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Economic Integration and Entrepreneurship Development in Nigeria

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Abstract

Most sectors in today's market are facing opportunities and challenges due to integration of global economies, which are natural by-product of demand and has driven innovation, competition, and the retention of Favorable conditions in the global market. Larger markets arise naturally from economic integration due to higher productivity. As a result, everyone involved benefit from the growing market and market share. Business enterprises in less developed countries may not be highly competitive domestically, which lead to a decline in their market and product destination, in addition to being disadvantaged internationally. This study examines how the performance of small and medium-sized enterprises is affected by integration of economies otherwise known as trade openness. The performance of small and medium enterprises is studied in conjunction with economic integration. 360 samples were obtained using EPIinfo Statcalc software in three population clusters of 5,268 related SMEs in the study area. SPSS was used to analyze the data using multiple regression analysis. With an observed P value of (0.000), multi-regression analysis yielded a calculated F value of (96.268). This shows that, in the selected case study, economic integration has a favourable and notable impact on the market share performance of enterprises of the selected states in Nigeria.

Keywords: Economic integration, entrepreneurship development, market share and profitability.

1. Introduction

In many countries around the world, the development of business enterprises today depends largely on economic integration. The process of lowering or eliminating trade barriers and coordinating fiscal and monetary policies between countries is called economic integration (Will 2023). It aimed to reduce prices for both producers and consumers, stimulate trade and promote economic expansion. One strategy to reduce poverty and integrate society into the economic system is to encourage enterprises operations. Economic development integration (EDI) is an approach that supports multi-dimensional initiatives and creates a diverse and innovative economy by improving cross-sectoral coordination and optimizing investments from many sources. Federal economic development resources (Cherti & Abdalloh 2018).

Economic development administration (EDA1965); Integration of trade and disintegration of production in Global economy (ITDPGE,1998) posit that, integrating resources for economic development can help stakeholders develop local businesses and industries, leading to job creation and economic diversification. Furthermore, the integration of individual economies into the global economic system means finding a place for these economies in the global production market and the various related flows of resources. Resources as well as their capabilities and potential for specialization. The degree of openness that determines the intensity of economic integration in the global system has

various implications for the total expected benefits and potential costs of the process and the institutional structures it involves.

In the same vein, Schwartz (2022) and Soundararajan (2024) have stressed that, profit is the primary goal of all business executives. Without profits, a business will not be able to survive long term. Therefore, measuring the current and past profitability as well as the future profitability of the project is very important. The central themes of economics are the desire of businesses to achieve the highest economic profits, the theory of profit maximization, and the emphasis on the importance of profits as a measure of efficiency, effectiveness, and growth (MTE, 2021). Also, Kaur and Sing (2012) believed that effective working capital management is an important part of corporate financial management because it directly affects business profits. The integration of economies suggests that larger markets will be a natural outcome as greater output is expected to develop entrepreneurship. This means that all participants will benefit from the market and a larger market share.

Small and medium-sized enterprises in less developed economies are at a disadvantage in the global market and at risk of losing their domestic competitiveness, leading to a decline in market share. However, many studies such as, Ezenta, et al. (2020); Kimura and Lim (2010), have evaluated economic integration, also known as trade openness, to measure the performance of SMEs in developing countries. For example, Hitt (2011) wrote about economic integration and SMEs focusing on trade and technological openness. However, this work aims to evaluate economic integration with the performance of small and medium enterprises. Against this premise; the researcher was led to pose the following research question: How does economic integration influenced the market share performance of entrepreneurship of the selected states in Nigeria? The main aim of this paper is to evaluate the impact of economic integration on the entrepreneurship market share performance in selected states in Nigeria. This research acts as a catalyst to transform the enterprise activities from simple, slow-growing, low-value activities to more efficient activities with higher profit margins, promoted and driven by economic integration that have higher growth prospects.

2. Literature Review

There have been a lot of literature on the economic integration and enterprises development across the globe. Several efforts have been made by researchers to link the relevance of economic integration on enterprises development with a focus on many variables. This study made efforts to assess the literature related to the topic under study: economic integration, entrepreneurship, new products, new market, profitability and SMEs among others.

