

Innovations

Strategic Fit and Organizational Performance: A Case Study Of Nestle Nigeria PLC

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Abstract: *The research investigated the relationship between internal strategic fit and organizational performance and examined the relationship between external strategic fit and organizational performance all with a view to assessing the impact of strategic fit on organizational performance. The study adopted a descriptive research design. The instrument of research design used was questionnaire. Two hundred and twenty-seven (227) copies of questionnaire were administered to Nestle Nigeria Plc, Lagos, two hundred and one (201) were correctly attended to while twenty-six (26) were defective. In analysing the questionnaire, descriptive statistics of Bar chart was used in classifying data supported using inferential statistics of Pearson correlation coefficient in testing of hypotheses. The research discovered that there is a positive significant relationship between the internal strategic fit and organizational performance. Secondly that there is a positive significance relationship between the external strategic fit and organizational performance. Conclusively, both the internal strategic fit and external strategic fit positively impact organizational performance in Nestle Nigeria Plc. The research recommended that organizations should conduct regular strategic fit assessments. This will involve evaluating the alignment between the organization's internal capabilities and its strategy as well as how the strategy matches the external environment.*

Keyword: *External Strategic Fit; Internal Strategic Fit; Strategic Fit; Organizational Performance.*

JEL Classification: L10; L20; M10

1.0 Introduction

Firms do business in order to become more competitive. In addition, they stock them in order to spur consumer demand for high-quality items by offering them to customers. They also stock them so they may supply products that meet customer demands. Firms try to manage risks and challenges from external perspectives as well as the inside to accomplish that. (Burggräf et al., 2022; Hashem &Maani, 2021; Kampker et al., 2014).It is essential keep in mind that firms that are successful strive to have a strategic fit between their internal and external setting. Firms will be able to satisfy internal operations needs by achieving such fit. It will make it possible for companies to deal with outside issues(Chung, 2017).

The expansion of markets and industries throughout the world has had a significant impact on the competitive landscape and attributes of businesses. International and worldwide networks of strategic linkages have been formed as a result of the increased overseas rivalry and number of links between businesses in various countries (Dewangga& Nugroho 2024; Qian et al, 2024; Wiersema & Bowen, 2008). It is noteworthy to mention that alliances, mergers and acquisitions, partnerships, and contracts are examples of how strategic fit or links are frequently publicized (Terrywinnie, 2023; Moses, &Ekwutosi, 2018; Nohria & Garcia- Pont, 1991).

One of the instruments used in the merger and acquisition (M&A) process for due diligence is strategic fit, which helps the acquiring organization reorganize and realign how it operates to maintain the performance of the revitalized business and maintain its competitiveness. An organization may function as effectively as possible in its competitive setting when it has a strategic fit. It conveys the extent to which a company is aligning its expertise and assets with the possibilities presented by the outside world. But after learning what causes M&A failure in previous companies, the goal for strategic fit was re-set to promote sustainability, eco-efficiency, competitiveness, and eco-effectiveness. In a nutshell, after pre- and post-merger acquisitions, the newly created conglomerate fixed its alliance to preserve long-term synergy and competitiveness. Organizations must prioritize both internal and external strategic fit to succeed and remain competitive in the market (Hamad, 2017).

Internal strategic fit is the term used to describe how different components inside an organization align and make sense. It involves being certain that the organization's resources, capabilities, and core competencies are in line with its purpose, vision, values, and goals. A company may successfully use its strengths and special resources to achieve its selected strategy when there is internal strategic fit, which improves decision-making and efficiency (Sahoo et al., 2023).Conversely, the alignment of an organization's strategy with the external environment in which it works is known as external strategic fit. This entails taking into account elements such consumer demands, market trends, the competitive environment, evolving laws, and technology breakthroughs.

