Organizational Social Asset and Firm Competitiveness in the Nigerian Telecommunication Sector

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Abstract

The increased level of competitiveness amongst firms requires incisive and strategic organizational attempts at unveiling all such organizational based actions and behaviours that impede goals. In view of this, the value configuration of organization referred as social asset (Banga, 2006) is considered as strategic organizational strength for competitiveness and this survey had systematically examined the influence of social assets like trust, reciprocity and cohesiveness and their influence on firm competitiveness. Through a cross-section survey approach the study generated data and analysed. A strong link was found to exist between social assets and firm competitiveness, thus, the imperative need for social asset development has been stressed, as managerial actions at encouraging social relations that supports positive organizational climate and should be considered strategic.

Key Words: Trust, Reciprocity, Cohesiveness, Social Asset, Firm Competitiveness.

Introduction

The place of commonly cherished values, norms and beliefs as cultural configurations have been underscored both in antiquated and contemporary discourse (Kotter and Heskett, 1992; Dennison and Mishra,1995; Waldman et al, 2001; Jaja, 2006; Athena & Maria, 2006; Jogulu, 2010; Schimmoeller, 2010). The avowed acclamation given to these elements cut across formal and informal societal make-ups. Ahiauzu (2006) had an empirical position on this subject resulting from his study on trade unionism amongst African workers. The author had found that the poor participational level resulted from lack of the cherished social bonding reminiscent in alien values that especially rob-off on respect and trust. This simply suggest that in a every social grouping or affiliation, the common denominator that tend to define the bonding essence and perhaps sustainability is the underlying relational attributes that are premised on generally acceptable standards of community.

These underlying attributes have been described by Fome, (2006) as social assets which are though transcendental are recipes for group or relational sustainability. In Banga (2008) he espoused that, they need not be felt as they are not tangibles but they are intangibles that a inevitably creates the system confidence and long term reliance. Social asset is an instantiated network of social relations (Fukuyama, 1999) characterized by trust, honesty, reciprocity, cohesiveness, commitment to promise, reliable performance of duties, esprit de corpse, civil society and value creation and value diversity. All these relational elements have the capability of enthroning some mutual benefits either for an individual or for a group (Putman, 1995; Ladd, 1998; Coleman, 1999; Arrow, 1999; Knack and Keefer, 1997). Fukuyama (1999) warned that not all instantiated norms constitute social asset.

For instance, the political norms of Nigerian political parties characterized by trust amongst immediate caucus members and dichotomies in dealing with everyone else outside does truly portray social asset. Coleman (1988) argued that social asset under-produces in private agents interacting in the markets and Dasgupta (1997) took a more wholistic understanding of it when he opined that it is a private product pervaded by positive and negative externalities. Drawing from the theory of Puritanism described by Max Weber, Dasgupta (1997) emphasized that the potential of co-operation diffuses beyond immediate group sharing the Puritan norms; hence moral treatment to all and not just to family members. Negative externalities exist because Fukuyama (1999) argued that many groups achieve internal cohesion at the expense of outsiders, who may be perceived with suspicion, hostility, or outright hatred.

Indeed, there is a growing concern for the health of firms in relation to complex and dynamic characteristics of the business environment. This requires an incisive search for work place variables that influence successful implementation of strategies and conduct of operations aimed at goal attainment. The quest to have functional organizations that meets all stakeholder needs is widely noted in literature with obvious variegation on conceptualization and evolving theories. We are however concerned in this study with finding the nature of relationship that exists between the concept of social asset and organizational competitiveness. With the acceptance of the concept of social asset increasing by the day, in the private sector, firms may be willing to explore it as a potential tool for competitiveness especially in the light of the open market economic strategies of governments. Again, while many work place managers hear and talk about social asset they are yet to come to terms with the dimensional aspects of the concept that can importantly influence the attainment of their sought after goals.

