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Original Article

Strategic Management and Performance of Information Technology Firms in Nigeria

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Abstract

The urgent need for diversification in the Nigerian economy has raised concerns in other sectors. The information technology (IT) sector remains the least developed despite increased government attention to IT and the need to encourage young graduates in the IT sector. Little seems to have been achieved so far; hence, this study assessed the influence of strategic management (SM) on the operational performance of IT firms in Nigeria. A sample of 195 managers of IT firms across the country of Nigeria was selected for this current study, and they were selected using a convenient sampling technique. The Pearson product correlation technique was used in analysing the data. It was found that there is a correlation between SM and the operational performance of IT firms in Nigeria. The study concludes that the presence of a sound SM would guarantee the improved operational performance of IT firms in Nigeria. It is recommended that IT firms' managers be willing to come up with a detailed strategic plan and implement it to conduct regular evaluation and control their own strategy, as it is useful towards ensuring that they gain a competitive edge.

Keywords: *Information; Technology; Strategy; Management; Performance*

Introduction

Businesses nowadays use strategic management methods to boost their performance and achieve tactical advantages in order to meet and exceed expectations in a climate of intense local and international competition. It has been said that the most crucial activity that sets an enterprise apart from another is strategic management. It is essential to accomplishing the corporate vision, purpose, strategy, and goals (Abosede, Obasan & Alese, 2016).

It has been demonstrated via several studies and more real-world corporate experiences that strategic planning may boost profitability. Relatively recent experimental evidence suggests that businesses that embrace planning systems function well and more frequently meet their objectives for increased sales and profits than those that do not (Adeyemi, Isaac & Olufemi, 2017; Ahmed & Mukhongo, 2017; Koech & Were, 2016).

Therefore, it follows that any firm that adopts strategic planning will do better than one that does not. Making decisions is proactive when strategic management is used but making them in a reactive manner without it will result in expensive errors. These might include management and staff members making decisions that aren't in accordance with the organization's objectives, money being spent on unneeded costs, and clients having various experiences depending on how they contact the business

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(Makanga & Paul, 2017). Organizations succeed because their tactics are suitable for the challenges they encounter (Muriuki, Cheruiyot & Komen, 2017).

The key goals that business organisations, in particular, should work toward achieving include having an edge over rivals in their operating industry or market and improving their performance in comparison to their rivals. Strategic management, which also includes strategic planning, execution, control, and evaluation, includes strategic planning as one of its key components (Abodunde, 2020; Waweru & Omwenga, 2015). Many academics and business leaders support strategic planning. Ali and Qun (2019), for instance, made the case that a deliberate planning approach, as opposed to random speculation, resulted in the collection and analysis of data essential to establishing and preserving enterprise environment alignment.

Since the notion of strategic planning was first presented, academics and the business world have shown a remarkable amount of interest in the importance of strategic planning for the growth, development, and good effects it has on firms generally (Babalola & Taiwo, 2016; Mumbe & Njuguna, 2019). Clearly, the performance of an organisation is a key topic in a study on strategic management. Performance is about generating benefits for the organization's main stakeholders (Auka & Langat, 2016; Agbazue & Chukwuemeka, 2020).

According to Carton and Hofer (2016), performance is the outcome of action. Measures for performance evaluation should be chosen depending on the enterprise unit being evaluated and the goals being pursued. A variety of metrics are used to assess enterprise success (financial and non-financial measurements). It is reasonable to use some metrics, including return on investment (ROI) and profits per share (EPS), to assess a unit's or a division's capacity to meet a profitability goal.

Therefore, a company has to create metrics that forecast potential profitability. They measure factors that have an impact on future profitability, thus the name "steering controls." Every sector has a unique set of important variables that help forecast earnings. Retail establishments use the inventory turnover ratio, which divides a retailer's cost of products sold by the average value of its stocks.The better the ratio, which demonstrates how hard an inventory investment is working. Faster moving inventory not only consumes less cash in stock but also reduces the likelihood of products becoming obsolete before being sold (Phina, 2020).

Over the past three decades, strategic management has ingrained itself into the daily lives of executives. Executives have looked to strategic management for assistance while striving to generate revenues, innovate, enhance quality, increase efficiency, or prepare for the future. The environment in which businesses operate is chaotic and dynamic, and there are frequently quick changes that make old methods obsolete (Orugun, Nafiu & Aduku, 2017). The issues that CEOs now confront have grown as a result of globalisation and economic unrest, and it is necessary to identify the best solutions to address these challenges. In order to properly filter through the possibilities and choose the best tactics for their organisations, CEOs must be more informed than before.

