

## **EFFECT OF STRATEGIC ORIENTATION ON THE PERFORMANCE OF MANUFACTURING FIRMS IN ABUJA, NIGERIA**

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### **ABSTRACT**

*Despite the recognized important role of strategic orientation in achieving company's business goals and overall firm performance, the manufacturing firms has not leveraged on it to enhanced their performance. Thus, this study examined the effect of strategic orientation on the performance of manufacturing firms in Abuja, Nigeria. Specifically, the study examined the effect of customer orientation and technological orientation on the performance of manufacturing firms, the study was anchored on Dynamic Capability Theory. Survey research design was adopted, the population of the study were one hundred and twenty-nine (129) owner/mangers of the selected manufacturing firms registered with (CAC) in Abuja with a minimum of five years in operation. Primary data with the aids of questionnaire on five-point likert scale was used in the study. The hypotheses of the study were tested using Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modelling (PLS-SEM). The result revealed that that customer orientation has a significant negative effect on performance; the study also found that technological orientation has a significant positive effect on the performance of manufacturing firms in Abuja. The study concluded that strategic orientation has a significant effect on the performance of manufacturing firms in Abuja. Based on the findings the study recommended that manufacturing firms in Abuja should implement robust customer feedback system and prioritizing customer needs; this can be ensured by establishing digital platforms and market survey to gather real-time insight on customers' needs and preferences. They should also continuously invest in advanced technologies, and encourage a company-wide culture that promotes technological innovation which can be achieved through regular training and collaboration with tech partners.*

**Keywords:** Strategic Orientation, Customer, Technological orientation, Manufacturing Firms, Performance.

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### **INTRODUCTION**

The approaches adopted by manufacturing firms can influence their overall organisational performance in a dynamic business landscape of globalization and rapid transformations. This is due to the constant competition, shifting consumer preferences, and evolving

market trends that define this industry. To thrive in such an environment, manufacturing companies must align their internal resources with their strategic focus, specifically through the adoption of strategic orientation practices (Theodosiou, 2021). These practices enable

businesses to remain competitive and achieve optimal organizational performance. Strategic orientation encompasses the ability of an organization to adapt and interact with its external environment.

Globally, strategic orientation has emerged as a pivotal concept in understanding how organizations navigate complex market challenges and achieve sustainable performance. Strategic orientation has gained significant importance as businesses face increasing competitive pressures, technological disruptions, and rapidly changing market dynamics (Kreiser et al., 2023). Multinational corporations and small-to-medium enterprises alike recognize the need to develop robust strategic orientations that can adapt to diverse economic landscapes and emerging market trends (Boso et al., 2023). In developing economies like Nigeria, strategic orientation becomes even more critical as it is increasingly recognized as vital for enhancing competitiveness and performance. For manufacturing firms, it offers a framework to address challenges such as inefficient production processes, resource constraints, and market volatility (Adamade & Umar, 2023). Locally, firms that align their strategies with evolving market demands, technological advancements, and customer preferences often report better performance metrics.

Strategic orientation provides guidelines for the day-to-day activities of a firm to incorporate organizational behaviors that enable firms to achieve increased performance (Kara et al., 2019). Strategic orientation is hence critical in enabling a firm to predict its chances of success, chances of owning unique capabilities, and chances of encountering a supportive business environment for better performance. Hakala (2011) and Krazkiewicz and Cyfert (2019) asserted that market orientation, entrepreneurial orientation, learning orientation, market orientation, and technological orientation are valuable dimensions of strategic orientation utilized by firms to achieved stated performance objectives. Adapting only these two dimensions in this study is valid because they directly influence a firm's ability to meet market demands and innovate. Together, they enhance firm performance by fostering

customer-centric strategies and leveraging technological advancements for sustained performance in competitive markets.

Customer orientation significantly impacts firm performance by driving customer satisfaction which is critical for sustained profitability. It fosters innovation by aligning products and services with customer need. Firms that are highly customer-oriented often achieve better performance outcomes, such as increased customer loyalty, market share, and profitability (Tuominen et al., 2023). This is because such firms align their products, services, and processes with customer expectations, leading to enhanced customer relationships. Technological orientation significantly enhances firm performance by fostering innovation, operational efficiency, and adaptability to market changes. It emphasizes investing in research and development, embracing new tools, and fostering a culture of technological adaptability. This orientation enhances firm performance by enabling process efficiency, product innovation, and competitive differentiation (Yousaf et al., 2020).

