

MARKET ORIENTATION AND PERCEIVED EMPLOYEE SATISFACTION: A STUDY OF SELECTED WOMEN ENTREPRENEURS IN NON-OIL EXPORT TRADE

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ABSTRACT

Market orientation has been a significant challenge for the effectiveness and sustainability of small and medium scale enterprises. The problem is more intense for women entrepreneurs who have issues with hiring and keeping skilled workforce marketing skills and marketing research. This study provided empirical evidence on the influence of market orientation on employee satisfaction in non-oil export women entrepreneurial firms. The study adopted a quantitative approach via the use of questionnaire distributed conveniently and purposively to 416 female entrepreneurs and export managers in the agribusiness, textile, and information technology and business processing outfit (IT/BPO) in Lagos state. The data collected were analysed using correlation, regression, and Structural Equation Modelling (SEM) to obtain results. The findings revealed that the relationship between market orientation and women entrepreneurs' perception of employee satisfaction is confirmed to be directly significant with a beta value of 0.584, indicating a strong degree of association. The analysis showed that the indicators of market orientation variable collectively explained 37.3% of the variability of women entrepreneurs' perception of employee satisfaction. It concluded that the orientation of the market via intelligence gathering, internal diffusion of information, and willingness to practice facilitate real employees' satisfaction and consequent customers' satisfaction. Women entrepreneurs need to structure their ventures flexibly to develop and adapt market orientation as a prospective strategy for speedy innovativeness through motivated and engaged employees for sustainable competitiveness.

Keywords: Market Orientation, Employee Satisfaction, Women Entrepreneurs, Non-oil Export.

INTRODUCTION

Employees are most important of all firm resources needed for the success of any organisation as they provide strategic advantage which competitors cannot easily replicate in a competitive business environment (Vlaseková, & Mura, 2017). Several studies have linked the sustainability and overall health of an organisation to employee commitment and loyalty which is contingent on their satisfaction (Kanyurhi & Akonkwa, 2016; Katou, 2017). Employee satisfaction is an essential factor in promoting levels of productivity and increased employee innovativeness, as well as, ensures customer satisfaction for growing profitability (Cochran,

2019; Wolter et al., 2019). The fundamental goal of every organisation is sustainable competitiveness and growth as customers get satisfaction. Competition intensity in the market environment requires the pro-activeness of organisations to understanding varying tastes and proclivities of customers and the capability to meet their specific requests better than their competitors. To achieve a sustainable comparative edge in a stiff competitive business environment, an organisation needs to be market-oriented. Market orientation is the core of high-quality marketing practice (Kohli et al., 1993), and the antecedent of organisation long term performance. Market orientation practice in organisations have been extensively discussed in the literature (Salas-Vallina et al., 2020; Yu et al., 2018), but there are limited studies on the practice in the female-managed firm. Women entrepreneurs have been involved in business practices at the same time with their home-making duties. Yet, several studies concluded that growing economic development is closely related to advancing women contributions; otherwise, their restrictions slow the economy (Bako & Syed, 2018; Sajuyigbe & Fadeyibi, 2017).

Literature established that women are better at managing personal-oriented and concerns about the well-being of their workers. They operate job functions without overlooking the positive relationship with their workers (Girdauskiene & Eyvazzade, 2015; Wikaningrum & Yuniawan, 2018). However, most women entrepreneurs in Nigeria, particularly in non-oil export, identify inadequate market information access and people management issues as a critical concern, especially with the cost of hiring qualified employees and employee turnover which makes their market innovativeness weak (Ugoani, 2016). Also, they experience difficulties in accessing information regarding foreign markets, marketing skills and research, therefore do not strategically plan and generate knowledge in a formalised process as inherent in market orientation practice (Ebitu et al., 2016; Iyiola & Azuh, 2014). Etim et al. (2018) & Taiwo et al. (2016) studied the interplay of human entrepreneurial activities, finance, and market forces on the product/service innovation and employment generation. These effects on low market orientation limit the effectiveness of their supply chain and innovation capabilities in response to the customer demands in the market environment (O' Dwyer et al., 2009; NEPC, 2016).