The hiring procedure itself may be as challenging as the business problems they must resolve. They must decide on the business strategies that will best enable them to make choices that result in improved procedures, goods, and services, as well as higher performance and profitability (Sylvia, 2021). Understanding the benefits and drawbacks of each strategy is essential for effective strategic planning, as is the capacity for innovatively fusing the appropriate strategies at the appropriate times. Whole businesses might fail as a result of ineffective strategic management (Pearce, Robinson & Subramanian, 2000).

The implementation of strategies is central to the attainment of the firm’s core objectives, as such, it must be structured in a manner that will not only aid in maintaining controlled market dominance but also in improving the general business outlook, which can lead to an advancement in earnings at lower expenses. According to Burugo and Owour (2017), the main issue companies currently face is a lack of a clear definition of strategic management and its goals. Additionally, Muriuki, Cheruiyot and Komen

(2017) state that the primary issue facing organisations in the globalisation period is the implementation, assessment, and performance of strategies.

It should be mentioned that research looking at the connection between enterprise performance and strategic management is still inconclusive. Studies by Muogbo (2013), Kinyanjui and Juma (2014) found a substantial negative relationship between enterprise performance and strategic management. Therefore, the purpose of this study was to describe the influence of strategic management on the operational performance of selected Information Technology (IT) firms in Nigeria.

Theoretical and Hypotheses Development

The primary theory applied in this study was the resource-based theory created by Birge Wenefeldt in 1984. The fundamental tenet of the resource-based view (RBV) is that a business differs from another in important ways because each firm has a distinct collection of resources—tangible and intangible assets, as well as enterprise capacities to utilise those assets. From these resources, each company generates abilities that, when properly developed, constitute the source of the firm's competitive edge (Mital, Pearce & Robinson, 2018).

According to this hypothesis, it stands to reason that a firm's resources will have a significant impact on how well its strategy is implemented. This is due to the fact that, regardless of how effective a strategy may be, it cannot be put into action without the requisite funding. The basic tenet of this theory, is that it proposes that the basis for a company’s competitiveness is the extent to which the business owners are able to use a set of valuable physical or intangible assets that are available to them (Barney, 2001).

However, when it comes to conducting business and assessing environmental possibilities and dangers, a firm's competitive edge depends on its special resources and talents (Barney, 1995). Further, the theory holds that a company's available resources, over which it has a greater level of control, are useful towards ensuring the business attains an increased level of competitive edge, which is fundamental to gaining an improved market advantage. The theory simply illustrates the reality that the success of any functional business operation is tied to its distinctive qualities (Gerhart & Feng, 2021).

The resource-based theory is applicable to this research since a business's resources and capabilities are the main factors to take into account when developing its strategy. The ability of the business to develop and define strategies before they are implemented is required to drive increased business performance. The connections between a business strategy and its performance are defined through the quality of the resources that the company possesses for strategy design, its implementation, and its control and evaluation.

Strategic Management

The concept of "focus" encompasses a combination of managerial or executive decisions and practises that influence the strategic future and prospective outlook of an enterprise (Ibrahim & Musa, 2020). The core of the concept is a careful analysis of a company's external and internal environment, its long-term goals, and the planning, design, implementation, evaluation, and control of all components of business operations. Increasingly, the focus is on assessing external threats and opportunities related to a company's core resources.

Further, it can be explained as an art and science of making, executing, and appraising cross-functional choices, which helps an enterprise attain its goals (David, 2011a). It is a top management task that seeks to effectively combine leadership, commerce, economics and finance, supply chain management, research and development, and data management.

Also, it entails a deliberate systemic medium by which senior executives determine the long-term strategic direction of the enterprise, set priorities and goals, advance set plans and methods to attain the goals considering the pertinent internal and external context, and dedicate themselves to implementing the selected initiatives. Thompson Jr and Strickland III (1978) stated five critical functions of strategic management, namely formulating a clear strategy and mission for the company, formulating goals, developing a strategy to achieve those goals, implementing the strategy, and evaluating the results.

Strategy is considered to be an ongoing series of activities that assess and regulate the firm and the economic sectors in which it operates, analyse its competitors, set goals and plans to contend with all direct and indirect competitors, and then review more or less all plans in response to changes, including modern innovations, competitive threats, a new market position, a new business climate, or a modern cultural, budgetary, or institutional context (Muogbo, 2013). The integration of long-term management, financing, capacity preparation, plan evaluation, quality assurance, and management with efforts to achieve excellence (or capacity building).