Firm performance is essential for assessing an organization's success, competitiveness, and sustainability. It reflects financial health, and operational efficiency. Evaluating firm performance provides insights into operational efficiency, resource utilization, and market positioning, serving as a foundation for decision-making and long-term planning (Omar & Zineb, 2019). Strong performance ensures a firm's resilience and adaptability in dynamic business environments. In view of the above this study examined the effect of strategic on the performance of manufacturing firms in Abuja, Nigeria.

The manufacturing sector plays a crucial role in the economic development of Nigeria, contributing to job creation, economic diversification, exports and GDP. However, the performance of manufacturing firms in Nigeria has been inconsistent, with some firms achieving success while others struggle leading to the folding up of the firms. Over the years the manufacturing sector's contribution to the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) is dropping as statistics has shown by the National Bureau of Statistics in 2018 - 9.20%, 2019 - 9.06%, 2020- 8.99%, 2021- 8.98%,

2022- 8.92%, and 2023 - 8.42% (NBS, 2023). This is despite government efforts such as import substitution policies, Bank of Industry (BOI) loans, fiscal and financial incentives and also technical and vocational education, infrastructural development. Should this situation persist, the manufacturing sector may witness a negative contribution to the GDP and this will be detrimental to the nation's economy. Therefore, it becomes pertinent for manufacturing firms to look inward for solutions to this pitiable situation and hence this study seeks to examine the effect of strategic orientation on the performance of manufacturing firms in Abuja, Nigeria.

Thus, numerous studies (Clarkson (2023; Hamisi & Ibrahim, 2023; Marei et al., 2024;

Muchiri & Muathe, 2024; Shonubi et al., 2024; Okegbemiro et al., 2024; Endeshaw et al., 2024) have investigated this topic across various sectors, economies as well as methodology, specific research on manufacturing firms are limited.

The main objective of the study is to examine the effect strategic orientation on the performance of manufacturing firms in Abuja, Nigeria. The specific objectives include to assess the effect of customer orientation on the performance of manufacturing firms in Abuja, Nigeria; and to investigate the effect of technological orientation on the performance of manufacturing firms in Abuja, Nigeria.

## **LITERATURE REVIEW AND HYPOTHESES DEVELOPMENT**

### **Concept of Strategic Orientation**

Strategic orientation refers to the firm's strategy direction in establishing the behaviours necessary for the company to maintain its outstanding performance (Marei et al., 2024). Similarly, Strategic orientation is the comprehensive strategy, mindset, and course of action that an organisation adopts to effectively place itself within its external environment. It also entails the management making deliberate and well-informed decisions regarding how an organisation will allocate its resources, utilise its capabilities, and carry out its activities in order to accomplish its long-term goals and objectives (Ibini & Jude, 2024).

Uzoamaka et al. (2020) further defined it as the strategic path that a company must follow to consistently enhance its performance and achieve a competitive edge over its rivals. Uvarova et al. (2023) proposed that strategic orientation can be seen as the way an organization leverages its internal resources and capabilities. Such an orientation aims to create a unique position in the market by aligning the organization's strengths with external opportunities. Also, strategic orientation is the process of creating business direction and adapting to the external environment changes in order to develop a competitive advantage (Maclean et al. 2023).

Given the preceding information, this study defined strategic orientation as the set of principles and direction implemented by a firm to create the proper behaviors for the continuous superior performance of the business.

### **Customer Orientation**

Customer orientation is a strategic approach employed by organisations that prioritises comprehending and fulfilling the requirements and expectations of consumers. It entails synchronizing all facets of the enterprise, encompassing product development, marketing, sales, and customer support, with a primary emphasis on generating value for customers (Islam & Zhe, 2022). This perspective acknowledges that customer pleasure and loyalty are crucial for achieving long-term success and sustainability (Ibini & Jude, 2024). Thus, customer orientation emphasizes the strategic focus on placing consumers at the core to achieve exceptional business performance (Wang et al., 2019).

According to Khan and Khan (2019), customer orientation encompasses all actions aimed at satisfying the requirements and desires of current and prospective customers in order to attain exceptional performance. A firm that prioritises the needs and preferences of its customers has an indirect impact on its ability to innovate and improve its performance in this

regard (Kim, 2017). However, customer orientation is the expansion of customer information across the organization, formulation of strategies and special techniques to meet market needs practically and from all parts of the organization and sense of commitment to the related program throughout the organization (Rsjoei, 2019).

