to connect with its communities is known as a system connection because it aids in people's understanding of the overall environment and uses the information to modify work practices by enabling them to comprehend how their actions affect the organisation. (Song et al., 2009).

System connection describes how a company considers all its partners, including suppliers, customers, distributors, investors, and others, leading to a proper grasp of its stakeholders' needs and demands (Hannachi, 2016). Accordingly, from the preceding, it can be deduced that scholars and authors seem not to disagree about the meaning and definition of system connection as they all arrived at the same conclusion, with all their views traceable to that of Marsick and Watkins. However, this work will like to combine all the ideas of the subject, thereby defining system connection as follows. System connection is the connection between a business organisation and its environment (internal and external) through information scanning that aids in understanding stakeholders' needs and demands and modifies work habits and performance while giving careful consideration to all of its partners, including suppliers, customers, distributors, investors, and others while thinking and reflecting globally. Furthermore, the desire to meet the partners' needs encourages and assists businesses to be naturally compelled to improve their performances, making the system connection dimension a mirror of the innovation process that has grown more transparent and participatory (Hannachi, 2016). Moreover, to create value for the stakeholders and achieve the business-set goal through internal and external connections, the organisation must encourage individuals to look for answers and encourage global thinking based on the local community and clients' demands (Prause & Venesaar, 2011).

Connecting the workplace to the environment, individuals can see the effect of their doings on the organisation (Dirani, 2006; Marsick & Watkins, 2003). Likewise, to promote flexibility, responsiveness, and knowledge sharing, the need for internal and external partnerships is of utmost importance (Prause & Venesaar, 2011). The internal connection could be the relationships within the units and departments, while external partnerships may involve collaboration with other businesses, suppliers, trade associations, and community and social organisations (Prause & Venesaar, 2011). System connections, however, facilitate considering critical partners and the public's perspectives when making vital decisions (Prause & Venesaar, 2011). Indeed, different views on system connection as proven that businesses and organisations are impacted by their environment; therefore, firms need to pay attention to and be well-connected to it (Dirani, 2006; Marsick & Watkins, 2003; Voolaid & Venesaar, 2011; B. Yang et al., 2004a, 2004b). Moreover, no business firm operates in a vacuum; as a result, business decisions and success are shaped by various environmental elements; hence the business is a crucial component of ecology and the social system (Cherunilam, 2021; Otache & Mahmood, 2015). Therefore, a business entity is an open system that connects mutualistic with its environments, meaning both the environment and the organisation gain from one another (Otache & Mahmood, 2015).

The business environment is the cause, factor, or institution that impacts business operations, decisions and performance (Cherunilam, 2021; Otache & Mahmood, 2015). To match a firm's strategies with environmental conditions crucial to corporate management and planning processes, business managers must know and comprehend their organisations' operational environments. (Khan & Khalique, 2014).Furthermore, the business environment has two parts, internal and external; although the interior climate is proven easier to control, the external environment is posited otherwise (Otache & Mahmood, 2015).

In the meantime, the external environment, which is usually out of control and is of utmost importance, refers to the powers outside the organisation which cannot be controlled by the business owners and can influence business performance, with its impact being examined through the factor like dynamism, hostility, munificence and complexity; however, it allows the business entity to explore and exploit (Otache & Mahmood, 2015). The external forces could sometimes be economic, political, social, technological, natural, legal, etc., and could breed opportunities or threats for the organisation, while the internal comes in the form of capabilities, resources, goodwill of the firm and the likes (Cherunilam, 2021). Furthermore, the business environment globally has constantly been dramatically unstable, causing firms to face new trials and challenges, such as rising pressure and various risk that impede the growth and survival of business; hence, it takes only organisations that can connect to survive and achieve the set goal (Khan & Khalique, 2014). Therefore, the ability of a business establishment to connect systematically well to the environment of existence by generating relevant information and understanding it will increase the efficiency and effectiveness of the plan and purpose (Khan & Khalique, 2014).

H6: System connection has no effect on the market growth of small and medium scale enterprises of Nigeria.