It is the method of preparing an enterprise for eventual success. Considering that any business can be affected by external environmental variables and internal elements at any point in its project life cycle, it is essential to develop strategies to gain a strategic advantage. Therefore, managers should first understand which strategic orientation is most appropriate for the organisation in question and how these techniques affect activities in a particular sector (Agwu, 2018). The benefits of strategic management are hard to overestimate, especially if a company uses this technique in the appropriate situation.

Considering its ability to improve the productivity of the company, strategic management, when accepted and implemented, is a critical tool to improve the prospects of the entire company (Nkuda, 2021). Abodunde (2020) stated that performance evaluation is crucial as it allows one to determine whether or not a company is achieving its objectives and is therefore strategic (David, 2011b). Evaluation criteria refer to the use of data and markers to measure, assess, and decide the adequacy of a company's financial quality, its impact on its own customers and the wider community, and its productivity and effectiveness.

Fundamental Components of Strategic Management

Analyzing the environment; developing and implementing strategies; and evaluating and controlling

(a) Scanning of the environment

According to current forecasts, the climate for all businesses will get worse with each passing year. Environmental uncertainty is the sum of the complexity and rate of change in the surroundings of an organisation. The number of variables a business must take into account for each choice grows significantly and gets considerably more difficult as more and more marketplaces become global. Every year, new technologies are developed, which causes markets to shift and products to follow suit.

On the one hand, environmental uncertainty poses a danger to strategic managers because it limits their capacity to create long-term goals and make tactical choices that will maintain the company in balance with its external environment (Phina, 2020). On the other hand, environmental certainty presents a chance since it alters the playing field such that innovation and creativity can have a significant impact on strategic choices.

An organisation must first assess both its internal and external environments for strengths and weaknesses before starting to formulate a plan. The external environment must be scanned for potential opportunities and threats. Strategic planning entails incorporating an examination of the external environment and a determination of the effects of business environment vicissitudes on the organisation (Kumar, 2021).

The monitoring, assessment, and dissemination of information from the internal and external surroundings to important individuals within the organisation explains the concept of environment scanning (Mumbe & Njuguna, 2019). Its goal is to pinpoint the strategic elements—both internal and external—that will shape the corporation's future. SWOT analysis is the most straightforward method for carrying out an environmental investigation. SWOT stands for Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats, and it is used to identify the precise SWOT aspects that are strategic for a certain firm.

The variables (Opportunities and Threats) that make up the external environment are those that are not within the immediate control of senior management and exist outside the company. These elements define the environment in which the corporation operates (Wheelen & Hunger, 2012). In order to acquire information for analysis, which will then be utilised to develop strategies, a business organisation must do a SWOT analysis on both its internal and external environments.

The company frequently has little influence over the outside environment. It covers external elements that are outside the company's control and that may present opportunities or challenges to the business. They are, in other words, variables that have the potential to affect an organization's performance but over which the company has little to no control (Ofunya, 2013). They might be broad forces and trends operating in the social or natural surroundings, or they could be particular elements operating in the niche task environment that is sometimes referred to as an organization's industry. The elements (weaknesses and strengths) within a firm that affect its competitive advantage make up the internal environment of a firm, and an enterprise's structure, values, and capitals are among the variables (Kinyanjui & Juma, 2014).

Competencies are taken into consideration in the domain of competitive advantage, and they have to do with determining the number and quality of a company's resources, capabilities, and methods of developing skills. Finding an organization's core competencies that will provide it a competitive advantage over other businesses in the industry to which it belongs is the main goal of internal analysis.

In this phase, an organization's strengths and shortcomings are identified (i.e. the internal analysis). While the organization's deficiencies result in subpar performance, its strengths drive great performance. Its weaknesses could be due to ineffective management, outdated office equipment, outdated information systems, cash flow issues, a limited supply of raw materials, and poor performance trends in labour costs, selling prices, and gross profit. On the other hand, it might have strong human resources that are adaptable and up-to-date in their technical knowledge, latest technologies, and efficient management.

(b) Development of a strategy

The critical development of fundamentals around the future of an enterprise is in its ability to build systems for the smooth handling of both internal and external opportunities and dangers, which are likely to affect the good will of the enterprise. This is necessary as a result of an enterprise's vulnerabilities and strengths, which can be handled by developing or formulating a strategy (Ofunya, 2013). It directs the organization's dynamic and evolving interaction with its environment and enables the systematic discovery and evaluation of business prospects. As a result, it makes it possible for a company to take initiative, keep a positive balance with its surroundings, and make ground-breaking discoveries for a competitive edge.