Therefore, this study conceptualized customer orientation as understanding customer demands and preferences by understanding their purchasing habits, expectations, and beliefs and develops the product and process to fulfill the customer's expectation for greater company performance.

### **Technological Orientation**

Technological orientation is defined as the alignment of an organization's strategies and activities with the technological trends prevailing in its industry. It encompasses the utilization of technology to achieve strategic goals, optimize processes, and enhance competitiveness. This perspective sees technological orientation as a proactive stance that drives innovation and allows organizations to exploit technological opportunities effectively (Kramer & Krafft, 2023). Similarly, technology orientation (TO) refers to firm behavior towards the use and develops new technologies or new ways of doing operations, consequently, contributing to firm performance (Kiiru et al. 2022).

Furthermore, Vasconcelos and Azevedo (2019) added that technological orientation refers to an organization's strategic approach to continuously invest in and apply technological advancements to improve efficiency, productivity, and innovation. It involves a proactive stance towards identifying and implementing technological solutions that align with organizational goals and market demands. Based on the foregoing, this study established that technological orientation is a firm's strategic orientation that reflects its emphasis on the development and use of new technologies to enhance its competitive position. It involves a firm's ability to identify, acquire, and assimilate new technological knowledge and to transform and exploit it to create new products, services, or processes.

### **Performance**

Nasuredin et al. (2022) viewed performance as the actual output or results of a task measured against its intended outputs (goals and objectives). Performance is the accomplishment of particular objectives measured on the basis of identified set standards (Richard, 2019). According to Abubakar et al. (2019) organizational performance alludes to the realization as well as accomplishment of organizational objectives or goals. The organization must have or set measurable objectives in order to measure its performance level. Similarly, organization performance is the extent to which an organization achieved its predefined goals and objectives in effective and efficient manner (Tajeddini et al., 2020).

Organizational performance has two dimensions: Financial and nonfinancial measurements or indicators. It is worthy of note that numerous organizations use different types of measurement to assess performance, the most commonly used today includes financial and non-financial performance indicators. The financial performance indicators include profitability, sales growth, return on sales, return on investment, return on equity while the nonfinancial indicators comprise customer retention, customer satisfaction, market share, employee turnover, new product development and innovation (Ndubuisi et al., 2022; Bature et al., 2024). As such this study focused on the non-financial measure.

### **Empirical Review**

#### **Customer Orientation and Performance**

In India, Thomas (2024) assessed how customer orientation affect performance of retail stores in Kerala, the study was conducted in a sample population consisting of 72 retail stores' employees. The primary data was collected via a questionnaire from sales personnel working in retail shopping centres in Kochi and Trivandrum. The questions are formulated utilising the 5-point Likert scale. The research model was analysed using Warp PLS 8.0, employing structural equation modelling (SEM) techniques. Squared



multiple correlations were utilised to analyse the structural model. The study found that customer orientation had a significant negative effect on performance. Given the distinct context of retail stores in India, the study's findings may not apply to Nigerian manufacturing firms. This research addresses this gap by focusing on the North Central Nigeria.

Bankole et al. (2022) examined the effect of customer orientation on firm performance of selected banks in Ekiti State. A descriptive survey research design was adopted for the study. One hundred and fifty (150) respondents were sampled using random sampling. Primary data used for the study was gathered through the administration of structured questionnaire. Data gathered were analyzed using Pearson product moment correlation and linear regression analysis. The result showed that there is significant positive effect of customer orientation on firm performance. The study was specific to banks in Ekiti state, and therefore its findings may not be directly applicable to manufacturing firms, this research addresses this limitation by focusing on manufacturing firms in North Central Nigeria.

### **Technological Orientation and Performance**

Muchiri and Muathe (2024) examined the effect of technological orientation on the organizational performance of Rotary Clubs in Nairobi City County. The study adopted a descriptive cross-sectional study design to simultaneously investigate the research questions. A sample size of 314 selected from a total population of 1729 Rotarians from 41 Rotary Clubs in Nairobi City County. Sampling was done using proportionate stratified and random sampling techniques. Primary data was collected using semi-structured questionnaires and key informant interviews and the results were analyzed using quantitative and qualitative analysis techniques. The study findings revealed that technological orientation has a positive and significant effect on organizational performance of Rotary Clubs in Nairobi City County. The study fails to provide essential information about the analytical method used to process the data.