High performance in stiff competition and rapidly changing customer preferences and tastes require market knowledge and commitment of employees to achieve competitive advantage. Quality Market orientation practice through the employees' commitment to sourcing of firm-wide market intelligence and responsive diffusion of the information across the board, stirs proactive response to changes in the business environment and meeting customers' need (Kohli & Jaworski, 1990; Igbaekemen, 2014). It sets the platform for employees' autonomy in their job roles to make decisions and innovatively advancing the firm's processes via mutual participation. They want to go the extra to increase their performance when they are satisfied with the management support (Narver & Slater, 1990; Kohli et al., 1993; Bodea & Dutu, 2016). Sustainable performance, leveraged on instilling high market orientation could enhance the competence of women entrepreneurs and employees in responding to customers' immediate and potential future needs (Li et al., 2008; Asaad et al., 2016). Thus the objective of this study focuses on examining the effect of market orientation on the satisfaction of employees in the non-oil export sector.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Market Orientations

Market orientation, according to Kotler & Lee (2008) is a management philosophy where the organisation's goal is to identify the expressed needs and possible wants of customers in its target markets and deliver the desires satisfactorily efficiently and effectively better than competitors. Customer satisfaction and employee satisfaction and commitment are fast replacing the optimisation and cost reduction priority (Gheysaria et al., 2012). Market-oriented businesses scan the market more broadly, having a longer-term focus to discover customers' current and latent needs resulting in generative learning drive. For example, they observe customers' use of products or services in regular routines, to acquire information to process; also work closely with lead users to see into the future regarding changes in the market (Wirtz & Daiser, 2018).

Employee Satisfaction

Employee satisfaction describes the psychological state of employee regarding the fulfilment of expected desires and needs at work. It is regarded as the effect of job satisfaction that determines the attitude of the employee towards work and work environment based on the appraisal of the actual working outcome against the expected (Widyanti, 2020). Singh (2017) reported that job satisfaction is a predictor of employee performance. Employee satisfaction is a critical underlying factor in employee motivation toward goal achievement, and positive outlook in the workplace necessary for generating competitiveness and high performance. Sound management of motivated employees, therefore, is pivotal to the survival and growth of firms, especially in smaller firms, due to the inherent resource constraints (Asuah-Duodu et al., 2019; Ferdousi et al., 2019; Kurdi et al., 2020; Lee, Patterson, Ngo, 2017; Tuan & Rajagopal, 2019; Yildiz & Amin, 2020).

Relationship between Market Orientation and Employee Satisfaction

Market orientation is customer-focused. It searches to understand the expressed and latent needs of customers and how to meet the requirements (Narver & Slater, 1990). Market orientation is a high-quality marketing behaviour of organisation-wide scanning its environment for current and future needs and wants of customers, and internally disseminate the intelligence vertically and horizontally for organisation-wide responsiveness, to enable effective and efficient creation of superior value continuously for its stakeholders, including its employees (Kohli & Jaworski, 1990, Kohli et al., 1993). There are three sets of activities that make up market orientation: The market-oriented enterprises generate scanning the customers' relation, spying on competitors, and the business environment for market formal and informal information on the current and future customer needs; processed to intelligence and disseminate across departments through vertical and horizontal communication; and effect organisation-wide responsiveness to the intelligence (Kohli & Jaworski, 1990). The responsiveness is said to be composed of two sets of activities, which are responsive design of the practice of market intelligence to advance plans; and the responsive application in the organization to achieve Competitive, Innovative, Sustainable performance. However, performance is easily achieved with free involvement of

employee by ensuring their satisfaction through management support, job design, Reward, training, creative environment (Kumar & Kaur, 2019; Yang et al., 2019) (Figure 1).