2.1 Economic Integration

Economic integration is an act of finding a place for individual economy in the global market of production and varied flows based on their resource endowment, specialization capacities, and potentials is the goal of economic integration of individual economies into the global economic system (Bruno, 2017). The degree of economic integration, which determines how deeply an economy integrates into the global system, has a variety of implications for the processes and the institutions' possible costs as well as the anticipated overall benefits. El-Agran (1998) defines economic integration as the establishment of components of coordination and certain collaboration between at least two participating countries, as well as the discriminatory removal of all trade obstacles between them. According to Baldwin and Venables (1995), the new approach to researching economic integration has its origins in the theory of international trade in which imperfect competition play an important role.

Economic integration and trade between countries have been the main drivers of growth for both developed and developing nations. International trade in products, services, capital, and labor has advanced quickly, according to the World Bank (1991). A key factor in motivating domestic producers to reduce costs by implementing new technology and creating new and improved products has been openness to trade, investment, and ideas. Conversely, in many regions, decades of progress have been halted by a strong degree of protection for indigenous industry. The World Trade Organization (WTO) emphasized that by the end of 1994, at least 100 regional agreements had been established, with almost one-third of those agreements formed in the preceding five years. Due to preferential trade agreements (PTAs), the share of PTAs in global trade increased significantly in the 1990s, reaching 42 percent of global trade between 1993 and 1997 (Greather & Olarreagg, 1998). As regional integration agreements have expanded, deepened, and spread over the past few decades, they have presented difficulties for economists in estimating the wide range of potential effects of these trade agreements. It has been argued that the analysis of trade creation and trade diversion is not well-suited to the study and disqualification of recent regional integration agreements because it ignores some important issues including welfares, effect the initial tariffs level, market structure and growth effect (Kose & ERszman, 1998).

2.1.2 Entrepreneurship

Drucker (1985) notes that today, much confusion exists about the proper definition of entrepreneurship. Some observers use the term to refer to all small businesses; others, to all new businesses. In practice, however, a great many well-established businesses engage in highly successful entrepreneurship. The term, then, prefers not to an enterprise's size or age but to a certain kind of activity. At the heart of that activity is innovation: the effort to create purposeful, focused change in an enterprise's economic or social potential." Indeed, this helps lay the foundation for the realization that entrepreneurship is not context specific. Drucker further emphasizes. This defines entrepreneur and entrepreneurship— the entrepreneur always searches for change, responds to it, and exploits it as an opportunity. In another view though relevant to the original principle of entrepreneurship, Montanye (2006) describes entrepreneurship as a factor of production, linked to innovation and risk taking, where entrepreneurial compensations are tied to uncertainty and profits. Deduced from the above, Sharma and Chrismas (1999) identified two clusters of thought on the meaning of entrepreneurship one group focused on the characteristics of the entrepreneurship e. g innovation, growth, uniqueness) while the second group focused on the outcomes of the entrepreneurship (e. g. the creation of value and ventures). In the same perspective with Gartner (1989).

Otokiti (2012) describes entrepreneurship as a process of recognizing and vigorous pursuit of an opportunity. He (Otokiti, 2012) explained that entrepreneurship is the process of new venture, innovative idea, opportunities identification, the recognition and pursuit of these opportunities. Considering the variances in the above definitions, European Commission (2013) tends to give a more harmonized definition which capture all the above. Accordingly, European Commission (2013) defines entrepreneurship as an individual's ability to turn ideas into action for a reward. In this sense, entrepreneurship involves creativity, innovation and risk taking, as well as the ability to plan and manage projects in order to add value for a reward. This definition supports everyone in day-to-day life at home and in society, makes employees more aware of the context of their work and better able to seize opportunities, and provides a foundation for entrepreneur establishing a social and commercial activity.

The European Commission (2013) definition will be adopted. Therefore, entrepreneurship is the actual process of creating something new with value by

devoting the necessary time and resources for a reward. It also means the pursuit of lucrative opportunities by enterprising individuals which involves creating new systems, resources, or processes to produce new goods or services, and or to serve new markets with the intention of delivering value for rewards. Entrepreneurship development on the other hands is the process of enhancing entrepreneurial skills and knowledge through structured training and institution-building programmes. It was meant for the enlargement of entrepreneurs to speed up the pace at which new ventures are created. The focus is on the individual who wishes to start or expand a business, with concentration on growth potential and innovation.

2.1.3 Small and Medium Enterprises

There is no universally accepted definition of SMEs (Beyene, 2002). Many of the definitions have considered the size as the names suggest: Micro, Small and Medium. Others have considered the number of staff and cost of Assets among others. Hashim (2000), Opined that MSMEs are defined by several factors and criteria: location, size and structure, organization, members of employees, sales volumes, worth of assets, and ownership through innovation and technology.