In Nigeria, Ogbari et al. (2022) studied the effect of technological orientation on the performance of small and medium entrepreneurial initiatives in Agege, Alaba, Satellite Town, Trade fair complex, Lagos State. A multi-stage sampling technique involving purposive, stratified and simple random techniques was employed. An aggregate of 120 questionnaire were self-administered to randomly chosen entrepreneurs in selected area of Lagos State. Data were collected, collated/ and analyzed using simple percentages and Regression via the Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS version 23) software. This study revealed that technological orientation has an insignificant effect on performance. This study employed regression analysis as an analytical tool while the current study utilizes a distinct analytical tool, PLS-SEM.

### **The Dynamic Capability Theory (DCT)**

The Dynamic Capability Theory (DCT) propounded by Teece (1997) holds that for organizations to continue being successful, they must constantly acquire and incorporate new abilities, information, and resources. This implies that to sustain success, businesses must continuously acquire and incorporate new abilities, information, and resources. The abilities include the capacity to recognize environmental alterations, seize chances, and adjust resources and capabilities to address emerging difficulties (Schwarz et al., 2020). This theory has been adopted in strategic management, entrepreneurship, and innovation. Manufacturing firms can greatly benefit from the application of this theory and accomplish their objectives with ease by creating and integrating new capabilities (Omar, 2021). As organizations, manufacturing firms are greatly influenced by their political social, economic, technological, and environmental landscape. The capacity to detect environmental changes is a crucial component of the dynamic capability theory. Manufacturing can stay ahead of the curve by detecting, recognizing these changes early, adapting fast and pro-actively.

The capacity to seize opportunities is another way in which this theory can influence strategic orientation of manufacturing firms.

Manufacturing firms must be able to spot and seize fresh possibilities as they present themselves (Schwarz et al., 2020). This could entail creating fresh initiatives, new business relationships, or adopting technology. Taking the Covid-19 pandemic as an example, it caused social and economic lives of many people all over the world and created huge social and economic gaps that governments alone could not fill (Muithya & Muathe, 2020). Manufacturing firms which recognized these needs responded by, for instance, creating

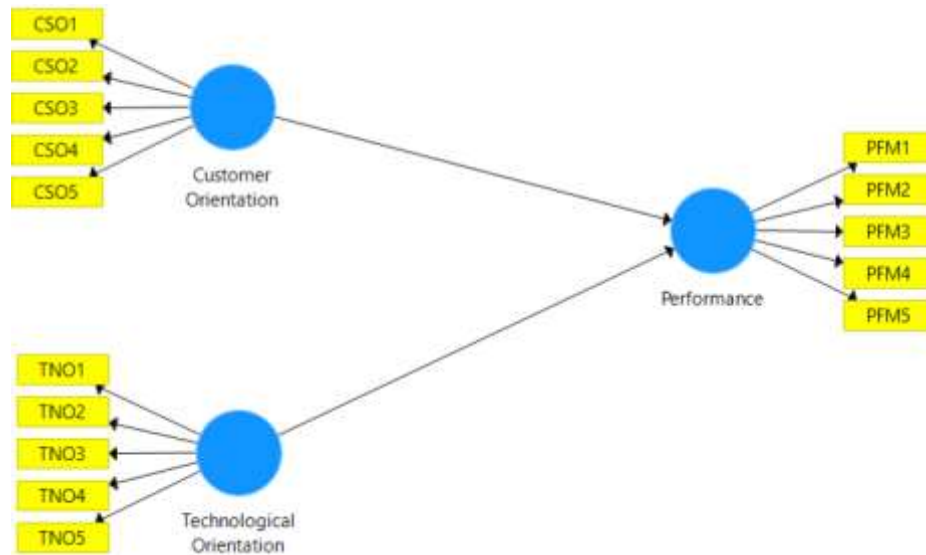
partnerships including with governments therefore increasing their influence in the society. This study is anchored on this theory because it provides a theoretical framework for understanding how manufacturing firms can develop and deploy strategic capabilities to achieve superior performance. By adopting a dynamic capability perspective, firms can create a more agile, responsive, and innovative organization capable of thriving in today's rapidly changing business environment.