To detect and seize opportunities and counteract any risks, an organization must be flexible and sensitive to external changes, according to Sahoo et al. (2023). The organization's overall strategy will be cohesive, consistent, and well-aligned with its internal strengths and the demands of the external market if it achieves a good internal and external strategic fit. When these two factors work together, a firm may satisfy consumer expectations, successfully set itself apart from competitors, and develop a durable competitive advantage. The extent to which the needs, demands, goals, objectives, and structures of one component" is the definition of fit (Nadler and Tushman, as stated in Hamad 2017). This perspective suggests that having a high degree of strategic fit is beneficial, hence it makes sense to optimize an organization's fit. In normative models of strategy creation, the pursuit of strategic fit has been a central idea (Skorodziyevskiy et al., 2024; Hultman & Oghazi, 2024; Zajac et al., 2000). To put it another way, alliances are voluntary agreements between two or more separate businesses that involve the sharing, trading, or cooperative creation or supply of technology, goods, or services. The degree to which a business can efficiently conduct its operations and maximize its profit depends on how difficult it is to manage strategic fit. According to Kale and Singh (2009), companies are investing an increasing amount of money in partnerships, and there is proof that these efforts help to improve a firm's competitive position. On the other side, research has shown that company partnerships have frequently failed. According to Huynh et al., organizations must employ strategic management strategies to boost their competitiveness and get strategic advantages in order to prosper in today's local and international marketplaces (Phina, 2020).

Businesses work in a chaotic, dynamic environment where ideas and methods from previous eras are sometimes rendered outdated by sudden changes (Maroa & Munturi, 2015).

The bulk of SMEs in Nigeria, according to a 2022 study by Ekon and Isayas, adopted strategic fit management practices. However, these practices were implemented and evaluated incorrectly, which explains why the competitive advantages of the SMEs in Nigeria did not improve as intended because of these practices. Strategy management implementation, according to Wasiu (2022), is the most challenging and time-consuming management assignment. Practitioners are convinced that developing a strong strategy plan is considerably easier than implementing it. The inefficient development and use of strategic management techniques has been linked to a number of issues, including a lack of commitment from senior management (Wasiu, 2022). This has a disastrous effect on a company's ability to compete, which will lower performance. In light of this, this paper investigates organizational performance and strategy fit in detail, focusing on Nestle Nigeria Plc.

2.0 Literature Review

Strategic Fit

The planning process for strategic operations is heavily influenced by the strategic fit. This is because the company can launch new items and increase productivity because to strategic fit. A company with strategic fit may also adapt to changing conditions more successfully. Put differently, the company can adapt to swift changes when there is a strategic match (Hashem & Maani, 2021; Aithal, 2016). Fit between the operational capabilities and market requirements is referred to as strategic fit, according to Slack and Lewis (2012). In regards to Chung (2017), he proposes that strategic fit is the congruence of organizational resources with internal and external activities.

Strategic fit is divided into internal and external categories by Schniederjans and Cao (2009). The alignment of the operational and business strategies is referred to as external strategic fit. The alignment of the company's responsibilities, procedures, and policies is known as the internal strategic fit. Strategic fit, according to Majukwa and Haddud (2016), significantly improves organizational performance. Long-term success is seen to be significantly impacted by an organization's capacity to continue providing high-quality services and goods, according to Owen et al. (2001). As a result, obtaining strategic fit is the goal of every corporate action.

Many businesses are compelled to implement strategies that determine their commercial destiny, according to Daniela (2014). According to their recommendations, businesses need to implement tactics that provide them a competitive edge. They will be able to endure in the market thanks to that. Aligning efficiency with adaptability to changes is necessary, according to Chopra and Meindl (2012). Businesses will be able to get a competitive edge thanks to it. According to a number of scholars (e.g., Garengo & Bernardi, 2007; Cunliffe, 2008; Aagaard, 2016), organizational strategies, structures, and operations must be complementary to each other. It will help to achieve organizational effectiveness and, consequently, performance improvement to achieve such complementarity (Hsieh & Chen, 2011).