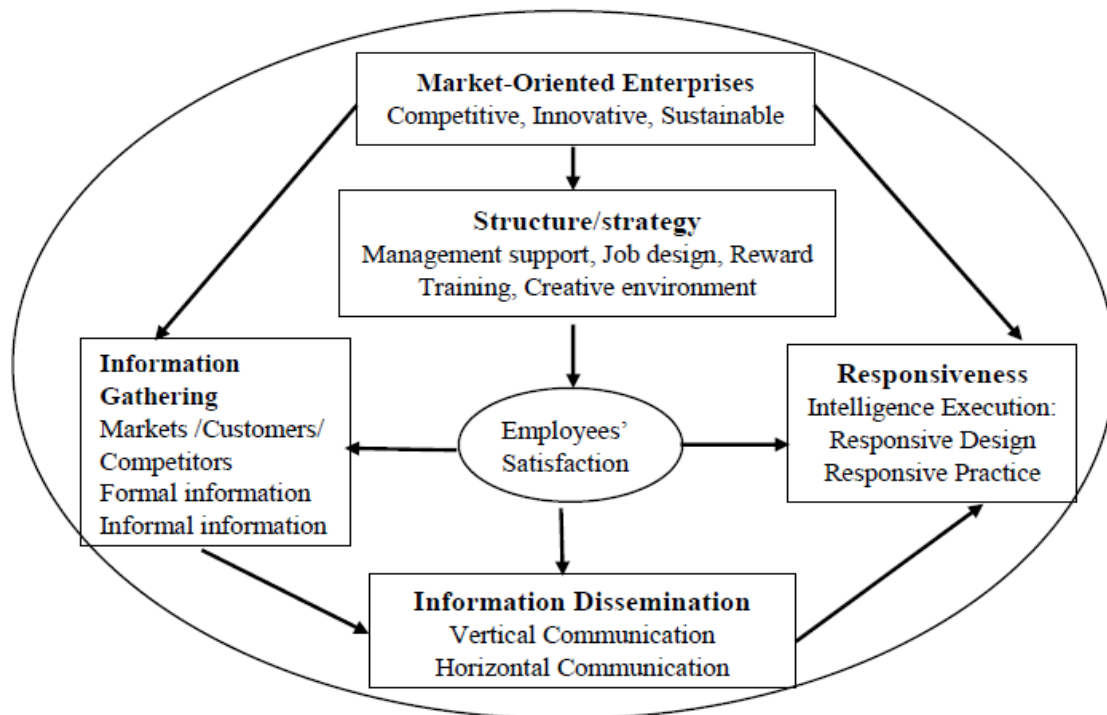


FIGURE 1
MARKET ORIENTATION AND EMPLOYEE SATISFACTION MODEL

Several empirical works attested to the importance of market oriented and employee involvement to enhancing firm performance. For instance, Bartosik-Purgat & Schroeder, (2014), found that SMEs expansion to foreign markets was not without diverse sourcing of adequate resource of information. The survey of 493 polish exporters confirmed that the use of different sources of information-internet, trade event participation, experience exchange, and personal contacts proffered differentiated usage which had a significant impact on export entry to foreign markets. In the same vein, organisational export success determines the significant positive influence of export information processing system but had moderated effect by the turbulent/competition environment, and organisational structure-centralisation/decentralisation (Theodosiou & Evangelia, 2013). Also, Jyoti & Sharma, (2012) gleaned data from the employees, customers, and the executives of different automobile showrooms, found a significant relationship between market orientation and customer satisfaction, and employee satisfaction indirectly on business performance. Several other studies confirmed the vital link between the variable (Mahmoud et al., 2016). Julian et al. (2014) found a positive and significant impact of the three dimensions of MO on export performance in Indonesian export market ventures. The customer orientation predicted the strongest, then competitor, and inter-functional, as well as interdepartmental coordination, respectively.

Employees are a strategic resource for sustainable competitive advantage. Resource-based view concedes to the organisation internal resources as heterogeneous for sustainable competitive advantage. Organisation resources can achieve competitiveness when they are

valuable, rare, inimitable, and no substitutable (VRIN) (Tidd & Bessant, 2018). According to Barney (1986), scarce resource enables a firm to gain high sales, low costs, high margins, or accrue financial value. Several scholars, however, argued that RBV evolved rigidity in adapting to a competitive environment. Instead, dynamic capability enables firms to focus more on structuring and restructuring processes and resources to create competitiveness than resource possession (Teece et al., 1997).

In comparison, dynamic capabilities view engenders the upgrade of resources to integrate, build, and reconfigure internal and external competencies to take advantage of the rapidly changing market condition (Teece et al., 1997). Organisational learning and redistribution of the internal capabilities evolve the innovativeness of the employees to deliver superior new or improved ideas for product/service faster and better than the competitor and to facilitate continual satisfaction of customers. This informs the top management's commitment to mitigating factors that may affect employees' satisfaction, and encourage the intrinsic and extrinsic motivation of employees to boost the level of performance, and indirectly the growth of the organisation. The management involvement in ensuring the satisfaction of employees improves self-confidence, enhances quality work output, and grows their loyalty to the organisation (Gerhart & Rynes, 2003). Yuritanto et al. (2020) study revealed the significant relationship between variables climate communication, competence, and discipline on employee performance by 40.3%. Still, Wei et al. (2012) postulated that reward based on participation influenced employees' performance desires. Using a mixed-method approach, and structural modelling method, a multi-industry of 290 firms' managers surveyed, showed the significant positive effect of market orientation on reward-based participation approach but found a negative impact on new product performance.

METHODOLOGY

The study adopted the use of a quantitative approach to allow extraction of analytic and descriptive data to explain the relationship between market orientation and perceived employee satisfaction in the non-oil export trade. This research held all female entrepreneurs, and export managers, who are actively, involved in non-oil export activities in the agribusiness, textile, as well as information and technology business processing outfit (ITBPO) in Lagos state as the study population. They were women entrepreneurs that registered with the Nigerian Exporters Promotion Council (NEPC) and SheTrade initiative. Four hundred and sixteen (416) of them operate formally in micro, small, medium, and low-technology agribusiness, textile industries, and ITBPO clustered under the umbrella of different women business groups located in Lagos state.