In South Africa, the term Small, Medium and Micro Enterprises (SMME) is used while recently in Nigeria, the term captured: Micro from what used to be SME now Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSME). Micro, Small and Medium Enterprise (2012) defines micro-enterprise as those enterprises whose total asset excluding land and building is less than 5 million Naira with a workforce not exceeding 10 employees. Small Enterprises as those enterprises whose total assets excluding land and Building are above 5 million naira but not exceeding 49 employees. While the Medium enterprise on the other hand is those whose total assets excluding land and building are above 50 million Naira but not exceeding 500 million naira with a total workforce of 50 to 200 and above.

Central Bank of Nigeria (2012), Defined Small Scale business enterprises as having an annual turnover not exceeding 500, 000 naira but, many small businesses in Nigeria had a capital base of less than 100,000 naira. This was contained in its monetary policy circular No 22 of 1988, but a typical small business in Nigeria has less capital investment. There is therefore needed to redefine Small Businesses in Nigeria. The Originator of the Business according to Adeyemi (2014) often plays the double role of the owners as well as the responsibility of planning, directing, and coordinating the activities that lead to the creation of production of business value. Central Bank of Nigeria (2012) envisaged a conflictive position in the classification system and opines that the employment-based classification will take precedence. In the instance of an enterprise with an asset worth 52 million naira with 49 employees, the enterprise shall be a small enterprise.

2.1.4 Profitability

The profitability of an organization is an important financial indicator to reflect the efficiency of the organization and the owners' / managers' ability to increase sales while keeping the variable costs down. The net profit or income is an indicator of the firm's profitable operations, which is the surplus of total revenues over total expenses during the accounting year. The choice of profitability as a measure of financial performance in this research is because, profitability is an important financial indicator that reflects the efficiency of the organization and the owners/managers' ability to increase sales while keeping the variable costs down as affirmed (Davis, Schoorman, Mayer & Tan 2000).

Adudu, et al. (2020) stated that profitability means the ability of a business to make a profit and remain sustainable. It indicates and measures the success of the business. The net profit or income is an indicator of the firm's profitable operations, which is the surplus of

total revenues over total expenses during the accounting year. The firm may be unprofitable if the total expenses are more than the total revenues, known as a net loss. Profit margin, return on assets, return on equity, return on investment, and return on sales are the common measures of financial profitability. Profitability is the most important measure of the success of the business. A business that is not profitable may not survive while, a highly profitable business can reward its owners with large returns on their investment (Kithiil, 2008). Profitability measures the net of revenue and expense greater than revenue is money generated from the activities of the business, while expenses are the expenditure incurred in the process of carrying out the activities of the business. Operating profit is a measure of a company's earning power from its ongoing operations, equal to earnings before the deduction of interest and taxes.

In addition, profitability is thus the primary goal of all business ventures. Without profitability, the business will not survive in the long run. So, measuring current and past profitability and projecting future profitability is very important. Mathur (2002) stated that measures of profitability include return on equity(ROE), determined by taking net income divided by average shareholding equity and return on Asset(RoA), determined by taking the company's income divided by the average total asset. Profitability has been greatly emphasized by many economists. Keat and Young (2009) maintained that central themes in economies are firms' striving to attain the highest economic profit, the profit maximization theory and to emphasize the significance of profitability as a measure of performance, efficiency, and growth. Kaur and Sing (2012) equally opined that efficient management of working capital is an important component of corporate financial management because it directly affects the profitability of the firms.

2.1.5 New Products and new market

Market share is said to be a key indicator of market competitiveness, i.e., how well a firm is doing against its competitors. Firms with market shares below a certain level may not be viable. Similarly, within a firm's product line, market share trends for individual products are considered early indicators of future opportunities or problems (Farris, Neil, Phillip & David 2010)). Market share competition drives companies to support climate change policies to impose costs on domestic competitors (Kennard 2020). Research has also shown that market share is a desired asset among competing firms (Scott & Kesten 2007). Market share represents the percentage of an industry, or a market's total sales that is earned by a particular company over a specified time (Frank & Albert, 2019). Market share is calculated by taking the company's sales over the period and dividing it by the total sales of the industry over the same period (Market share is the percent of total sales in an industry generated by a particular company. Market share is calculated by taking the company's sales over the period and dividing it by the total sales of the industry over the same period. This metric is used to give a general idea of the size of a company in relation to its market and its competitors.