I) Strategic Leadership

Poor leadership has been posited to be a significant barrier and impediment to any organisation's growth and objective accomplishment (Nyong'a & Maina, 2019). Corroborating this, Chanpoom and Intrawong (2019) said that the ability to employ or leverage motivation to persuade individuals and organisations to come together and work together to achieve their goals is a crucial component of leadership that increases the effectiveness and efficiency of work. Whereas, the need for effective leadership styles that can effectively respond to the demands of the constant shift in processes and cope with uncertainty as well as devise a strategy efficaciously in a constantly changing world is increased by a variable of oscillations in the business environment that is characterised by volatility, uncertainty, complexity, and ambiguity; one such leadership style is strategic leadership (Hidiroğlu, 2020).

In recent times, strategic leadership has dominated all governmental, commercial, and economic organisations, whether at the global or local level, making it a crucial subject for experts, whether they are individuals or organisations (Abu Mostafa et al., 2021) because it focus is on the people who have obligation mainly for the organisation (Samimi et al., 2022). Meanwhile, strategic leadership involves adjusting to change; meanwhile, more enormous changes necessitate more prominent leadership (Nyong'a & Maina, 2019). Strategic leadership, however, is one of the dimensions of a learning organisation (Birdthistle & Fleming, 2005). It is a factor that unites a learning organisation's components and aspects (Prause & Venesaar, 2011). Such leadership style is distinct from other leadership styles because such a leader can manage uncertainty and foresee the direction of organisations (Hidiroğlu, 2020). Inspiring, involving, motivating, and deploying a team to carry out their tasks to accomplish desired strategic and organisational objectives are considered strategic leadership's business (Nyong'a & Maina, 2019).

Strategic leadership refers to how executives use learning to drive change and propel the organisation toward a new direction or emerging businesses (Birdthistle & Fleming, 2005). It encourages generalised, ongoing learning processes strategically oriented toward improving business performance and results (Dirani, 2006; Hannachi, 2016; Marsick & Watkins, 2003; Song et al., 2009). It implies that managers use learning strategically for corporate objectives and that leaders exemplify, advocate, and encourage learning (Birdthistle & Fleming, 2005). Likewise, strategic leadership entails managing via others and involves the leader's capacity to foresee, visualise, and maintain flexibility to enable others to create strategic change as necessary (Nyong'a & Maina, 2019). Likewise, strategic leadership is the ability of a manager to articulate a strategic vision for the organisation or a specific department within the organisation and to inspire and influence others to adopt that vision (Chanpoom & Intrawong, 2019). In another view, strategic leadership is the leadership style that prioritises the capacity to envision the future, fosters flexibility and works with others to bring about the essential and required strategic change (Abu Mostafa et al., 2021). Moreover, this work will streamline and align the definition of strategic leadership to this paper's umbrella, a learning organisation. It is therefore defined as the process by which an organization's leader aims to promote ongoing learning, considers how learning may spur change, moves the organization in a new direction or toward emerging enterprises, and enhances organizational performance.

The fundamental tenet of strategic leadership is that leaders and managers of businesses must actively participate in creating and growing learning organisations (Prause & Venesaar, 2011). Corroborating this, Samimi et al. (2022) argued that strategic leadership's fundamental components are learning potential, adaptability, and management knowledge. Managers must know all organisational-wide systems, processes, and structures that may facilitate or obstruct learning (Prause & Venesaar, 2011). Moreover, providing leadership for learners and their learning on an individual level entails providing care for individuals and groups for as long as necessary to help them become better learners or masters of the learning process (Prause & Venesaar, 2011).

Integrating strategic leadership style successfully into organisational processes, strategic leaders can influence all members of the business and can boost employee performance by encouraging commitment to the company's goals (Hidiroğlu, 2020). Therefore, leaders try to provide, set direction, and build a learning-driving environment full of high expectations and as a result, every structure and system must help and produce a chance to learn (Prause & Venesaar, 2011). Meanwhile, In the works of Chanpoom and Intrawong (2019), Dubrin listed several characteristics that a strategic leader must possess, including high levels of cognitive activity, conceptual thinking skills, the ability to envision the future, transformational thinking, the ability to design a product or service, market research, industry boundary determination, and vision creation. To guide this study, strategic leadership is a process by which an organisation's leader aims to promote ongoing learning, considers how learning may spur change, moves the organisation in a new direction or toward emerging enterprises, and enhances organisational performance.