Goals of Strategic Fit

In order to thrive and endure, organizations engage in business operations. The implementation of business frameworks and the enhancement of standards can guarantee that. For all managers in a company, achieving strategic fit is the ultimate aim. Furthermore, the goal is to provide the organizational units with the necessary tools to successfully execute their strategies. Senior management has to prioritize achieving strategic fit. According to Bilaloğlu (2019) and Bjorkhem (2008), it is necessary for the remaining staff members of the company to look for it. According to Shadid and Al-Nuimi (2012), the goal of strategic fit is to keep the organization moving in the direction of stable development. Development in this sense relates to the creation of organizational tactics and instruments. Regarding stability, it is the capacity of the company to manage any risk or crisis that may

arise while conducting business. When the company can manage any risk associated with the target market, it reaches a stable condition.

According to Kim et al. (2015), strategic fit gives employees the ability to assess the surrounding conditions. Furthermore, they propose that strategic fit raises directors' and workers' understanding of the appropriate ways to handle different kinds of situations. According to Schott (2008), companies may connect their plans and goals with the sound conditions on the other side by attaining strategic fit. The latter aligns with purchasing power, market position, and level of competition. Encouraging interaction between the organization and other organizations is the goal of strategic fit. It also seeks to create a connection of complementarity between the company and other organizations. Additionally, it encourages firms to compete fairly. Furthermore, it contributes to enhancing the procedure of creating the organizational results and operations.

The Dimensions of Strategic Fit

Rapid changes have been occurring in the market environment on many fronts. Consequently, in order to reach their objectives, companies need to be able to achieve a strategic fit between the tactics they have chosen and their aims. It is important to remember that strategic fit has several aspects. According to Yusoffa et al. (2016), these dimensions are internal and exterior.

Internal strategic fit:

The degree of congruence between the tactics used and the organizational structure is known as internal strategic fit. It also describes the degree of congruence that exists between the events, abilities, concepts, and plans of action that the organization's directors, workers, and leaders accept.

The most crucial component of strategic fit is regarded to be internal strategic fit. This is due to the fact that it influences the organization's internal direction. Internal strategic fit highlights important facets of the organization's internal environment. This is so that the organization may get a competitive edge by focusing on the latter characteristics. In order to get a competitive advantage, it should be highlighted that the emphasis on internal strategic fit is more crucial than the emphasis on external strategic fit (Sinha et al., 2024; Pellathy et al., 2023; Xu et al., 2006).

External strategic fit:

As stated by Kaliappen and Hilma (2017), the degree of alignment between an organization's external environment and itself is referred to as external strategic fit. To put it another way, external strategy describes how closely an organization's plans and the external environment's components align and are consistent with one another. The market, rivals, clients, need for the market, and rivals' advertising activities are among the latter components.

Empirical Review

Gleim et al. (2023) employ contingency theory to explore how sustainable marketing strategies influence consumer perceptions of fit. The research uses multiple methods: a qualitative pretest with 88 MBA students, a scenario-based survey with 546 online participants, and an experiment involving 185 consumers. The findings consistently show that perceptions of sustainability fit significantly impact consumer perceptions and firm performance. Overall, the study suggests that consumer perceptions of fit are crucial antecedents to organizational outcomes, highlighting the importance of aligning sustainability initiatives with consumer expectations to enhance firm performance.

Ekon and Isayas (2022) examined strategic management practices among 150 SMEs in Lagos, Nigeria, using a descriptive survey methodology. The findings indicated that practices such as identifying opportunities, developing, implementing, and evaluating strategies significantly impacted organizational performance. However, the improper execution and assessment of these practices meant they did not enhance SMEs' competitive advantages internationally. Most SMEs had adopted strategic management methods, but their incorrect implementation limited their effectiveness.

Tarighi et al., (2022) investigated the impact of corporate social responsibility disclosure (CSR D) on financial distress risk (FDR) among 200 firms listed on the Tehran Stock Exchange from 2013 to 2018 using logistic regression. The study found that high levels of CSR disclosure did not improve creditworthiness or financing access, leading to more financial insolvency. Institutional ownership moderated this relationship, reducing financial distress risk. Firms with more institutional owners and higher CSR disclosure-maintained shareholder trust better, preventing financial distress.