The market leader in an industry is the company with the largest market share. Market share is said to be a key indicator of market competitiveness, i.e., how well a firm is doing against its competitors. Firms with market shares below a certain level may not be viable. Similarly, within a firm's product line, market share trends for individual products are considered early indicators of future opportunities or problems (Farris, Neil, Phillip & David 2010)). Market share competition drives companies to support climate change policies with a view to imposing costs on domestic competitors (Kennard, 2020). Research has also shown that market share is a desired asset among competing firms (Scott & Kesten, 2007)

The new products on the other hands are the company needs a new marketing, and in which the substantial changes are conveyed but, excludes any changes that may require simple promotion. The new product development can be categorized into four groups: Major innovations, products improvement, products addition and product repositioned (Kim, Park and Sawng, 2008). In another definition of categorizing new product development has suggested by Booz, Allen and Hamilton (2008) are generation of new product idea, screening and evaluation of idea, concept development and testing, marketing strategy, business strategy, product development and market (Chunawella, 2008)

2.2 Theoretical Reviews

In an attempt to explain the relevance of integration of world economy theories that inform the theoretical background of the research subject were reviewed. The theory reviewed is dependency theory:

2.2.1 Dependency theory

The dependency theory became popular in the 1960s as a response to research by Raul Prebatch. Prebisch found that increases in the wealth of the richer nations appeared to be at the expense of the poorer ones(Ferraro, 2008). Dependency theory is an approach to understanding economic underdevelopment that emphasizes the putative constraints imposed by the global political and economic order of the Northern world at the expense of the Southern world. It was first proposed in the late 1950s by the Argentine Economist and Statesman Raúl Prebisch. Dependency theory gained prominence in the 1960s and 1970s. In its extreme form, dependency theory is based on a Marxist view of the world, which sees globalization in terms of the spread of market capitalism, and the exploitation of cheap labour and resources in return for the obsolete technologies of the developed world. The dominant view of dependency theorists is that there is a dominant world capitalist system that relies on a division of labour between the rich ‘core’ countries and poor ‘peripheral’ countries.

Over time, the core countries exploited their dominance over an increasingly marginalized periphery. Dependency theory advocated an inward-looking approach to development and an increased role for the state in terms of imposing barriers to trade, making inward investment difficult and promoting the nationalization of key industries. Although still a popular theory in history and sociology, dependency theory has disappeared from the mainstream of economic theory since the collapse of Communism in the early 1990s. The considerable inefficiencies associated with state involvement in the economy and the growth of corruption, have been dramatically exposed in countries that have followed this view of development, most notably a small number of African economies (Ferraro, 2008).

Despite the intellectual disagreement among dependency theorists, there remains some basic agreement among them, namely the view that the world is divided into two parts, the centre-industrialized countries and the periphery/ underdeveloped countries and that this structure also exists within a state, while they do not employ the use of the term centre/periphery, their approach to the structure of the international system remains the same (Namkong,1999). They argued that trade between the centre and periphery is characterized by unequal exchange, which has resulted in the underdevelopment of the periphery. They agreed that underdevelopment in the third-world countries can be linked to the expansion of the world capitalist system.

This theory provides a framework for understanding the reason for the divergence in the development level between wealthier and poorer nations. It helps to analyze the widening inequalities between developed, developing, and underdeveloped countries around

the world. This invariably shows the operational advantages and disadvantages businesses faced in the environment. Many local industries in the developing world struggle to compete due to trade openness, export diversification, and technological advancement which directly and indirectly affect business operations and performances around the globe.

According to Friedman and Wayne (1977), the dependency theory represents an advanced over-evolutionary theory of development and underdevelopment. It has confronted serious difficulties in attempting to analyze social relationships based on geographical observations and in attempting to construct a model of the world capitalist system. It is argued that these difficulties are rooted in four basic aspects of dependency theory. The critics of the theory relate to the fact that: Some countries which have close links with the North have recently shown economic development for example Taiwan, South Korea, and Brazil. Some Countries such as North Korea, Cuba, China, and Tanzania have tried to break off the link with the North but, they have not succeeded since they still depend on the North in one way or another. It is difficult for small countries to raise enough investment capital on their own to break off the link with the North. Some Colonized Countries have developed-India-colonized-now developed. Some Countries which were never Colonized lack infrastructure and are very underdeveloped-Afghanistan/Ethiopia.

3. Methodology

This work adopted a cross-sectional survey research design. A sample of 360 respondents were drawn from the population of the study using Taro Yamane. The questionnaire and interview were used as instrument for data collection. 360 copies of questionnaires distributed to the selected SMEs. Descriptive and inferential statistics were used using multiple regression Analysis and thematic analysis were adopted to analyze group discussion of the interview.