H7: Strategic leadership has no effect on the market growth of small and medium scale enterprises of Nigeria.

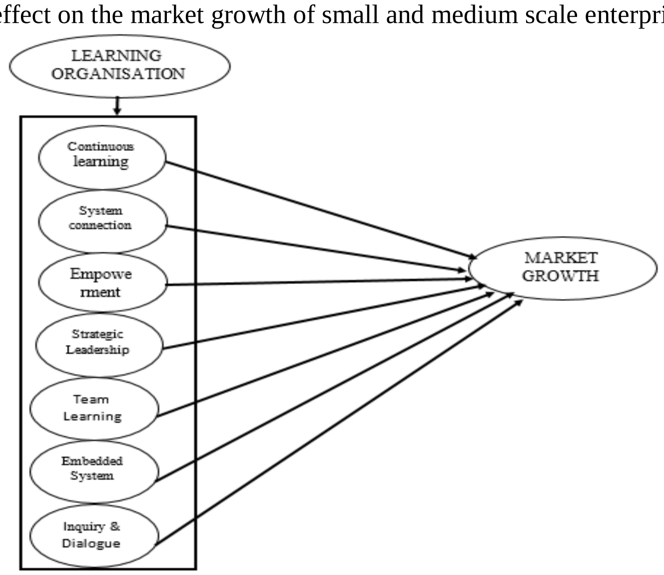

Figure 1: Conceptual Model

III. RESEARCH METHOD

A cross-sectional survey method was employed in this study because it captured a single point in time, collecting information from a study group at a single point and comparing respondents; as a result, it is a quick, straightforward and easy way to get the information needed cheaply and relatively quickly, especially when it comes to analysis (Setia, 2016). Moreover, between October and December 2022, an online survey was designed using google form and printed copies to collect data. Anonymity was guaranteed in writing and to gain insight from as many managers and business owners. Accordingly, we followed random sampling, which involved sending the survey to business owners or managers at different small and medium scale enterprises in Lagos Nigeria. A simple random sampling technique which is most suitable for relatively homogeneous populations, allows members of the sample to be chosen at random and solely by chance, while the sample's quality is unaffected because each member has an equal probability of being selected (Bhardwaj, 2019).Also, the choice of the manager came to be because of their wealth of knowledge about the business. Moreover, they play a significant role in forming and moulding organisational characteristics by determining expected and supported behaviour types (Wolff et al., 2015; Yusoff et al., 2019).

The final data was collected with three hundred and seventy six (376) making 78.6% that were useable responses from the expected four hundred and seventy eight (478) that formed 100%. The study's sample size however was determined from the population figure of Eight Thousand, Three Hundred and Ninety-Five (8,395) Small and Medium Scale Enterprise in Lagos State Nigeria using the Raosoft online sample size calculator with an attrition of 10%. The response rate represents a large portion of the respondents, and was considered very good according to Mugenda and Mugenda (2003), cited in the study of (Kiawa et al., 2019). As a result, the response rate for the study, therefore, signifies that it is adequate for the analysis while making conclusions and recommendations based on it will not be out of the boundary. Also, they are enough to conduct a partial-least-squares structural equation modeling (PLS-SEM) analysis (Hair Jr et al., 2020). Consequently, SmartPLS Version 4.0 was used for analysis to run the algorithm and bootstrapping basically on two-tailed method.