## **METHODOLOGY**

This study employed the survey research design; the design involves studying a sample of the population once at a point in time for the purpose of drawing inference that will be generalized to the entire population of the study. The population of the study consists of manufacturing companies in FCT Abuja, registered with the Corporate Affairs Commission (CAC) with a minimum of five (5) years in operation. In accordance to the information provided and available data, only one hundred and twenty-nine (129) manufacturing firms in Abuja meets the aforementioned requirements (A comprehensive list is provided in the appendix). As such the target population of this study comprised 129 selected manufacturing firms in FCT Abuja, while respondents for the study were the owners/or managers of the selected companies or an equivalent position as directed by a particular firm. This study

adopted census sampling technique because it is suitable when carrying out a study where the population is small and manageable, it allows the inclusion of the entire population to be used as the sample size, ensuring a comprehensive and accurate representation of the phenomena under investigation and hence reducing sampling error.

Primary data was used for this study and it was collected through the use of five-point likert scale questionnaire ranging from (Strongly agree = 5, A= Agree = 4, Undecided = 3, Disagree= 4 to Strongly Disagree = 1) as the research instrument, the questions were adapted from various sources. Partial Least Square Structural Equation Model (PLS-SEM) was used to test the hypotheses formulated at 0.05 level of significance. A pictorial representation of the Partial Least Square Structural Equation Model (PLS-SEM) model for the study is provided as follows



**Figure 1: Structural Equation Model for the Study**  
Source: SMART PLS, 2024

The model shows the effect of measurement variables of strategic orientation on performance. Whereas CSO = customer orientation, TNO = technological orientation, while PFM = performance.

### Data Presentation and Analysis

The distribution and retrieval of questionnaire to selected manufacturing firms in FCT Abuja, is presented in Table 1

**Table 1: Distribution and Retrieval of Questionnaires**

Questionnaires	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Properly filled/Returned	113	88
Not Properly filled / Not Returned	16	12
<b>Total</b>	<b>129</b>	<b>100</b>

Source: Field Survey, 2024

Table 1: showed that one hundred and twenty nine (129) copies of questionnaire were administered to the selected manufacturing companies in Abuja, of which one hundred and thirteen (113) copies were properly filled and returned which represent 88% response rate. This response rate was acceptable to make conclusions from the discoveries as indicated by Mugenda (2011), a response rate of half is satisfactory for investigation and reporting; a rate of 60% is great and a reaction rate of 70% and over is superb as such the reaction rate in this study was superb. Consequently all further

analysis was conducted using one hundred and thirteen (113) valid responses.

### Data Analysis

#### The Measurement Model

In assessing the measurement model, the outer loadings are assessed first, and as a rule loadings above 0.70 are accepted as they indicate the construct explains more than 50% of the indicators variance, thus providing acceptable item reliability (Hair et al., 2019).

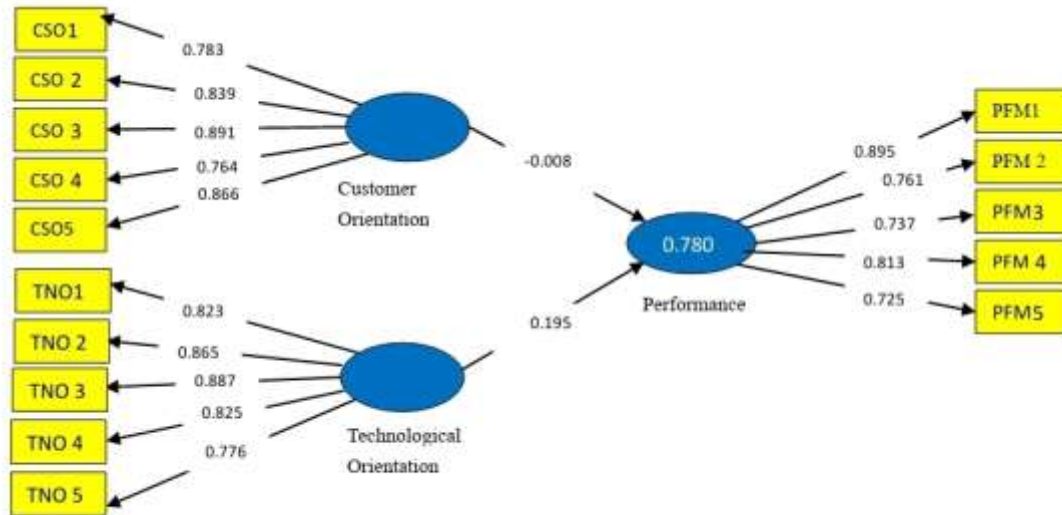


Figure 2: Indicator Outer Loadings

Source: SMART PLS, 2024

Table 2: Reliability of Study Scale

	Cronbach's Alpha	rho_A	Composite Reliability	Average Variance Extracted (AVE)
Customer Orientation	<b>0.872</b>	<b>0.877</b>	<b>0.907</b>	<b>0.662</b>
Technological Orientation	<b>0.839</b>	<b>0.848</b>	<b>0.886</b>	<b>0.610</b>
Performance	<b>0.862</b>	<b>0.864</b>	<b>0.901</b>	<b>0.645</b>