In our pilot study preceeding this study, we have found that there are behavioural tendencies that are premised on cherished values of the people. The general attachment to organization was observed to have largely resulted from the value configuration and orientation that characterizes the administrative and operational processes of the organization. These practices that are value oriented amplify a platform for commitment. We are also aware of a handful of research efforts that links organizational social asset with effective informal group formation and survival of cottage business (Takome, 2010; Isoje, 2011; Barimala, 2011; Enengesi, 2012; Afikuyomi, 2012). All these efforts notwithstanding, we are mindful of the impact of omnibus claim in terms of result that would amount to undermining the contextual variegation that is associated with different analytical levels. We are also mindful of the use of empirical referents which have also been varied therefore we rely on common dimension that expresses the social asset phenomena in this study. In other words this study investigates organizational social assets like trust, reciprocity and cohesiveness as a means of competitiveness in the telecommunication industry of Nigeria.

H_1: Trust as a dimension of social asset does relate significantly with organizational competitiveness.

H_2: Reciprocity as a dimension of social asset does relate significantly with organizational competitiveness.

H_3: Cohesiveness as a dimension of social asset does relate significantly with organizational competitiveness.

Theoretical Underpinning

In social asset research, there have been studies exploring the links between social relation practices dimensions and communities (Fukuyana, 1995; Narayan and Pritcheff, 1997; Amato, 1998). There are also in literature studies that relate social asset and democratic institutions effectiveness. There is however a dearth of such works that links it specifically with business performance though the works of Putman (2002) successfully correlates social asset with economic performance with specific operationalization of economic indicators and a national level of analysis. There is also a general belief that measurement validity of the construct was yet to be empirically described thereby making it difficult for its operationalization and perhaps do not have a scholastic reinforcement on its dimensions. Nonetheless, Wendy and Hughes (2002) remarked on its emergence and stressed the importance of test and re-test to validate the many dimensions to give both conceptual and empirical understanding of the concept. Further, the works of Paxton (1999), Stone (2001) and Wendy and Hughes (2002) created required in-road on the measurability debate, providing the appropriate measures and dimensions. The work of Portes (1998) explored descriptively the link between social asset and performance but his choice of dimension was still theoretical as against the empirical dimension which Wendy and Hughes (2002) outlined in their study. However, the outcome of their work was essentially heuristic and taken us further from mere conceptualization to empiricism.

The assumption here is that there will be a positive effect on competitiveness through the strengthened relationship that breeds a conducive work setting for employees. In same vein, there is the belief that once such an atmosphere is created, it makes management, leadership and supervision a lot easier for those who undertake such roles. (Costa (2002), Wendy and Hughes (2002), Cornes (2004), Banga (2006) works revealed empirically and validate social asset dimensions as trust, reciprocity and cohesiveness whereas Cornes' (2004) work, in addition, correlated them with commitment amongst co-workers.

Trust

Without trust people may not co-operate and/or collaborate (Anderson and Weitz, 1989) for communication is critical to the administration of trust (Mishra et al, 2008). Some of the earliest works on trust (e.g.; Dwyer et al, 1987Morgan and Hunt, 1994) and recent ones (e.g.; Chris and Graham, 2007) considered it as the ultimate glue that holds group members together over the long hauls. Trust is the willingness to rely on an exchange partner in whom one has confidence (Morgan and Hunt, 1994); a rational choice based on recognizing the motivation of others (Kramer, 1999). It requires honesty, benevolence, brother-hood, sharing of opinions, less conflicts, and focus on common goals amongst the parties involved. The undertone rests on the partners' belief of future gratification of their needs by the actions of other parties (Anderson and Weitz, 1989) and so, each party must have confidence in the other partner's reliability and integrity. With this, trust is social software that relies on Robert Metcalfe's network effects to deliver maximum values (Cook, 2008) through reliability, openness, competence and concern (Mishra, 1996). Once trust is established, selfishness and superficiality are expected to disappear to permit parties achieve what they would have rarely achieved if they go solo (Anderson and Narus, 1990). Each party stands by his words, will not do anything that negates the interest of other members (Geyskens and Steenkamp, 1995), more emotionally involved and less consciously does cost-benefit analysis of relationship (Wetzls et al, 1998).