Ongongo and Mang'ana (2022) assessed the impact of strategy evaluation on the performance of Kenyan commercial banks through a descriptive survey of 40 banks. Using data from surveys and annual reports, the research employed descriptive statistics, correlations, and regressions to establish variable associations. The results indicated that strategy assessment techniques had a significant positive impact on bank performance, suggesting that proper evaluation of strategies is crucial for the success of commercial banks in Kenya.

Vandersmissen et al. (2022) examine the mediators in the strategic planning-public service performance relationship using PLS-SEM on survey data from managers and citizens in 101 Flemish municipalities. The study finds that strategic planning positively impacts managers' and citizens' perceptions of performance indirectly through its effect on external relations. The conclusion highlights the significance of other potential mediators and the utility of PLS-SEM for public management research, offering a deeper understanding of how strategic

planning influences public service performance.

Phina (2020) focused on the impact of strategic management on organizational performance in South-East Nigeria's manufacturing firms. Using multiple regression analysis on data from 300 employees sampled from a population of 1200, the study found that strategic activities, including goal setting, development, execution, and assessment, significantly affected organizational performance. The study recommended aligning strategic aims with company objectives and involving middle and upper management in strategy crafting for better organizational performance.

Alade and Ehigbochie (2019) explored how strategic business management affects productivity in Nigerian SMEs, sampling 10 businesses in Lagos. Data from 200 SME owners and employees were collected via questionnaires and analyzed using SPSS. The findings showed that strategic management and organizational implementation were present in Lagos SMEs, but issues like lack of top management support and change management hindered effective strategy adoption. The study concluded that improving strategic business management could enhance SME performance and productivity.

Hashem and Maani (2021) aimed to identify the impact of strategic fit on marketing performance in Jordanian industrial corporations listed on the Amman Stock Exchange. Using simple random sampling, 76 valid questionnaires from marketing and administrative directors were analyzed. The results indicated that strategic fit had a significant positive impact on marketing performance. The researchers recommended that industrial corporations should focus more on achieving strategic fit to enhance marketing performance.

According to 2004 research by Yin and Zajac, which included strategy and governance systems as its factors, organizations with strategic fit perform better. Furthermore, a 1994 study by Dan et al. on a sample of 173 acute care hospitals concluded that adhering to an externally declared perfect strategy profile improved firm performance; this emphasizes the significance of an organization's strategic fit with its operating environment (Abong'o et al, 2015).

3.0 Methodology

The study made use of descriptive research design which is also called survey design. The instrument of descriptive research design is questionnaire. The use of questionnaire began with the construction using research questions which were geared towards achieving research objectives.

Population of the study

Population of the study refers to the entire group of people of interest that the researcher wishes to investigate. Mugenda and Mugenda, as cited in Tindiwegi

and Kiiza (2024), defines population as an entire group of individual or objects having common observable characteristic. The study population comprises of all the about 525 employees of Nestle Nigeria Plc. Ikeja, Lagos state.

Sampling Procedure and Sample size

As the target population of the study is numbered to be 521. The study employed Taro Yamane model, as cited in Okafor et al., (2023) to ascertain the sample size, by employing the model, the sample size becomes.

$$\text{Sample size: } n = \frac{N}{1+N(e)^2}$$

Where: n = anticipated total sample size; N = population size; e = acceptable error term (0.05).

$$n = \frac{525}{1 + 525 (0.05)^2} = 227$$

The sampling method used for this research is the quota sampling techniques, which was adopted to get information on strategic fit and organization performance. Therefore, the sample for this study is 227 and questionnaire was distributed to selected employees.

Data Collection Instrument and Validation

A questionnaire was employed as the instrument and primary data was used to gather information for the study. Using a five-point Likert scale assessment, which rates replies on a range of 1 to 5, the questions were organized in accordance with the hypotheses and other pertinent research topics. The Likert scale ranking for each item is shown below. (1) Strongly Disagree = SD, (2) Disagreed = D, (3) Undecided = U, (4) Agree = A, and (5) Strongly Agree = SA.