Table 1: Loading and Cross Loading

Latent Variables	Item Code	Market Growth	Continuous Learning	Embeded System	Empower ment	Inquiry & Dialogue	Syst. Connection	Team Learning & Collaboration	Strategic Leadership	Squaroot of AVE
Team Learning and Collaboration	10_CTL1	0.555	0.591	0.580	0.639	0.623	-0.147	0.796	0.179	0.776
	10_CTL2	0.541	0.628	0.601	0.615	0.681	-0.107	0.830	0.213	
	10_CTL3	0.520	0.621	0.595	0.599	0.639	-0.060	0.799	0.159	
	10_CTL4	0.552	0.677	0.677	0.664	0.658	-0.102	0.813	0.224	
	10_CTL5	0.373	0.431	0.481	0.446	0.413	-0.128	0.595	0.128	
	10_CTL6	0.539	0.642	0.689	0.671	0.646	-0.098	0.800	0.198	
Embedded System	11_ES1	0.560	0.606	0.766	0.571	0.590	-0.091	0.666	0.201	0.779
	11_ES2	0.506	0.607	0.770	0.580	0.595	-0.153	0.646	0.218	
	11_ES3	0.532	0.574	0.781	0.617	0.574	0.019	0.621	0.144	
	11_ES4	0.559	0.575	0.772	0.613	0.627	-0.020	0.592	0.177	
	11_ES5	0.576	0.541	0.798	0.631	0.543	-0.003	0.573	0.174	
	11_ES6	0.558	0.561	0.790	0.638	0.565	0.016	0.560	0.148	
Empowerment	12_EP1	0.564	0.631	0.646	0.738	0.625	-0.164	0.635	0.232	0.773
	12_EP2	0.565	0.552	0.591	0.766	0.569	-0.098	0.595	0.197	
	12_EP3	0.520	0.579	0.591	0.769	0.576	-0.043	0.611	0.160	
	12_EP4	0.584	0.590	0.610	0.825	0.599	-0.091	0.641	0.230	
	12_EP5	0.517	0.575	0.594	0.768	0.590	-0.003	0.562	0.134	
	12_EP6	0.595	0.562	0.592	0.771	0.582	-0.080	0.600	0.147	
Market Growth	16_MG1	0.811	0.506	0.552	0.580	0.582	-0.104	0.533	0.203	0.807
	16_MG2	0.804	0.495	0.543	0.575	0.513	-0.059	0.516	0.113	
	16_MG3	0.831	0.547	0.587	0.591	0.548	-0.104	0.554	0.214	
	16_MG4	0.807	0.479	0.570	0.559	0.522	-0.097	0.518	0.196	
	16_MG5	0.781	0.539	0.588	0.608	0.559	-0.099	0.566	0.200	
System Connection	19_SC1	-0.129	-0.132	-0.028	-0.105	-0.127	0.917	-0.116	-0.619	0.478
	19_SC2	-0.029	-0.087	0.003	-0.001	-0.095	0.667	-0.069	-0.298	
	19_SC3	-0.017	-0.037	0.043	0.037	-0.023	0.631	-0.026	-0.293	
	19_SC4	-0.066	-0.131	-0.084	-0.102	-0.136	0.752	-0.137	-0.293	
	19_SC5	0.010	-0.039	0.087	0.064	-0.031	0.523	-0.018	-0.295	
Strategic Leadership	20_SL1	0.285	0.306	0.233	0.275	0.292	-0.681	0.284	0.848	0.712
	20_SL2	0.074	0.094	0.127	0.126	0.118	-0.320	0.104	0.684	
	20_SL3	0.099	0.142	0.105	0.111	0.145	-0.243	0.089	0.659	
	20_SL4	0.134	0.143	0.109	0.099	0.110	-0.311	0.111	0.732	
	20_SL5	0.034	0.114	0.086	0.071	0.070	-0.192	0.062	0.602	
	20_SL6	0.114	0.183	0.199	0.162	0.193	-0.241	0.166	0.713	
Continuos Learning	8_CL1	0.391	0.696	0.502	0.521	0.541	-0.054	0.530	0.149	0.763
	8_CL2	0.451	0.795	0.554	0.604	0.635	-0.128	0.594	0.194	
	8_CL3	0.422	0.737	0.489	0.495	0.601	-0.165	0.526	0.253	
	8_CL4	0.484	0.785	0.596	0.562	0.637	-0.076	0.608	0.188	
	8_CL5	0.538	0.809	0.599	0.631	0.695	-0.143	0.627	0.246	
	8_CL6	0.498	0.777	0.586	0.617	0.679	-0.111	0.635	0.189	
	8_CL7	0.571	0.734	0.599	0.567	0.618	-0.103	0.608	0.226	
Inquiry and Dialogue	9_ID1	0.529	0.672	0.602	0.599	0.749	-0.107	0.607	0.197	0.724
	9_ID2	0.527	0.674	0.595	0.595	0.808	-0.127	0.614	0.185	
	9_ID3	0.497	0.602	0.548	0.571	0.762	-0.086	0.600	0.205	
	9_ID4	0.526	0.647	0.548	0.581	0.776	-0.096	0.606	0.210	
	9_ID5	0.300	0.311	0.256	0.343	0.425	-0.184	0.340	0.094	
	9_ID6	0.517	0.620	0.618	0.584	0.757	-0.077	0.631	0.217	