Callaghan (1995) noted that trust amongst people of same work group determine the extent to which they rely on one another in terms of integrity of the promise offered by members of the group. Gronoros (1995) strongly observed that positive work experiences amongst work members in previous circumstance and frequent interactions engender trust with expected positive outcome. Trust is treated as a phenomenal experience that results to some established positive organizational outcomes (Olotu, 2008) though its effects on positive reinforcement incentives in social relations appear to be largely validated. La Porta et al (1997) in their study found a strong correlation between trust and institutional efficiency. In his work Hellwell (1996) showed the converse and argued that in some countries, trust may have a negative impact on growth. Even though this has been empirically reinforced further, it still raises underlying questions as to what ways trust affects the very essence of developing social asset for the long-term organizational gains. We are however concerned with the non-organizational performance focus of such works in the trust survey and their choice of level of analysis. In order to affirm the influence of trust as a dimension of social asset on competitiveness we hypothesized thus;

H_1: Trust as a dimension of social does relate significantly with firm competitiveness.

Reciprocity

Reciprocity as an expression of social asset is scarcely treated in the literature but it has been well emphasized and documented in the measurability debate sparked off by Woolcock (2000) and Wendy and Hughes (2002). Stone's (2000) framework on measuring social asset made an assertive position for reciprocity as he believed that within the informal analytical level, reciprocity is a primary bonding element. It was further stressed that the quality structure of social asset is reinforced with the level to which group members expect in returns one thing for another, hence rub my back and I rub yours. Every long-term relationship allows give and take or granting of favours in exchange for similar treatment in future (Chris and Graham, 2007). Stronger social bonds increase each party's commitment to the common goal (Jobber and Fahy, 2006; Yim et al, 2008) and unify work groups in a structural manner (Wilson, 1995) to ensure social interaction networks, closeness, friendship, satisfaction and ultimately appeals to member's affection, sense of belonging and pleasurable behaviour (Sin et al, 2002).

Implicit is the fact that reciprocity as a social occurrence or practice lead to some expected outcomes. Funsterbeg and Hughes (1995) in their study which was conducted at the earlier stated informal level strongly correlate reciprocity with family co-operation.

Also Amato (1998) unarguably closed ranks with reciprocity creating conduciveness and group confidence at the generalized realm were abinito loosed network that could trigger disbelief among group members. However, at the institutional level, which is the third classified realm in the works of Funsterberg and Hughes (1995), ample scholarships are yet to correlate reciprocity with overall business performance. Olotu (2008) attempted to correlate it with enterprise performance and found a strong correlation relating to such marketing metrics as cost reduction, market share and customer retention. Be that as it may, such a univariate or functional measurement of performance is not expected to present or capture the link between the concept and the overall functioning of firms therefore we hypothesized as follows:

H_2: Reciprocity as a dimension of social asset does relate significantly with firm competitiveness.

Cohesiveness

Villarel (2004); Natashi, (2009); Yole and Ruona (2007); Merana, et al (2011) have theorized that cohesiveness of work members enhances the bridging capabilities of social asset. This suggests that work groups that are largely cohesive from inception procure the ability to have multi-characteristic that often tends to be their source of strength. For Mervis (2011), group cohesiveness and performance correlate on accounts that problems are commonly shared and solved in same vein. Novel approaches to work processes are created due to collaboration and cooperation among all work members who see themselves as one family. Brainstorming and diversity of opinions, knowledge and backgrounds allow for a thorough airing and assessment of alternatives. When a workforce capitalizes on commonly shared values and workplace norms, Ramsey (2009) argued that it provides the leverage for innovative practices while at same time ensuring all-member commitment to change processes that will see through novel actions. According to Ndadaye (2009) the cohesiveness debate should be considered pervasive as it is required across all levels and functions as an asset that lessen the managerial burden of coordinating and supervision as it were. A cohesive workplace often thinks less of conflicts according to Ruona (2010), since there is characteristic oneness and equitable relational attitude amongst all members. In a cohesive circumstance, Manjole (2012) had insisted that the general organizational climate will permit idea exchange and knowledge transfer practice that ensure planned approaches to work operations thereby improving in workflow and timely customer service delivery and efficiently. From the foregoing positions offered, we hypothesise that;

Ho_3: Cohesiveness as a dimension of social asset does relate significantly with firm competitiveness.