Firm size	Employees	Agribusiness	Textile/Apparel	ITBPO	Total
Micro	10-Jan	23	11	28	62
Small	Nov-50	56	21	79	156
Medium	51- 99	69	28	101	198
Total		148	60	208	416

This number is aside from the several unregistered exporting women entrepreneurs in the informal space (NEPC Conserve List, 2019) as shown in Table 1. The agribusiness division consists of all agriculture-related cultivation and processing firms; the textile division comprises

of all textiles, apparel, and fashion related firms, and ITBPO consists of information and technology services. The reason is to allow easy identification, classification, and measurement of the study population, and for adequate and equal representation of the population characteristics (Ahrens, 2016). The returned responses consisted of four hundred two (402) active female export entrepreneurs and managers involved in non-oil export activities in the agribusiness, textile, as well as information and technology business processing outfit (ITBPO) in Lagos State. By the purposive technique, the researcher selected the women entrepreneurs' firms out of the entire gender-neutral non-oil export population for the suitability of the study goal. The growing importance of the economic shift away from oil evolved gender inclusiveness in the nation's economy, which provides women with an opportunity to tap more into export trade and to eliminate discriminatory practices. This inclusiveness sets as its priority improved access to productive resources that encouraged a shift in behaviour towards entrepreneurship and capacity-building for improved access to international markets to expand wealth creation opportunities for them (ITC, 2018). Hence, the purposive choice for this study. The geographical choice of Lagos premised on it being the commercial hub and host of the major infrastructure for access ports in the nation. Complete enumeration survey collects data from all elements included in the population (Gupta et al., 2015). Thus, the internet and phone communication facilitated the ease of all-inclusive equal chance for the respondents and participants selected.

The use of questionnaire was adopted and was designed using the 5-point Likert scale and organised into three sections, A-C. Section A comprised the respondents' demographic profile; Section B featured firm-specific questions related to the characteristics and operations of the respondents. Section C dealt with issues related to the thrust of the study- the independent variable (export orientation), the dependent variable (performance of women entrepreneurial firms) and the moderating variable (innovation). The design of section C showed the 5-point Likert scale ranging from "*Strongly agree*" to "*strongly disagree*" (Strongly agree=5, 4=agree, 3=undecided, 2=disagree, 1=strongly disagree). The pattern of the questionnaire guided the respondents' selection process to the best option that satisfied them. The items were adapted from existing literature, as presented in Table 2.

s/n	Variables	No of items	Sources
1	Market Orientation	5	Kohli & Jaworski (1990); Igbaekemen (2014); Narver & Slater (1990); Asaad et al. (2016)
2	Perceived Employee Satisfaction	5	Mwaura et al. (2015)

The use of Partial Least Square – Structural Equation Modelling (PLS-SEM) technique was adopted for data analysis. Smart PLS 3 was used for SEM analysis because this tool is used for theory testing in early stages (Hair et al., 2011; Henseler et al., 2009). PLS also can be used on small sample size because this method does not consider distribution assumptions.

Data Presentation and Analysis

The data presented below depicts the descriptive analysis of the respondent women entrepreneurs to the research question raised- what way does market orientation affect the satisfaction of employees?

The responses were measured based on five (5) items on the questionnaire with the aid of five (5) point Likert's scale. The Likert's scale ranges from strongly agree (5), Agree (4), undecided (3), disagree (2) and strongly disagree (1). Table 3 and Table 4 showed the market orientation and women entrepreneurs' perceived employees' satisfaction responses.

Items	Sub-sectors	SA	A	U	D	SD	Mean	SD
Periodically review customers' want review	Agribusiness	33	99	6	5	1	4.097	0.682
	Info-Tech	63	121	13	4	-	4.209	0.645
	Textile	22	26	8	1	-	4.193	0.811
Total		118	246	27	10	1	4.166	0.713
Collection information of industry	Agribusiness	27	85	28	3	1	3.93	0.725
	Info-Tech	51	115	21	13	1	4.005	0.815
	Textile	16	27	8	6	-	3.929	0.923
Total		94	227	57	22	2	3.955	0.821
Gathering information on our competitors	Agribusiness	38	84	18	1	3	4.062	0.777
	Info-Tech	51	114	30	6	-	4.044	0.723
	Textile	14	28	14	1	-	3.964	0.755
Total		103	226	62	8	3	4.023	0.752
Periodically Review changes in the business environment	Agribusiness	30	81	30	2	1	3.951	0.732
	Info-Tech	51	126	16	6	2	4.084	0.733
	Textile	21	25	9	1	1	4.122	0.867
Total		102	232	55	9	4	4.052	0.777
Interdepartmental hold from time to time meetings	Agribusiness	29	85	23	5	2	3.93	0.79
	Info-Tech	46	115	33	5	2	3.985	0.764
	Textile	17	25	11	1	3	3.912	1.022
Total		92	92	225	67	11	7	3.942