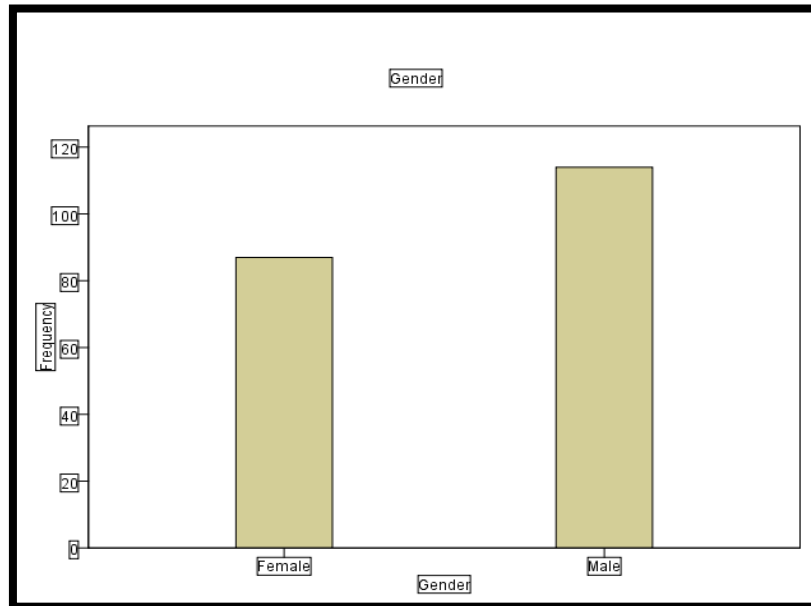
4.0 Data Presentation and Analysis

The data gathered from the respondents during the study is presented and analyzed in this part. To determine the answers to research questions, data are arranged in tables and presented as straightforward percentages. Pearson correlation coefficient is the statistical test that is used to evaluate the study's hypothesis. In order to determine if there was a significant association between the variables, the study used the Pearson correlation coefficient. On the other hand, the respondents to whom the questionnaire was given were chosen using the quota sampling technique. The questionnaire was delivered in 227 copies to the chosen respondents.

Unanswered copies of the questionnaire, however, totalled seventeen, and ten copies were lost during distribution and administration. Only twenty-one (201) copies of the questionnaire (88.5%) were completed satisfactorily, resulting in insufficient data for analysis and presentation.