4. Data Analysis and Discussion of Findings

4.1 Economic Integration and Entrepreneurship Development

Table 2:
Model Summaryb

Model	R	R-Square	Adjusted R-Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	Durbin-Watson
1	.556a	.309	.300	.43257	1.824

Predictors: (Constant), Increasing Product Demand, Inflow of FDI, Trade Tariffs, High Competition
b. Dependent Variable: Market share
Source: Authors' Computation (2024)

Table 2 the model summary revealed a multiple regression between the proxy of economic integration on the market share of small-scale businesses in North central Nigeria. Table 2 revealed an R-value of 0.556 and R^2 value of 0.309. and the standard error indicated a value of 0.4357. The model also revealed a Durbin Watson value of 1.824 indicating the absence of multi-collinearity. The R-value indicates that the increasing product demand, inflow of FDI, Trade Tariffs and high competitions all representing economic Integration has effect on market share of small-scaled businesses. This implies that a unit increase in any of the proxy would amount to 43% increase in Market share. The remaining 57% is variables not captured by this research work.

Table 3: ANOVA[a]

Model		Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	27.266	4	6.817	36.429	.000[b]
	Residual	61.001	326	.187		
	Total	88.267	330			

a. Dependent Variable: market share

b. Predictors: (Constant), Increasing Product Demand, Inflow of FDI, Trade Tariffs, High Competition

Source: Authors' Computation (2024)

Table 3 presents the results of an analysis of variance (ANOVA) for the dependent variable "market share" with four predictors: "Increase Product Demand," "Inflow of FDI," Trade tariffs," and "High competition." The total variability explained by the regression model is 27.266. The model has 4 degrees of freedom, indicating the number of predictors. The mean square is calculated by dividing the sum of squares by the degree of freedom. Here, it is 6.817. The F-value is a ratio of the mean square regression to the mean square residual. In this case, it is 36.429. The significance value (p-value) measures the statistical significance of the F-value. The significance level is denoted as "b" and is extremely low (".000"), indicating a highly significant relationship between the predictors and the dependent variable. The unexplained variability or error remaining after accounting for the regression model is 61.001. The residual degree of freedom is 326, which is the total number of observations minus the degrees of freedom in the regression model. The mean square is calculated by dividing the sum of squares by the degree of freedom. Here, it is 0.187. The total variability in the dependent variable is 88.267.

The ANOVA table indicates that the regression model, consisting of the predictors "Increased Product Demand," "Inflow of FDI," "Trade Tariff," and "High Competition," significantly explains the variability in the dependent variable "market share." The predictors collectively contribute to the model's ability to predict market share, as indicated by the low p-value (".000") in the regression section. The residual section shows the remaining unexplained variability or error.

Table 4:Coefficients[a]

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients		
		B	Std. Error	Beta	T	Sig.
1	(Constant)	2.233	.198		11.260	.000
	Trade tariffs	-.021	.034	-.032	-.627	.531
	High Competition	.270	.042	.345	6.466	.000
	Inflow of FDI	.170	.033	.270	5.118	.000
	Increasing Product Demand	.078	.032	.120	2.448	.015

a. Dependent Variable: market share

Source: Authors' Computation (2024)

Table 4 provides the coefficients for the regression model with the dependent variable "market share" and the predictors "Trade tariffs," "high competition," "inflow of FDI," and "Increasing Product Demand." The constant term in the regression equation is 2.233. The standard error associated with the constant term is 0.198. The t-value measures the significance of 11.260. The significance level (p-value) for the constant term is extremely low (".000"), indicating that it is statistically significant. Trade Tariffs: unstandardized Coefficient (B): The unstandardized coefficient for the "Trade Tariffs" predictor is -0.021. Standard Error: the standard error associated with the "trade tariffs" coefficient is 0.034.

Standardized Coefficient (Beta): the standardized coefficient represents the effect of the predictor when the variables are standardized. Here, it is -0.032 the t-value: The t-value for the "Integration of Technology" predictor is -0.627. Significance (Sig.): The p-value for the "Economic Integration" predictor is 0.531, which is not statistically significant at a conventional significance level (e.g., 0.05).