Source: SmartPLS Output, 2024

The table 2 presents the reliability metrics for three constructs in the study: customer orientation, technological orientation and performance. Each construct demonstrates strong internal consistency, with Cronbach's Alpha values ranging from 0.839 to 0.872, indicating high reliability. The rho\_A values, which are similar to Cronbach's Alpha, further confirm the reliability of the constructs. Composite Reliability scores are all above

0.86, suggesting that the constructs are measured consistently across different items. Additionally, the Average Variance Extracted (AVE) values are all above the 0.50 threshold, ranging from 0.610 to 0.662, indicating that a substantial amount of variance in the items is explained by the constructs. These metrics collectively suggest that the study scales are both reliable and valid.

Table 3: Heterotrait-Monotrait Ratio (HTMT)

Constructs	CSO	TNO	PFM
Customer Orientation			
Technological Orientation	<b>0.442</b>		
Performance	<b>0.632</b>	<b>0.578</b>	



Source: SmartPLS Output, 2024

Table 3 present the Heterotrait-Monotrait Ratio (HTMT) values for the relationships between three constructs: customer orientation, technological orientation and performance. The HTMT value between customer orientation and technological orientation is 0.442, indicating a moderate relationship. The HTMT value between customer orientation and performance is higher at 0.632, suggesting a stronger relationship between these two constructs. Lastly, the HTMT value between technological orientation and performance is 0.578, also indicating a moderate relationship. All HTMT

values are below the commonly accepted threshold of 0.85, suggesting good discriminant validity among the constructs, meaning that they are distinct and measure different concepts.

### The Structural Model

In assessing the structural model, the standard assessment criteria was consider which include the path coefficient, t-values, p-values and coefficient of determination( $R^2$ ), the bootstrapping procedure was conducted using a resample of 5000

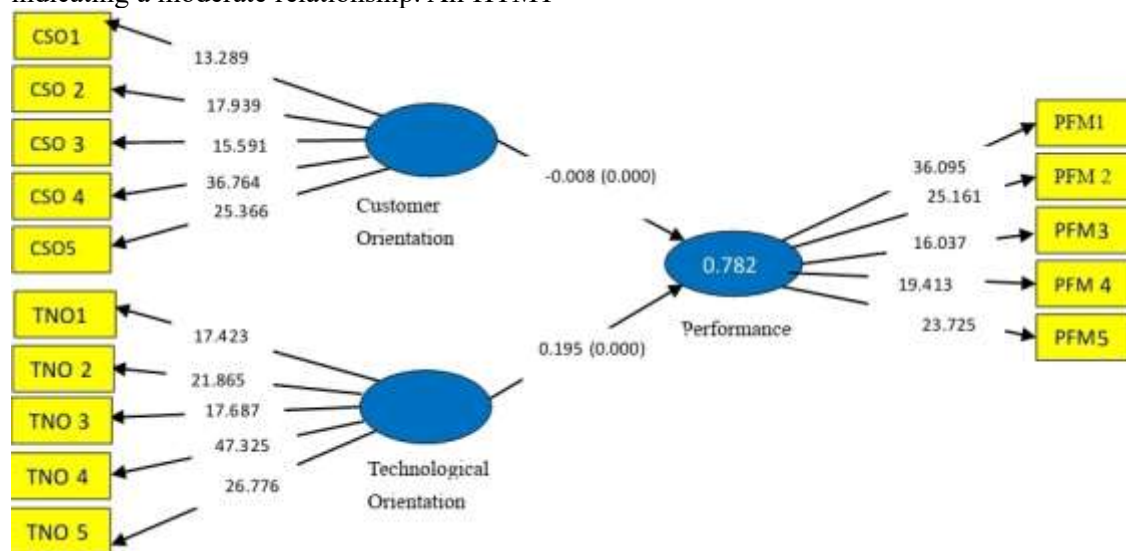


Figure 3: Path Coefficient of the Regression Model

Source: SMART PLS

### Test of Hypotheses

Table 4 presents the path coefficients, T-values, and P-values for the relationships

between customer orientation and performance, and technological orientation and performance.