A) Measurement Scales And Validity

Validated scales were used to measure the independent and dependent variables. All scales validated through confirmatory analysis, and they showed adequate reliability. Six point Likert Scale was used. Six-point Likert because it enables the more excellent articulation of the breadth of respondents' opinions with no opportunity for ambiguity. Likert's scale of 6 points tends to reduce the deviation to the least and give higher discrimination and reliability values; hence, when emphasising discrimination and reliability, it was considered coupled with the fact that it is appropriate to the research, which has several variables (Chomeya, 2010). For learning organisation sub variables (Strategic leadership, System Connection, Continuous learning, Embedded System, Empowerment, Inquiry and Dialogue and Team learning and Collaboration) the options ranges from 6 - Very true 5 - True 4 – Somewhat True 3 – Somewhat Untrue 2 – Untrue 1 – Very Untrue while for Market Growth the option ranges from 6 – Very high 5 – Moderately High 4 – High 3 – Low 2 – Moderately Low 1 – Very low.

Continuous learning was measured through seven items scale, Inquiry and Dialogue - six items, Team Learning and Collaboration - six items, Embedded System- six items, empowerment- six items, System Connection – five items and Strategic leadership – six Items (Hannachi, 2016; Pokharel & Ok Choi, 2015); meanwhile Market growth, was measured with five items (Menon & Mohanty, 2012)

IV. RESULTS & DISSCUSION

A) Measurement models

We used confirmatory factor analysis to test convergent validity, internal consistency reliability, and discriminant validity using the conventional approach. Every construct has reflecting dimensions. The cross-loadings, loadings, and square root of AVE are all shown in Table 1. All objects should have loadings larger than 0.707, however a handful, such as 10_CTL5, 19_SC2, 19_SC3, 19_SC5, and 20_SL2, have loadings between 0.4 and 0.6. These items, however, should not be deleted because they are not less than 0.4, as their deletion may impair the internal consistency dependability of the construct (Hair et al., 2017). Convergent and discriminant validity were the two components used as scientific measures of construct validity were adopted. The former (convergent validity) explains the variance in its indicator as it is described by Average variance Extracted (AVE) (Fornell& Larcker, 1981) with a value exceeding 0.5 for it to be significant and established. This is therefore confirmed to be in the right threshold as shown in table 2 and 3.

Cronbach's alpha and Composite reliability were employed to assess the internal consistency and scale reliability. Cronbach's alpha is the most often used and convenient metric in behavioural and social science to evaluate the reliability or internal surface of measurement tools, and its computation only takes a single delivery of a test (Hoekstra et al., 2019). Moreover, the constructed value of both tools must range from 0.7 and above to be used in the model (Sahoo & Vijayvargy, 2021; Tripathi et al., 2020); the result therefore meet the crieteria. Cronbach's alphas are all bigger than 0.7. The composite reliability exceeds the 0.7 minimal standard. The inner structural model and the outside structural model have no collinearity issues as the variance inflation factor (VIF) are found to be less than 5.

Table 2: Fornell-Larcker Criterion

	Market Growth	Continuous Learning	Embedded System	Empowerment	Inquiry & Dialogue	Syst. Connection	Team Learning & Collaboration	strategic leadership
Market Growth	0.807							
Continuous Learning	0.637	0.763						
Embedded System	0.705	0.740	0.779					
Empowerment	0.723	0.752	0.781	0.773				
Inquiry & Dialogue	0.676	0.829	0.747	0.763	0.725			
Syst. Connection	-0.115	-0.147	-0.047	-0.105	-0.146	0.710		
Team Learning & Collaboration	0.667	0.777	0.781	0.786	0.794	-0.136	0.776	
strategic Leadership	0.231	0.273	0.227	0.238	0.261	-0.570	0.239	0.710