It also makes it more efficient to prioritise tasks and allocate time and resources to opportunities that have been recognised. It offers a foundation for the definition of individual roles, which helps increase members of the organization's motivation and commitment to achieving long-term enterprise goals. According to Buuni *et al*. (2015), a normal commercial firm often takes into account three different forms of strategy. It includes declaring the company's objective, setting specific systems, developing tactics, and articulating reasonable targets (Abu Amuna, Al Shobaki & Abu-Naser, 2017).

Mission: An organization's aims and objectives are laid forth in its mission and vision statements. In other words, an organization's mission and vision statements inform its aims and objectives. The mission statement of an organisation frequently includes goals. It is believed that mission and vision are two distinct ideas. The organization's mission explains where it is right now. It highlights the objectives and state of affairs. According to Wheelen and Hunger (2012), the organization's mission serves as its primary goal or justification for being.

Vision: The future aspirations of a firm are outlined in its vision. Wheelen and Hunger (2012) describe that vision as putting into words both the current state of the business and its long-term goals. In other terms, it refers to management's long-term strategy plan for the company.

Goal: Although goals and objectives are sometimes used interchangeably, when a strategic planning model distinguishes between the two, it signifies that the goals are broad, timeless assertions of the outcomes that the business believes it can employ to fulfil its mission. As a result, goals are precise, quantifiable, and time bound. They sharpen the organization's objectives even further.

Objective: The objectives are the end results of a planned effort. Ideally, they should have a quantifiable time frame and be expressed as action verbs. The mission of the organisation is outlined in its goal. Any organization's foundation is made up of them. The strategists may better design the strategic management process with the aid of their good comprehension. Any action not made in line with the company's mission statement may harm the reputation of the business and demoralise the employees.

(c) Execution of the strategy

Overall strategy deployment in an organisation necessitates the development of projects, resources, and processes to put plans and objectives into action. Throughout this phase, adjustments to the company's core ethos, architecture, and/or control framework might well be required. Nevertheless, until such large-scale corporate entity improvement is needed, the implementation of direction is often conducted by lower-level and middle-level executives, with appraisal by top leadership. The execution of a strategy sometimes entails daily choices regarding the allocation of resources and is sometimes referred to as "operational planning" (Wheelen & Hunger, 2012).

The "planning process" is the term used to describe the actions and choices required to execute forth a comprehensive tactic. Through the creation of programmes, budgets, and procedures, it is the process through which goals, plans, and policies are put into practise. Implementation is a crucial component of strategic management, even though it is often taken into account after a plan has been developed. Thus, developing a plan and putting it into action should be seen as two sides of the same coin. Numerous strategy failures have been attributed to poor execution.

(d) Evaluation and Control

Once the strategy has been put into place, the outcomes must be monitored, assessed, and changed as necessary to keep the plan on track. As a component of the assessment and control phase, monitoring business activities and overall performance permits contrasts between real and expected output (David, 2011a; Wheelen & Hunger, 2012). As an element of the assessment and accountability phase, corporate operations and productivity results are monitored in order that the overall output can be compared to the anticipated output. Executives from various stages utilise the knowledge generated or that emerges to address difficulties and implement appropriate actions. Although. The third significant component of strategic management is evaluation and control. It can also reveal flaws in previously executed strategic plans and prompt a new round of planning (Wheelen & Hunger, 2012).

The review and control process assure that a business is achieving its goals. It contrasts performance with intended outcomes and offers the feedback required for the executives to assess outcomes and the right remedial action. For executives to conduct efficient evaluation and oversight methods, their employees need to provide them with precise, timely, and unbiased feedback. For an effective corporate planning strategy to increase productivity throughout all enterprises, there should be key elements that must be placed to work together. Additionally, evaluation needs feedback. The strategist must endearvour to return and take cognisance of the new changes in the initial effort made, most especially, when an enterprise is being developed (Kuye & Oghojafor, 2011).

Performance

Performance is what happens after an activity. The real results of the strategic management approach are included. In order to increase an organization's performance, which is normally gauged in terms of profits and return on investment, strategic management is justified. Managers must have clear, timely, and unbiased information from those below them in the corporate hierarchy in order for evaluation and control to be successful (Owolabi & Makinde, 2012). Managers of a business must not overlook the critical role that performance measurement plays in operational activities.