Table 4: Path Coefficient of the Model

Hypotheses	Path coefficient Beta**	T-Statistics	P-Values	Decision
Customer Orientation -> Performance	-0.008	2.094	<b>0.000</b>	Rejected
Technological Orientation -> Performance	0.195	3.992	<b>0.000</b>	Rejected

Source: SmartPLS Output, 2024

**H<sub>01</sub>:** Customer orientation has no significant effect on the performance of performance of manufacturing firms in Abuja, Nigeria.

The results in Table 4: shows that the coefficient for the effect of customer orientation on performance of manufacturing firms. The beta value of -0.008 with a T-statistic of 2.094 and a p-value of 0.000 which is less than the acceptable 5% significance level show that there is sufficient statistical evidence to reject the null hypothesis one (H<sub>01</sub>). This means that there is a significant negative effect of customer orientation on the performance of manufacturing firms in Abuja, Nigeria.

**H<sub>02</sub>:** Technological orientation has no significant effect on the performance of performance of manufacturing firms in Abuja, Nigeria.

Similarly The results in Table 4 shows that the coefficient for the effect of technological on performance of manufacturing firms in Abuja is 0.195, with a T-statistic of 3.992 and a p-value of 0.000. The result indicates a statistically significant positive effect of technological orientation on performance. Since the p-value is less than the conventional threshold of 0.05, the null hypothesis (H<sub>02</sub>) was rejected, so technological orientation has a significant positive effect on the performance of manufacturing firms in Abuja, Nigeria.

**Table 5: R<sup>2</sup> Summary**

	<b>R Square</b>	<b>R Square Adjusted</b>
<b>Performance</b>	0.782	0.780

**Source: SmartPLS Output, 2024**

The R-square value stood at 0.782 indicating that the variation in performance is explain by strategic orientation dimensions of customer orientation, and technological orientation to the degree of 78%, the remaining 22% variation could be explain by other factors not included in the study. The R-square is said to be substantial according to Hair et al. (2019).

consistent with the result of Thomas (2024) who conducted his study in India and found a significant negative effect of customer satisfaction on performance. It however, contradicts that of Bankole et al. (2022).

## **Discussion of Findings**

### **Customer Orientation and Performance of Manufacturing Firms**

Firstly, the study examines the effect of customer orientation on the performance of manufacturing firms in Abuja, Nigeria. The results show that customer orientation exerts a significant negative effect on the performance of manufacturing firm. This implies that the manufacturing firms over times have not consistently prioritized customer feedback or established systems to regularly collect and analyse it. Additionally, failing to act on the feedback has made these firms not to improve or develop products that aligned with customer needs, thus leading to weaker competitiveness and ultimately lower patronage that affects performance. This finding of this study is

### **Technological Orientation and Performance of Manufacturing Firms**

The findings from the second hypotheses revealed that technological orientation has a significant positive effect on the performance of manufacturing firms in Abuja, Nigeria, implying that prioritizing technological innovation enhances operational efficiency which contributes to new products development that lead to overall firm performance. This-agrees with the findings of Muchiri and Muathe (2024) that have conducted a study earlier in this regard in Kenya. However, it disagrees with the findings of Ogbari et al. (2022) who conducted their study in Nigeria and found an insignificant effect of technological orientation on performance.

## **CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

The study examined the effect of strategic orientation on the performance of manufacturing firms in Abuja, Nigeria. Thus, it is concluded that strategic orientation has a significant effect the performance of manufacturing firms in Abuja, Nigeria.

Based on the findings from the objectives of the study, the following recommendations were made:

- i. Manufacturing firms in Abuja should implement robust customer feedback system for regularly collecting, analyzing and acting on customer feedback; this can be ensured by establishing multi-channel feedback collection method like the social media and focus groups. Also, they should prioritize customer needs by developing products that aligns with their demands, this could be ensured by conducting a market survey using data analytics to identify key market trend.
- ii. Manufacturing firms in Abuja should also continuously invest in cutting-edge technologies, and encourage a company-wide culture that promotes technological experimentation and innovation. This can be achieved through regular training, research and development (R&D) investments, and collaboration with tech partners to stay ahead of industry trends and drive firm performance.

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