Table 3: Construct reliability and validity table

	Cronbach's alpha	Composite reliability (rho_a)	Composite reliability (rho_c)	Average variance extracted (AVE)
Market Growth	0.866	0.866	0.903	0.651
Continuous Learning	0.880	0.885	0.907	0.582
Embedded System	0.871	0.871	0.903	0.607
Empowerment	0.865	0.867	0.899	0.598
Inquiry & Dialogue	0.810	0.832	0.865	0.525
Syst. Connection	0.823	1.009	0.831	0.505
Team Learning & Collaboration	0.866	0.876	0.900	0.603
strategic Leadership	0.829	1.039	0.858	0.505

B) Structural model results

The structural path coefficients, T-statistics, P-values, and our findings are shown in Table 3. The table depicts the relationship between the learning organization's dimensions and market growth. The direct path coefficient (-0.015) is negative and not statistically significant ($P > 0.05$). As a result, the first hypothesis is supported; hence continuous learning has no effect on the market growth of small and medium scale enterprises in Nigeria. Furthermore, the direct path coefficient (0.178) is both positive and statistically significant (P-value 0.05). As a result, the second hypothesis is rejected. The related effect size f2 (Cohen, 1992) is also 0.018. As such, the effects of inquiry and dialogue on market growth for Nigerian SMEs is negligible.

Table 3: Path coefficients Table

	Original sample (O)	Sample mean (M)	Standard deviation (STDEV)	T statistics (|O/STDEV|)	P values	Effect Size (f^2)		Result
Continuous Learning -> Market Growth	-0.015	-0.012	0.074	0.202	0.840	0.000	No effect	Supported
Embedded System -> Market Growth	0.276	0.272	0.099	2.783	0.005	0.054	Small effect	Rejected
Empowerment -> Market Growth	0.338	0.338	0.081	4.200	0.000	0.078	Small effect	Rejected
Inquiry & Dialogue -> Market Growth	0.178	0.172	0.078	2.290	0.022	0.018	No effect	Rejected
Syst. Connection -> Market Growth	-0.025	-0.035	0.055	0.453	0.650	0.001	No effect	Supported
Team Learning & Collaboration -> Market Growth	0.047	0.051	0.076	0.620	0.535	0.001	No effect	Supported
strategic Leadership -> Market Growth	0.020	0.023	0.037	0.528	0.598	0.001	No effect	Supported

Significant at $p \leq 0.05$

The direct path coefficient (0.338) is both positive and statistically significant (P-value 0.05). Thus, the third hypothesis is also rejected. In addition, the related effect size f2 is 0.078. As a result, the effects of empowerment on market growth for Nigerian SMEs is small. The fourth hypothesis is likewise rejected. The path coefficient which was positive (0.276) and also was statistically significant with the P value < 0.05; meanwhile, the f2 (0.054) depict that effect of embedded system on the market growth remain small. In the meantime, the fifth, sixth and seventh hypothesis is supported as the P value was found to be greater (>) than 0.05. Thus team learning and collaboration, system connection and strategic leadership has no effect on market growth of Nigeria SMEs.

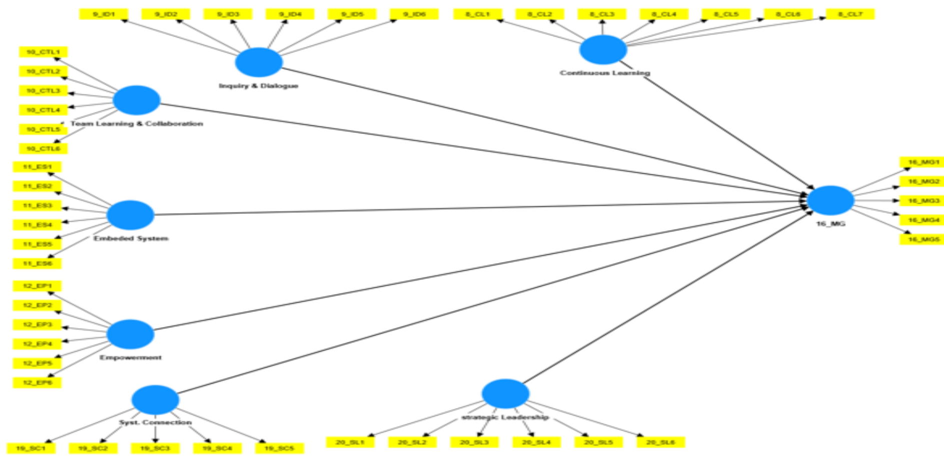

Figure 2: The Path diagram of learning organisation dimension on the market growth.