Section A: Demography details of the respondents

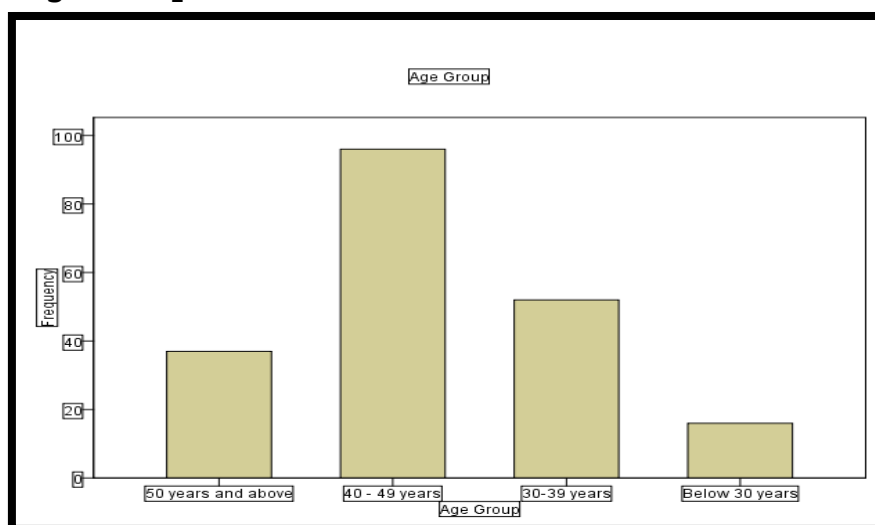
Figure 4.1 Gender of the respondents



Source: self-field survey, 2023

In Figure 4.1, the data illustrates the gender distribution among a group of 201 individuals. Among them, 87 individuals identify as female, representing 43.3% of the total, while 114 individuals identify as male, accounting for 56.7% of the total. The data provides insights into the gender composition of the group, highlighting the slightly higher representation of males compared to females. Understanding such demographic characteristics is essential for organizations and researchers to ensure inclusivity and tailor their approaches based on gender-specific considerations.

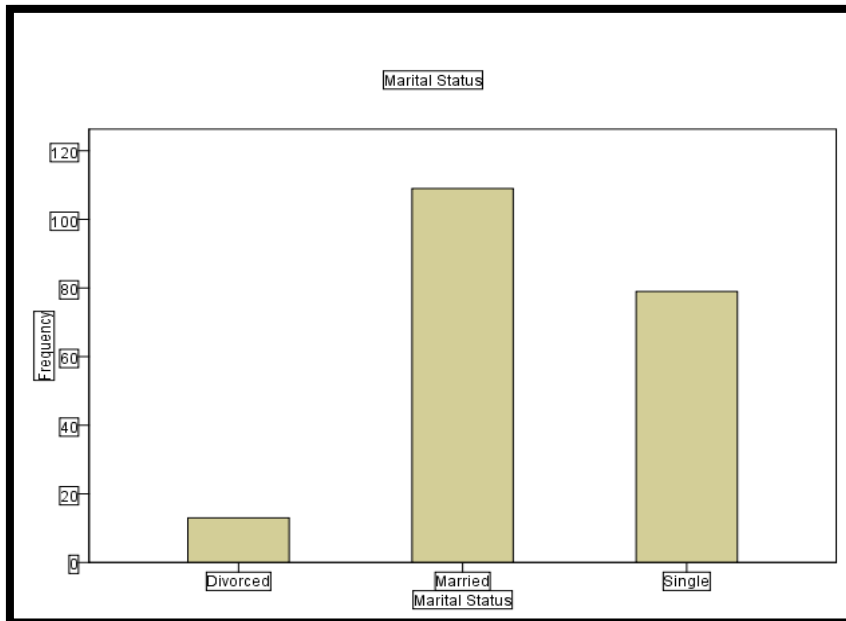
Figure 4.2 Age Group



Source: self-field survey, 2023

Figure 4.2 presents the age group distribution within a population of 201 individuals. The data reveals that 18.4% of the individuals are aged 50 years and above, with a frequency of 37. The largest age group is between 40 and 49 years, constituting 47.8% of the population, with a frequency of 96. The next age group, comprising individuals between 30 and 39 years, accounts for 25.9% of the total, with 52 individuals. Lastly, the age group of individuals below 30 years represents 8.0% of the population, with 16 individuals.