Organizational Competitiveness

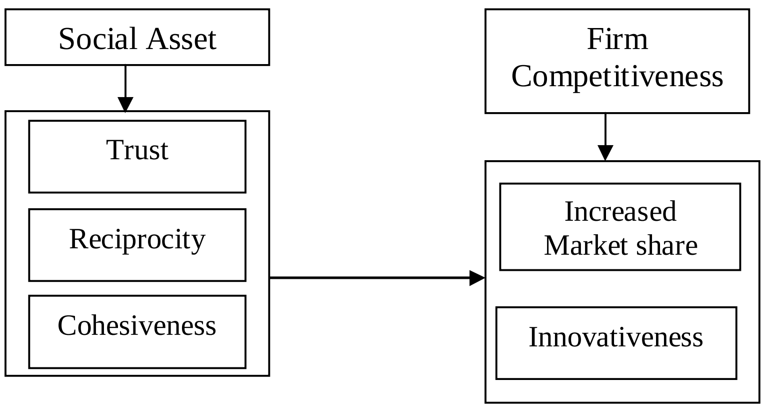
Competitiveness has dominated the strategic horizon of organizations especially in the light of contemporary turbulence and complexities that characterize the environment of business. Monsaya (2011) believed that more than ever before, globalization has changed the way business is conducted and creating linkages that makes product and services readily available to customers. These and many others have threatened organizational survival and continued sustainability therefore competitiveness.

Barney (2001) described competitiveness as a multidimensional and relative concept. This simply means that it changes with time and context. Competitive ability refers to these characteristics that permit a firm to compete efficiently and amplifying the urge to compete. Djakamon and Hoekman (1998) noted that it indicates the capabilities of a firm to successfully compete within its sector. Competitiveness broadens the capacity to maintain and improve on the organization position in its market. Apart from the process approach to competitiveness that seek to recognize all work process as cumulative competitive component, Narayan (2007) espoused on the organizational outcomes of competitiveness but also noted that it thrives under a perceived and concrete climate which promote the involvement and commitment of all organizational managers. Indeed Harrison (2010) argued that in the wake of turbulent global economic down turn, organizational operators should behaviourally and attitudinal ensure that employees and other stakeholder alike rely on their ethnical observance and steadfastness to values that promotes confidence. The author further noted that the resilience of firms for competitiveness can only be sustained through a willing workforce that support change efforts and having the robust competencies for implementing tasks.

While the aforementioned remains imperative in competitiveness Kamblampti (2006) is of the strong view that competitiveness primarily ensures renewed approaches to getting things done and ultimately bring about new products.

In other words, it offers the incentive for efficiency and innovation. Ricupers (2004) argued that competition compels firms to explore new ways to increase their efficiency by extending their international reach to new markets. All the same, these plausible outcomes notwithstanding, Rao (2001) observes that competitiveness is not merely a question of having expanded market through new product offers and improved technological process, rather there are many factors ranging from macroeconomic, strategic, institutional to behavioural that augment the potentials of competitiveness. As noted elsewhere, Banga (2008) had extensively argued that the aggregate transcendental action and behaviours at work that constitutes social asset for work organizations are vital for organizational positioning within their markets therefore competitiveness which we are considering in terms of enhanced market share and the extent of innovativeness that is targeted at value creation across all work processes, new products and service delivery.

Figure 1: Conceptual Framework showing the Relationship between Social Asset and Firm Competitiveness



Data Collection and Operational Measurement

The data for the study were collated primarily through the use of the questionnaire, which according to Osuala (1998), helps to generate quantitative data where the researcher is inclined to a positive approach for conducting research. They were handed directly to the core employees of the three leading telecommunications firms operating in Port Harcourt through stratified random sampling approach. The sample was drawn from a population, which aptly describes their nominal rolls obtained from their Personnel and Human Resource units. The population which has 380 core employees gave a sample size of 191 as prescribed using Krejcie and Morgan (1970) sample size table.

The measurement scale used was similar to that of Wendy and Hughes (2002). A 16 item questionnaire was constructed, subjects' responses measured on a 5 point Likert scale (with 5 indicating strongly agree and 1 – strongly disagree) and factor-loaded to measure the relationships between the observed dimensions of dependent variables and independent variables. An overall score for each construct was obtained by averaging the response to the appropriate item.

Validity and Reliability

The validity and reliability of constructs were tested to assess the accuracy of their measurement power. Validity of the variables was already confirmed in previous studies relating to firm competitiveness (O' Sullivan and Abela, 2007; Wang et al, 2005) but we reconfirmed their applicability by taking up a pilot survey of 28 subjects, whereupon the questionnaire was tested to correct ambiguities of concepts before the actual survey. The reliability of constructs was measured by ensuring all respondents answered the same questions and scientifically by Cronbach Alpha (α).