It is a useful tool for holding an organization's stakeholders responsible and determining when a change is necessary. Literature has identified two approaches to dealing with performance: the financial or "sales-based" approach and the non-financial or "firm-based" approach. The non-financial measures employee development, customer satisfaction, work happiness, and effective enterprise internal procedures, whereas the financial measures variables like profitability level, extent of efficiency, percentage of sales, competitive market edge, and possible product goodwill (Eniola & Ektebang, 2014).

A number of management decisions and activities affect an enterprise's success over the long run. Monitoring of the internal and external environments, tactical or lengthy development, the development and implementation of strategies, as well as evaluation and supervision, are all involved. As a result, monitoring and evaluating external risks and opportunities in light of a corporation's strengths and weaknesses (Eniola & Entebang, 2015).

Previous Studies on Strategic Management and Firms Performance

Dahir and Nyang'au (2019) carried out a study in Kenya on similar variables used in this study. The study used employees in the power sector, and a descriptive design was adopted. The sample for the study was 250 employees that were selected using a multistage sampling technique. Primary data were used, and the method of collection was through the use of questionnaires. Regression was used for the analysis of the study. It was found that the components of strategic management have a direct effect on organizational performance. It was concluded that outsourcing should be time dependent, while the policies of the enterprises should be tailored to meet the strategic objectives of the company.

Onikoyi *et al*. (2021) study that was carried out in Nigeria was on strategic management influence on Cadbury performance. The study used a descriptive research design. Questionnaires were used to collect primary data. The study used a sample of 100 Cadbury employees. Regression analysis was conducted on the data obtained. The study found that strategic management is not, yet a regular strategy adopted by the firm, but it was found to be useful and remains a veritable tool for advancing improved enterprise performance. The study recommends that there is a need for the management to include strategic management programmes in their approach, so as to improve their overall performance.

Meseret (2019) study that was carried out in Ethiopia emphasized on the relevance of strategic management practices on the institutional performance. The study used a descriptive design and the study sample of the study was 128 respondents. Regression was used for the analysis of the data, as a questionnaire was used for data collection, which was the primary data collection method. The study found that strategic management is easier to design than to implement. The study confirms that implementing strategic plans in an enterprise is critical to assisting them in meeting their expectations.The study recommended that having a strategic plan is vital to driving the institutional performance of firms.

The study of Nkemchor and Ezeanolue (2021) that was carried out in Nigeria was centred on the influence of strategic management dimensions on organizational performance. The study used a sample of 343 tertiary institutions' employees. Multiple regression was used to analyze the data gathered. The study found that the dimensions of strategic management affect the performance of tertiary institutions. The study concludes that the ability to design a suitable strategic plan is essential to driving the increased productivity of the firm. It was suggested that the institutions' strategic policies be designed to reflect their expectations.

Similarly, Aliyu, Adekunle, and Abbah's (2022) study focused on the strategic management and performance of SMEs.The study used a descriptive design and a sample of 388 participants took part in the survey. Regression was used for the analysis of the study. In their findings, it was recorded that there was an association between strategic management and the performance of the SMEs. The study concludes that the enterprise's ability to build a system-wide strategic structure was an important and positive driver of its performance. The study recommended that SMEs make an effort at building a structure strategy that would help improve their business performance.

In addition, Agwu (2018) conducted a study on similar variables in Lagos State, Nigeria. The study used a survey design and a sample of 120 owners of SMEs was used for the study. Primary data was collected using a questionnaire instrument, while a convenient sampling technique was used in selecting the participants for the study. The study used regression analysis for the data gathered. It was found that the competitive edge that SMEs seek can be found when they have a strong strategic management practice. The study recommended that there is a need for an organizational structure that supports the overall performance of the organization.

In addition, the study of Mutendera and Simba (2019) was carried out in the hospitality sector on the same study variables. The study adopted a descriptive research design, using a sample of 72 participants across various sectors. The study used primary data, which was collected using a questionnaire schedule. The data gathered was analysed using correlation and regression techniques. It was found that strategy formulation is vital to the growth of the hotels. It was also concluded that managers can improve their performance through a deliberate strategy focused on their growth.

Dauda, Akingbade and Akinlabi (2010) looked at how strategic management affected the performance of a few small businesses in Nigeria's Lagos Metropolis. Their research found that strategic management techniques increase enterprise profitability and market share. It has been therefore concluded that strategic management methods increase enterprise profitability and corporate market share and recommend that business organizations implement strategic planning principles.