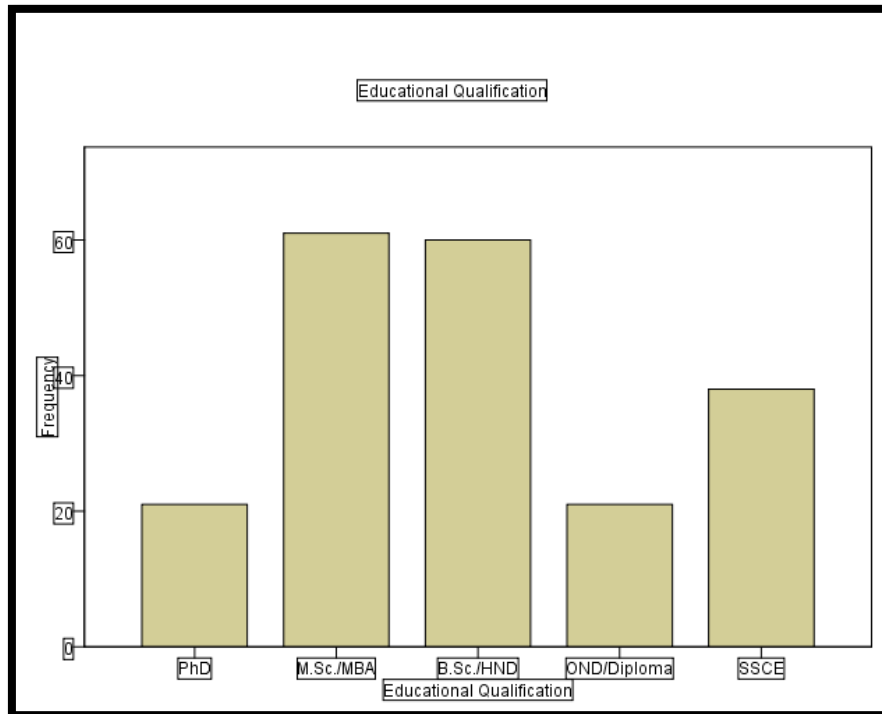
Figure 4.3 Marital Status



Source: self-field survey, 2023

In Figure 4.3, the data presents the distribution of marital status among a group of 201 individuals. Among the participants, 13 individuals, constituting 6.5% of the total, identify as "Divorced." The largest category is "Married," comprising 109 individuals, accounting for 54.2% of the group. The "Single" category consists of 79 individuals, representing 39.3% of the total. The cumulative percentages indicate the progressive distribution of marital status within the group, with the final cumulative percent being 100.0%. This data provides valuable insights into the marital status composition of the group, which can be useful for demographic analysis, relationship-specific marketing strategies, and understanding the diversity of marital backgrounds within the population.

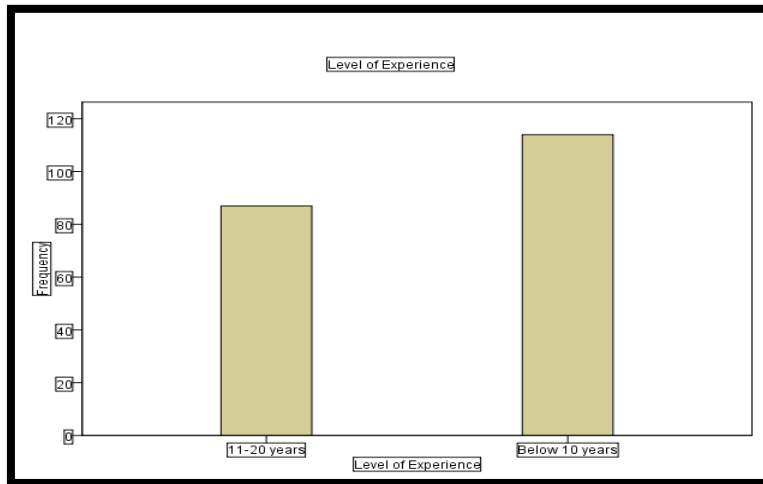
Figure 4.4 Education Qualification



Source: self-field survey, 2023

Figure 4.4 presents the distribution of educational qualifications among a group of 201 individuals. The data reveals that a diverse range of educational backgrounds is represented in the group. The highest educational category is "M.Sc./MBA," comprising 61 individuals (30.3%), followed closely by "B.Sc./HND" with 60 individuals (29.9%). A smaller proportion of the group holds a PhD, accounting for 21 individuals (10.4%), while the "OND/Diploma" category also consists of 21 individuals (10.4%). The category with the lowest frequency is "SSCE," representing 38 individuals (18.9%). The cumulative percentages demonstrate the overall distribution, reaching 100.0%. This data provides valuable insights for understanding the educational diversity within the group, aiding educational institutions, policymakers, and employers in crafting tailored approaches and opportunities to accommodate the varying educational qualifications and aspirations of individuals.