The reliability assessment of trust, reciprocity, and cohesiveness and competitiveness stood at 0.76; 0.81 and 0.74 respectively. These results are adequate, according to Nunnally's (1978), benchmark of 0.7.

Confirmatory Test

Table 1 shows exploratory factor analysis used to explore the common variance – covariance characteristics of the three dimension of the construct. This identified core factors that represent the relationship amongst the variables. Principal component analysis with eigenvalue, greater than one was used to extract factors and varimax rotation was used to facilitate the factor matrix. The Bartlett Test of sphericity and the Kaiser –Meyer – Olkin (KMO) were used to validate the use of factor analysis (see table 1).

The set of five practices that represent trust dimension all have factor loadings above 0.63. The KMO measure was 0.907 and the factor accounted for more than 51 percent of the variance in the data, indicating that it was sufficient to represent the data. In the case of reciprocity the five practices that represent the construct have factor loading above 0.53. The KMO measure was 0.838 and the factor accounted for 56 percent of the variance in the data which is also an indication of its sufficiency in giving meaning to the data. For cohesiveness, six practices that represent diversity have factor loadings all above 0.5. The KMO measure was 0.802 and the factor accounted for 63 percent of the variance in the data, indicating that it was sufficient to represent the data for the construct.

Further the set of practices that represent competitiveness all have factor loading 0.59. the KMO measures was 0.818 the factor accounted for more than 53 percent of the variance in the data, which implies that it was sufficient to represent the data. The implication of the exploratory factor analysis result is that, while it is important to identify and understand the influence of individual practices used to assess trust, reciprocity and cohesiveness it is also critical to understand how they all correlate to influence competitiveness of organization. For example reduced trust level among work groups may necessarily affect the level to which cohesiveness among different members is cherished, therefore the interface between these should be underscored. Knowledge of the interaction among the practices can be a variable diagnostic tool in addressing the ineffectiveness of each of the dimensions.

Results

The mean responses for social asset dimensions and the corresponding business performance dimensions are given in table 1. These results indicate that social asset in terms of trust, reciprocity and cohesiveness developed among organizational members is a desired asset for corporate performance. The mean value of 4.16 on trust and performance is descriptively assertive. Reciprocity as a phenomenal factor that encourages high performance is also represented by the mean value of 4.14 and same was the case of cohesiveness with a mean value of 4.50. It indicates that cohesiveness among all members of the organization would encourage membership support for co-worker and create a supportive work climate. The inferential test further carried out on the hypothesized statements has co-efficient that depicts a positive and significant relationship between competitiveness and trust, reciprocity and cohesiveness. This shows that social asset is an organizational asset, which, though has been abstractly defined, supports performance of firms. Table II shows our regression result with the co-efficient.

Table 1: Descriptive Statistical Outcome and Confirmatory Test of Results of Social Asset Dimensions