High Competition: Unstandardized Coefficient (B): the unstandardized coefficient for the "High competition" predictor is 0.270. Standard Error: the standard error associated with the "High competition" coefficient is 0.042. Standardized Coefficient (Beta): the standardized coefficient for "High competition" is 0.345. The t-value: the t-value for the "Compatibility" predictor is 6.466. The significance (Sig.): the p-value for the "High competition" predictor is extremely low (".000"), indicating that it is statistically significant. In addition, Inflow of FDI: Unstandardized Coefficient (B): the unstandardized coefficient for the "foreign direct investment" predictor is 0.170. Standard Error: the standard error associated with the "FDI" coefficient is 0.033. Standardized Coefficient (Beta): the standardized coefficient for "FDI" is 0.270. The t-value: The t-value for the "FDI" predictor is 5.118. The Significance (Sig.): The p-value for the "FDI" predictor is 0.000, indicating that it is statistically significant.

Increasing Product Demand: Unstandardized Coefficient (B): the unstandardized coefficient for the "FDI" predictor is -0.078. Standard Error: the standard error associated with the "FDI" coefficient is 0.032. Standardized Coefficient (Beta): the standardized coefficient for "FDI" is 0.120 The t-value: The t-value for the "FDI" predictor is 2.448. And the Significance (Sig.): The p-value for the "FDI" predictor is 0.15, which is not statistically significant. The coefficients provide information about the relationships between the predictors and the dependent variable. The "Trade tariffs" and "" predictors statistically have no significant positive relationships with "market share." The constant term is also statistically significant. However, the "high competition" predictor appears to have low statistically significant relationships with "Market share" based on their p. In all therefore the null hypothesis is rejected, and the researcher concluded economic integration affects market share of SMEs in the study area based on the level of significance (P=0.000). In addition, figures 4.4 and 4.5 revealed the linearity and the normality of the regression data.

4.2 Discussion of Findings

This section presents the findings of the study are: The work revealed the importance of economic integration on Market Share of businesses in the selected states in North-central Nigeria. The multi-regression analysis shows extremely low (0.000). This implies that economic integration has a positive and significant effect Market share of business in the selected case study. It shows foreign direct investment, increased product demand, trade tariff and high competition all explained market. This finding was in line with Krugman (1991) who wrote on increasing return and economic geography. The work revealed that, by precluding inter-continental trade, an intra-continental integration agreement would produce larger welfare gains in the continent. Also, World Bank (1991) notes that when international flows of goods and services, capital; labour and technology have expanded quality, the pace of economic advancement has been rapid. Openness to trade, investment and ideas has been critical in encouraging domestic producers to cut costs by introducing new technologies and developing new and better products. A high level of protection for domestic industry, conversely has held development for decades in many places.

Furthermore, the idea that economic integration leads to enterprise performance among SMEs was expressed by the participants in the interview. For instance, participant PAT2 opined thus:

"Yes, Integration of technology to the business operations does have a great impact on the overall operations of the business. The adoption of technology has eased the production and service delivery of the product across the state and beyond. The technology available around the world has made business operations more sophisticated for business owners around the globe".

Economic integration and business development in Nigeria have significant implications for the country's growth and development. Enterprise has been found to have a positive and significant effect on economic growth in developing countries like Nigeria: However, Nigeria faces challenges such as low state capacity, limited-service delivery, insecurity, and violence, which hinder economic integration and entrepreneurship opportunities. The country's weak job creation and entrepreneurial prospects limit opportunities for its citizens, leading to high poverty rates and spatial inequality. The African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) aims to enhance Africa's competitiveness by establishing a single continental market for goods and services, promoting free movement of capital, and easing trade barriers. This initiative could boost productivity, increase market efficiency, reduce business costs, and enhance trade and investment flows in Africa.

5. Conclusion and Recommendation

This study examined the effects of economic integration on the performance enterprises of selected States Nigeria. The study adopted both qualitative and quantitative approaches to determine the aggregate components that influenced the performance of enterprises. The independent variables are technology innovation, and economic integration, which were tested against performance variables (profitability, market share and new product). On the other hand, the qualitative approach used focus group discussions which allows more themes, and sub-themes (business diversification, business expansion, competitive edge). Having assessed all variables considered, the study therefore concluded that, integration of interdependent economies on the performance of enterprises in the selected states in Nigeria has significant impact.

Based on the findings and conclusions drawn from the study, business enterprises should be aggressive in transaction of business beyond the geographical location through export, foreign direct investment, and diversification of their operations to attain more market destinations both abroad and overseas and concerted effort to training and re-training the employees on the adoption of innovative technology in the operations of enterprises in the selected State and beyond.

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