Figure 4.5 Level of Experience



Source: self-field survey, 2023

In Figure 4.5, the data reveals the distribution of experience levels among a group of 201 individuals. Most of the group, comprising 56.7%, has experience below 10 years, with 114 individuals falling into this category. On the other hand, 43.3% of the group, consisting of 87 individuals, has accumulated 11 to 20 years of experience. The cumulative percentages demonstrate that the entire group's experience distribution accounts for 100.0%. Understanding the distribution of experience within the group is crucial for organizations and employers to assess their workforce's expertise, plan for future talent development, and create career growth opportunities that cater to employees at different stages of their professional journeys. Additionally, this data aids in fostering a diverse and balanced workforce that benefits from the combined knowledge and perspectives of individuals with varying levels of experience.

Test of Hypotheses

The Pearson Correlation Coefficient was employed in this study for testing hypotheses 1 and 2.

Hypothesis 1

- H_0 : There is no significant relationship between internal strategic fit and organizational performance.
- H_i : There is a significant relationship between internal strategic fit and organizational performance.

Table 4.1: Correlation Analysis

Correlations			
		Internal Strategic Fit	Organizational Performance
Internal Strategic Fit	Pearson Correlation	1	0.715**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		0.000
	N	201	201
Organizational Performance	Pearson Correlation	0.715**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.000	
	N	201	201

****Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed). Source: self-field survey, 2023**

The result from the Pearson correlation in table 4.1 above shows an 71.5% correlation which implies a positive and significant relationship between internal strategic fit and organizational performance. The result is however, significant at 1% level of significance i.e., 0.01 since its p-value is less than 0.01. This shows that there is conclusive evidence about the significance of the association between internal strategic fit and organizational performance. Therefore, the alternate hypothesis which states that there is a significant relationship between internal strategic fit and organizational performance, is accepted.

Hypothesis 2

- H_0 : There is no significant relationship between external strategic fit and organizational performance.
- H_1 : There is a significant relationship between external strategic fit and organizational performance.

Table 4.2: Correlation Analysis

Correlations			
		External Strategic Fit	Organizational Performance
External Strategic Fit	Pearson Correlation	1	0.661**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		0.000
	N	201	201
Organizational Performance	Pearson Correlation	0.661**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.000	
	N	201	201

****Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed). Source: self-field survey, 2023**

The result from the Pearson correlation in table 4.2 above shows a 66.1% correlation which implies a positive and significant relationship between external strategic fit and organizational performance. The result is however, significant at 1% level of significance i.e., 0.01 since its p-value is less than 0.01. This shows that there is conclusive evidence about the significance of the association between external strategic fit and organizational performance. Therefore, the alternate hypothesis which states that there is significant relationship between external strategic fit and organizational performance, is accepted.

5.0 Conclusions

This study investigated the influence of strategic fit on organizational performance. Two hundred and twenty-seven (227) copies of the questionnaire were distributed to the selected respondents. However, (17) copies of the questionnaire were returned unanswered, while (10) copies got lost during distribution and administration. Therefore, only two hundred and one (201) copies (88.5%) of the questionnaire were answered well enough to generate reasonable data for presentation and analysis. From the results, it was observed that both internal strategic fit and external strategic fit positively impact organizational performance in Nestle Nigeria Plc, Ikeja, Lagos State.

6.0 Recommendations

Based on the finding of a positive and significant relationship between strategic fit and organizational performance, some policy recommendations that businesses and organizations can consider implementing:

- i. organizations should conduct regular strategic fit assessments. This involves evaluating the alignment between the organization's internal capabilities and its strategy, as well as how well the strategy matches the external environment. Policymakers can promote the adoption of standardized tools and frameworks to facilitate these assessments.
- ii. Create platforms or networks where organizations can share best practices and lessons learned related to achieving strategic fit. Policymakers can facilitate workshops, conferences, or online forums that promote knowledge exchange and collaboration between businesses, academia, and industry experts.
- iii. Establish mechanisms to monitor and evaluate how organizations are implementing strategic fit principles. Policymakers can use this data to identify successful practices and areas that may require additional support or intervention.

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