Factors	Percent of Variance	Empirical Indicators/Scale items	Factor Loadings	Mean	Stu
Trust	51.72	(a) Trust is the basis for every member working together	0.840	3.88	0.99
		(b) Reliable information is considered foremost amongst all for effective communication	0.835	4.06	0.84
		(c) Confidential employee data is treated as that amongst all.	0.816	3.67	1.4
		(d) Operational obligations made are fulfilled to ensure trust	0.774	3.93	0.19
		(e) I believed strongly that our relationship and success in task are owed to trust	0.632	4.16	0.78
Note: *Based on the rotation sums of squared loadings, total variance explained = 51.72 percent, Kaiser-Meyer – Olkin measure of sampling adequacy = 0.907; Bartlett test of sphericity = 891.494, significance = 0.000.*					
Reciprocity	55.68	(f) We exchange knowledge/ideas freely were they help group members to reach work goals	0.535	4.41	0.73
		(g) Co-worker interface is encouraged through programmed interaction sessions	0.876	4.57	0.59
		(h) We share common work experiences and challenges to innovate work process that help goal attainment	0.813	4.42	0.77
		(i) Management aptly reward hard work to all member at all times	0.659	4.07	0.86
		(j) Sharing with one another is the strength or our success and innovative practices	0.649	4.14	0.95
Note: *Based on the rotation sums of squared loadings, total variance explained = 55.68 percent, Kaiser-Meyer – Olkin measure of sampling adequacy = 0.838; Bartlett test of sphericity = 391.439, significance = 0.000.*					
Cohesiveness	62.74	(k) Our different work skills are acknowledged and cherished and constitutes our competitive strength	0.627	3.83	0.10
		(l) Work tasks are not assigned based on the close relationship with managers	0.781	4.07	0.86
		(m) We have existed together because work goals are clearly and commonly communicated to all	0.662	4.44	0.79
		(n) We enjoy a one-to-one closeness that makes us to commonly relate and share ideas	0.602	4.07	0.86
		(o) valuing diversity is the reason why we cheerfully work with one another	0.502	3.82	0.99
		(p) The goals of the company are achieved because every one seas himself as a member of the company family	0.556	4.50	0.66
Note: *Based on the rotation sums of squared loadings, total variance explained = 62.74 percent, Kaiser-Meyer – Olkin measure of sampling adequacy =0.802; Bartlett test of sphericity = 293-887, significance = 0.000.*					
Competitiveness	53.77	(q) We have always evolved new work process as an advantage because work as a team.	0.663	4.04	0.98
		(r) We have trust for one another so it is always easy for us to share knowledge in new areas of work	0.594	4.28	0.72
		(s) We have fared well in the sector in terms of improved market because ours is cohesive workplace that delivers truly.	0.633	3.95	0.89
		(t) Our customers patronage has been all time high because we closely relate with our customers to know areas of needs	0.781	4.20	0.83
		(u) Our customers has remained with us because they trust our product features and our work teams	0.801	3.20	1.15
		(w) We believe in one another both in terms of work skills, relational practices and that is the reason for our cohesiveness	0.724	4.54	0.69
Note: *Based on the rotation sums of squared loadings, total variance explained = 53.77 percent, Kaiser-Meyer – Olkin measure of sampling adequacy =0.818; Bartlett test of sphericity = 341.39, significance = 0.000.*					

Table 2: Regression Analysis

Social Capital Dimensions	Beta	Correlation Co-efficient	T-test	F-test
Trust	0.392	0.423	9.137	83.485
Reciprocity	0.423	0.486	10.88	118.44
Cohesiveness	0.355	0.430	9.267	85.871

t-statistic whether social asset dimensions of trust, reciprocity and cohesiveness correlates with firm competitiveness, all showed statistical significance at $P < 0.05$ level. The relationship was expressed positive by the r values which were also statistically significant at $P < 0.05$ level.