V. DISCUSSION

The result of structural equation modelling for the effect of learning organisation dimensions on the market growth of small and medium-scale enterprises in Nigeria revealed that learning organisation dimensions significantly affected the market position of SMEs in Nigeria (Adj. R2 = 0.581; SRMR = 0.057, d_ULS = 3.727, d_G = 1.223, Chi-square = 2484.166, and NFI = 0.769.). This result implies that implementing the learning organisation in small and medium-scale enterprises in Nigeria will promote market growth. However, with more attention to embedded system, empowerment and inquiry & dialogue. Additionally, it shows that learning organisations are directly related to market growth, as proven by previous researchers (Bhaskar & Mishra, 2017; Kyoungshin et al., 2017; Siddique, 2018a).

The outcome of this research work is in agreement conceptually with what some scholars opined. To start with, the success of learning organisations in company establishments will support and sustain market expansion, according to a collection of researchers (Bharadwaj et al., 2005; Shirokova et al., 2016; Zhang & Song, 2019). For example, the availability and accessibility of information cumulating learning in the organisation will aid market stability and growth (Shirokova et al., 2016). Moreover, power distance tends to reduce in situations of high market expansion and to increase in those of low market growth (Zhang & Song, 2019) hence the primary reason to adopt a learning organisation. Furthermore, beyond the availability and accessibility of the information, the utilisation of such information aids the learning of individuals in the organisation, thereby yielding market expansion (growth) (Bianchi & Mathews, 2016). Also, learning organisations not only help to foster or grant desired market growth or expansions but also support their retention and upkeep while providing a means of gaining a competitive edge, thereby preparing the organization for potential future shock waves or changes in the corporate environment (Zhang & Song, 2019). Scholars asserted that the inability of managers to consider nor give room for the learning organisation could create an adverse effect on the rate at which products and services are being demanded cum, the future opportunity for new products and services low (Shirokova et al., 2016; Zhang & Song, 2019).

The study's conclusions corroborate several empirical studies on learning organisations and market growth (Bhaskar & Mishra, 2017; Ellinger et al., 2002; Hannachi, 2021; Hatane, 2015; Hussein et al., 2014, 2016; Kontoghiorghes et al., 2005; Kyoungshin et al., 2017; Laeeque & Babar, 2015; Siddique, 2018a, 2018b). As a result, business owners who do not embrace learning organisations as a means of organisational improvement risk having a weak market expansion. Meanwhile, the practice of learning organisation was significantly and positively proven to impact organisational performance's financial variables, i.e., Pakistani hospitals' market growth (Laeeque & Babar, 2015). Corroborating this finding, Hannachi (2016), in his study on the impact of the learning organisation on product innovation performance: An empirical assessment in the French biotechnology industry, it was empirically ascertained that product innovation performance is a significant contributor to market growth is heavily dependent on the learning organisational ability of any firm. Additionally, it was determined that there is a correlation between the dimensions of the learning organisation and the dimensions of organisational performance in the sense that the higher the dimensions of the learning organisation, the greater the market growth (financial performance) (Bhaskar & Mishra, 2017). Subsequently, adopting a learning organisation would not be a bad idea for business owners and their managers.

The findings of this study also lend credence to the principles of the Human Capital Theory, which explains the connection between organizational learning and performance factors (market growth). Therefore, the relationship between learning organisation and market growth is used in this study to establish the assumptions of the human capital theory.

Investing in personnel education and training will create a better organisational foundation. As a result, given the conceptual, empirical, and theoretical backing provided by the current study's findings, learning organisation features significantly impact the market expansion (growth) of small and medium-sized businesses in Lagos, Nigeria.