Methodology:

A descriptive research design was adopted in this study. The reason behind the study's research design was to intentionally describe the influence of IT firms’ strategic management practices on their performance. The researcher uses primary sources of information for this project. The questionnaire was a self-designed sample of 260 managers from 59 IT firms across the six geopolitical zones of Nigeria. The survey uses a five-point Likert scale, with 1 denoting "strongly disagree," 2 "disagree," 3 "neutral," 4 "agree," and 5 "strongly agree." In selecting the participants for the investigation, simple random sampling was used. The choice of this technique was made to ensure all qualified individuals are allowed to fully take part in the study without any restrictions. The instrument used in this study is said to be valid because content validity was applied, it served the purpose for which it was intended to measure, and the data used are all valid because it produces somewhat consistent results when the randomly selected sample is tested again several days later. Since the instruments were compiled from trustworthy business periodicals and textbooks and were designed to prevent ambiguity, the researcher is confident in their validity. The study used Cronbach alpha to test for the reliability of the study. The result from the analysis shows that coefficients between 0.721 and 0.822 were obtained for the variables in the study. The responses to each questionnaire were analysed using Pearson product correlation because it was suitable to describe the nature of the relationship that existed between the study variables.

Results and Discussion:

The preliminary analysis of the data gathered for the study was conducted. A careful analysis showed that of the two hundred and sixty (260) questionnaires distributed, only one hundred and ninety-five (195) were found suitable for further analysis. The demographic analysis of the instrument shows that one hundred twenty-five (125), which is 64% of the respondents were male while seventy (70), which is 36% of the respondents were females. The age distribution of the respondents indicates a mean average of 18- 30years, which means majority of tech firms in the country are managed by young CEOs. The education qualification shows that majority of graduates with 87% being university graduates. The analysis also shows that majority of the firms are within a 5-10years of operations. The normality of data was assessed, and it was found normal. Next, the data was subjected to correlation analysis. The result is presented in Table 1 and 2 below.

Table 1: Descriptive result on the link between strategic management and firm performance

	Mean	Std. Deviation	N
Strategic Management	4.0103	0.82481	195
Performance	3.9795	0.91921	195

Table 2: Correlation showing the link between strategic management and firm performance

		Strategic Management	Performance
Strategic Management	Pearson Correlation	1	0.753**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		0.000
	N	195	195
Performance	Pearson Correlation	0.753**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.000	
	N	195	195
**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).			

The result confirms that there is an association linking strategic management and IT firms' performance, as shown in Table 2. The result shows that the relation is positive, hence, a good application of strategic management would lead to increase in the IT firm's performance. The result also implies that the relationship is strong and high, as shows that 75.3% shared relationship exist between strategic management and the IT firm's performance. The coefficient of determination, which explains the degree to which changes in the strategic management would affect the enterprises performance was also assessed. The result shows a coefficient of 57%, which means that 57% of changes in the firm's strategic management could account for potential changes in the IT firm's performance.

The mean and standard deviation result for the tables as shown in table 1 indicates a good spread of the response, which a favourable perspective to the variables in the study. The findings from this stud aligns with the study of Nkemchor and Ezeanolue (2021) that also found that strategic management affects the organizational performance of tertiary institution in Delta State, Nigeria. Similarly, the outcome from this study aligns with the works of Meseret (2019) that also assessed the effect of strategic management practices on the institutional performance of firms. Also, the finding agrees with the works of Agwu. (2018) and Mutendera and Simba (2019) that also found that strategic management is an essential component in driving improved business performance in Nigeria.

Conclusion:

The central objective of this study was to account for the influence of strategic management on the performance of IT firms in Nigeria. The study found that there is a positive association between strategic management and the performance of IT firms. The study therefore concludes that strategic management is a sufficient vehicle through which firms that desire an increased competitive edge can obtain it. Thus, managers of IT firms that desire increased performance can implement the listed recommendations.

i. The managers of IT firms should be willing to come up with a detailed strategic plan that shows where they are and where they want to be in each financial year.

ii. Further, it is relevant for IT firm managers to become increasing willing to implement their strategy having developed them through a deliberate and consistent process that is in line the firms' objectives.

iii. Finally, it is also vital that IT firms' managers conduct regular evaluation and control of their own strategy and be willing to make deliberate changes when the need arises, as it will be critical to guarantee improved performance.

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Conflict of Interest:

The authors declare that they have not any conflict of interests.

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