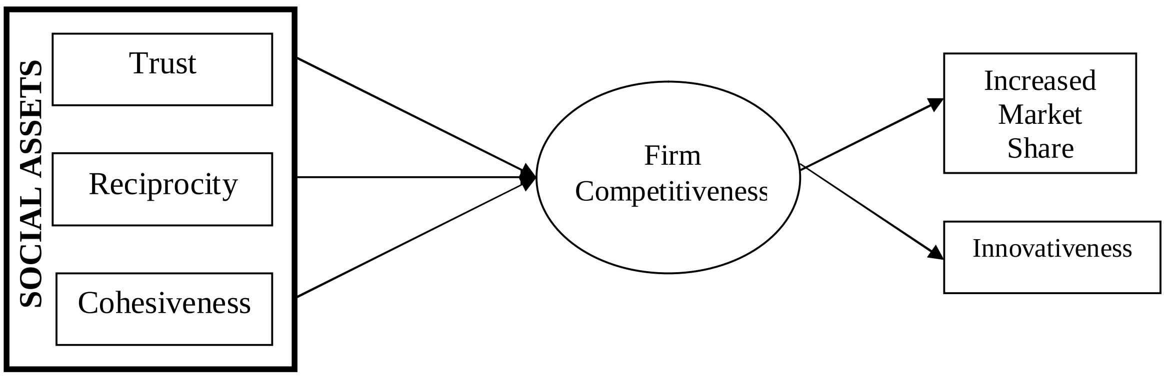


Figure 2: Social Assets and Firm Competitiveness Model

Discussion

The essence of social asset is quality social relations amongst members of a group perhaps with a desire to achieve a common goal. It has been noted strongly that, it is the quality of the relationship that affects the ability of the people to come together to collectively resolve problems they face in common and accomplish tasks for their mutual benefit (Lochner, 1999). This study investigated the relationship between dimensions of social asset and firm competitiveness within the telecommunications industry. The model operationalized the predictor variable with tri-dimensions of trust, reciprocity and cohesiveness while firm competitiveness was measured by market share, and innovativeness. The empirical results suggest strongly that social asset dimensions surveyed had positive and significant relationship with the observed dimensions of competitiveness. The correlation coefficient for trust (β=0.423, P<0.05), reciprocity (β=0.486, P<0.05) and cohesiveness (β=0.430, P<0.05) have positive significant relationship, thereby rejecting Ho_1, Ho_2 and Ho_3. The standardized coefficients of trust (beta=0.392), reciprocity (beta= 0.423) and cohesiveness (beta=0.355) show their average weighted impact on market share, and innovativeness respectively. The outcome of this study is rightfully attractive considering the need to strategically ensure the attainment of organizational goals. The identification of social asset as that which reinforces firm's effort at competing is empirically assertive. Essentially, it facilitates certain positive actions of individual employees. Ayopo (2008) reiterated the influence of trust among work teams as the basis for ensuring commitment and the needed tact to function optimally. Reciprocity is equally seen as an imperative for strong intra-organizational relationship which shapes a climate that encourages all inclusiveness and reliance. Managers are required to establish a reciprocal interface that attracts subordinate confidence on assigned responsibilities.

Similarly, the study from its results on cohesiveness as a dimension of social asset and firm competitiveness is quite convincing and has given credence to the various theories that conceptualize cohesiveness within a culturally heterogeneous workforce as an asset (Chris, 2007). Emphasizing the cohesiveness phenomenon in firms deprives discriminatory practices leaving all employees function beyond supposed individual restrictions and hindrances.

Indeed, much of the existing works on the concept are based on relatively untested assumption thereby making it difficult to accept how it manifests and ultimately how it may lead to certain organizational outcome. This study so far has given a substantiated empirical outcome that relegates preceding thoughts and attempts on the concept of social asset and firm's competitiveness which was largely described as transcendental and non-economic.

Conclusion and Policy Implications

The reliance on the social relation outcomes as an asset to firm has been intuitively addressed in literature perhaps because of the abstract nature and the conceptual confusion that arose from its definition Baum, (2000) therefore, in this study attempt has been made to systematically investigate some social assets that were hitherto viewed as transcendental and their influence on firm competitiveness. We have raised three research questions and based on data generated and analyzed, it was empirically shown that social asset expressed in trust, reciprocity and cohesiveness relates significantly with firms performance. The findings indicates that the hitherto argument against emphasizing the nature of social relation among organizational members as a mere abstraction which does not reflect its role on firm performance can be empirically diminished since the expression of trust, showing reciprocity and accommodating the diversity are all features that attracts commitment to task and enhance goal attainment. In this way, members are glued to one another, discouraging distrust and apathy. The empirical results suggest that employees and top management perception of the social relations and networks is imperative for implementing strategic actions and also helps in creating enthusiasm for innovative practices. This, management must ensure they convert as a strategic asset for competitiveness.

Further, the results have significant implication for managing the workforce and her external relations. The benefits of a committed workforce can no doubt encourage direct customer related services and culminate to moulding the integrity of the firm among other stakeholders. Again, the relationship among the constructs identified in this paper, should provide a direction for managing employees and significant incentive for management to always create a conducive organizational climate and a culture that deposits values that properly bond employees.

Suggestions for further Studies

This study investigated the telecommunications industry in terms of trusts, reciprocity and cohesiveness dimensions of social asset against market share growth, and innovativeness respectively. Future scholarships are encouraged for three reasons. First, they need to investigate other dimensions of the dependent (e.g.; new business generated and return on investment) and independent variables (reliable performance of duties, esprit de corps, cohesiveness, and civil society) not covered by the study. Second, they need to replicate the study in other industries to provide external validity. Third, the use of major industry players for the survey could potentially compound the research findings since smaller firms are fast springing up in the industry with variance in organizational practices and so future research therefore should be made to cover all such firms with their unique characteristics.

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