The findings of this study have implications for management practices, industry, government, employees and investors.

VI. IMPLICATION

The findings of this study show that learning organisation has a positive and significant effect on the market growth and market position of small and medium-scale enterprises in Nigeria hence, the implication for both current and prospective investors. The investors, therefore, must look out for organisations that adopt learning organisations in Nigeria's small and medium-scale enterprises before committing resources to a business that will not yield an encouraging market growth. Moreover, more attention should be paid to the embedded system, empowerment, team learning and collaboration alongside inquiry and dialogue as these dimensions specifically improved market growth in Nigerian SMEs. Likewise, this study will assist the management of small and medium-scale enterprises in Nigeria to proffer solutions to the ongoing problem that has impeded the industry's growth over the year. The study also would assist the organisational managers/ management in being well informed on learning organisation and deploying the same towards attaining the corporate objective and gaining a competitive advantage in the respective industry. The study will enable Small and Medium Scale Enterprises to proactively invest in the capacity building of their employees to allow them to survive the turbulence and respond to constant changes within the business environment. It further gives an edge to compete locally and globally and aids the attraction of better investors and customer retention. Likewise, the study additionally provides the business owners and managers of SMEs in Nigeria the knowledge of how to improve their business performance to have ground to hold and enhance their survival rate.

The study has significantly proved the effect of learning organisation dimensions on the market growth of small and medium-scale enterprises in Nigeria. Moreover, it has been proven that the economic prosperity of any nation lies on the performance of its SMEs hence the implication of this study to the government of Nigeria and the regulatory body of small and medium-scale enterprises. The government of Nigeria and the Small and medium enterprises development agency of Nigeria (SMEDAN) should ensure that they promote, facilitate and monitor policies that aid the implementation of learning organisation dimensions in today's Nigeria small and medium-scale enterprises to foster improved performance and thereby create better economic growth. On the other hand, the researcher used structural equation modelling to thoroughly analyse a Nigerian study on learning organizations for measurement and model, including confirmatory analysis. This is an excellent repository of scholarly literature for aspiring researchers, scholars, and practitioners. This is because it offered a trustworthy source of conceptual data that could be used. The association between learning organization dimensions and the market growth of Nigerian SMEs was also supported empirically by this study. Additionally, it would help the claims made by the human capital theory and allow for a deeper exploration of its presumptions by other academics.

VII. LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

Generally speaking, because the exposure and outcome are primarily assessed in a cross-sectional study, there is typically no indication of a temporal relationship between the two. As a result, it will be challenging to make predictive conclusions, but the prescriptive analysis is made possible. Similarly, this design decision does not determine causality; given the time available for the investigation, this alternative appears to be the best option.

The survey design favours closed-ended questions over open-ended ones, collecting primary data using a questionnaire, thereby limiting respondents from fully expressing their views compared to adopting open-ended questions coupled with the inability to interact most time with the subject. Due to the time and cost, the decision appears to be appropriate. Some respondents had trouble grasping and understanding the question, which may be attributed to their intellectual ability and the fact that no one could fully explain it. Meanwhile, there were also individual incomplete entries. Likewise, the sampling unit for this study is the business owners or their managers, which implies one person per firm, making it challenging to gather the data on time and at the same premises as these organisations were dispersed within the state. Consequently, it is more expensive and time-consuming. Also, though the confidentiality and anonymity of the information and respondents were guaranteed, some respondents were still sceptical about filling out the questionnaire, while some refused bluntly for reasons best known to them.

Further study should however use other sub-variables of organisational performance such as profit margins or growth, return on equity, revenue growth, market share, return on asset, export growth, investment and stock rice, employee retention, cost reduction, turnover rate, rate of innovation, socially responsible business and ethical behaviour could also be considered against learning organisation to ascertain the interaction further while either moderating or mediating the relationship.

VIII. CONCLUSION

Based on this findings of this study, paying attention to the existence of learning organisation strategy in Nigeria SMEs is like paying attention to a child on oxygen whose cylinder must not go out of content. Thus business owners and managers should be deliberate and dutifully implement learning organisation strategy to achieve better performance and compete successfully.

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