For the market orientation assessments, the above questions asked were on the periodic review of customers' want, and 364 (90.6%) of the respondents periodically review customers' desire, 27 (6.7%) were indifferent. In comparison, 11 (2.7%) had an opposing view. Secondly, 321 (79.8%) of the respondents collect industry information to gain competitive advantage, 57 (14.2%) were uninterested, and 24 (6%) had a differing view. Thirdly, 329 (81.8%) of the respondents often gather information (strengths and weaknesses) on their competitors, 62 (15.4%) were unconcerned, while 11(2.7%) had an opposing view. Fourthly, 334 (83.1%) of the respondents intermittently evaluate changes in their business environment, 55 (13.7%) were unresponsive, and 13 (3.2%) had a divergent view. Finally, 317 (78.8%) of the selected female entrepreneurs and export managers attested that interdepartmental meetings hold from time to time during which market trends are discussed, 67 (16.7%) were indifferent. In comparison, 18 (4.5%) had a contrary view.

In the above Table 3, the mean represents the average measures central tendency, while standard deviation measures the extent of variation compared to mean. The standard deviation rule states that if the ratio of the standard deviation to mean is greater than 1, it indicates high variation compared to mean. Still, if it is less than 1, it suggests a low variation compared to mean. It was observed that the average mean of the specific items of measurement for market orientation across the selected non-oil exporting activities values above of 3.80 on a scale of five (5). This implies that, on the average, the respondents' agreed to each item in the questionnaire.

		SA	A	U	D	SD	Mean	SD
Employees fulfill their desires/needs at work	Agribusiness	34	89	18	1	2	4.055	0.717
	Info-Tech	53	121	22	2	3	4.089	0.736
	Textile	17	28	9	2	1	4.017	0.876
Total		104	238	49	5	6	4.054	0.776
Our firm has a considerable opportunity for growth/improvement	Agribusiness	33	94	11	5	1	4.062	0.711
	Info-Tech	53	119	23	4	2	4.079	0.737
	Textile	22	24	10	1	-	4.175	0.782
Total		108	237	44	10	3	4.105	0.743
Employees are proud to work for my company	Agribusiness	38	68	25	7	6	3.868	0.998
	Info-Tech	37	99	36	24	5	3.691	0.987
	Textile	14	19	14	7	3	3.596	1.147
Total		89	186	75	38	14	3.718	1.044
Employees are dedicated to Meeting customers' expectations/demands	Agribusiness	45	78	13	7	1	4.104	0.808
	Info-Tech	50	121	24	6	-	4.069	0.696
	Textile	20	27	6	3	1	4.087	0.911
Total		115	226	43	16	2	4.087	0.805
We provide a suitable learning Environment to help employees grow	Agribusiness	41	73	16	11	3	3.958	0.945
	Info-Tech	57	95	26	21	5	3.915	0.958
	Textile	20	24	10	3	-	4.07	0.863
Total		118	192	52	35	8	3.981	0.922

On women entrepreneurs' responses on perceived employee satisfaction, Table 3 portrayed the assessment of employee's satisfaction based on relevant questions. 342 (85.1%) of the respondents have a significant conviction that employees fulfill their desires and needs at work, 49 (12.2%) were indifferent, while 11 (2.7%) had an opposing view. On the firm considerable opportunity for growth/ improvement, 345(85.8%) of the respondents' firms have a substantial opportunity for growth/ improvement, 44 (10.9%) were unmoved, while 13 (3.2%) had a contrary view. Also, 275 (68.4%) of the selected respondents alluded that employees are proud to work for their company, 75 (18.7%) could not ascertain the fact, and 52 (12.9%) had an opposing view about the statement. 341 (84.8%) of the respondents' employees' dedication to meeting customers' expectations/demands, 43 (10.7%) were indifferent, while 18(4.5%) of the respondents had an opposing view about the statement. Lastly, 310 (77.1%) of the selected female entrepreneurs and export managers attested that they provide a suitable learning environment to help employees grow, 52 (12.9%) of the respondents were indifferent about the statement. In comparison, 43 (10.7%) of the respondents had a differing view of the report.

The study further tested the null Hypothesis proposed:

Hypothesis Test

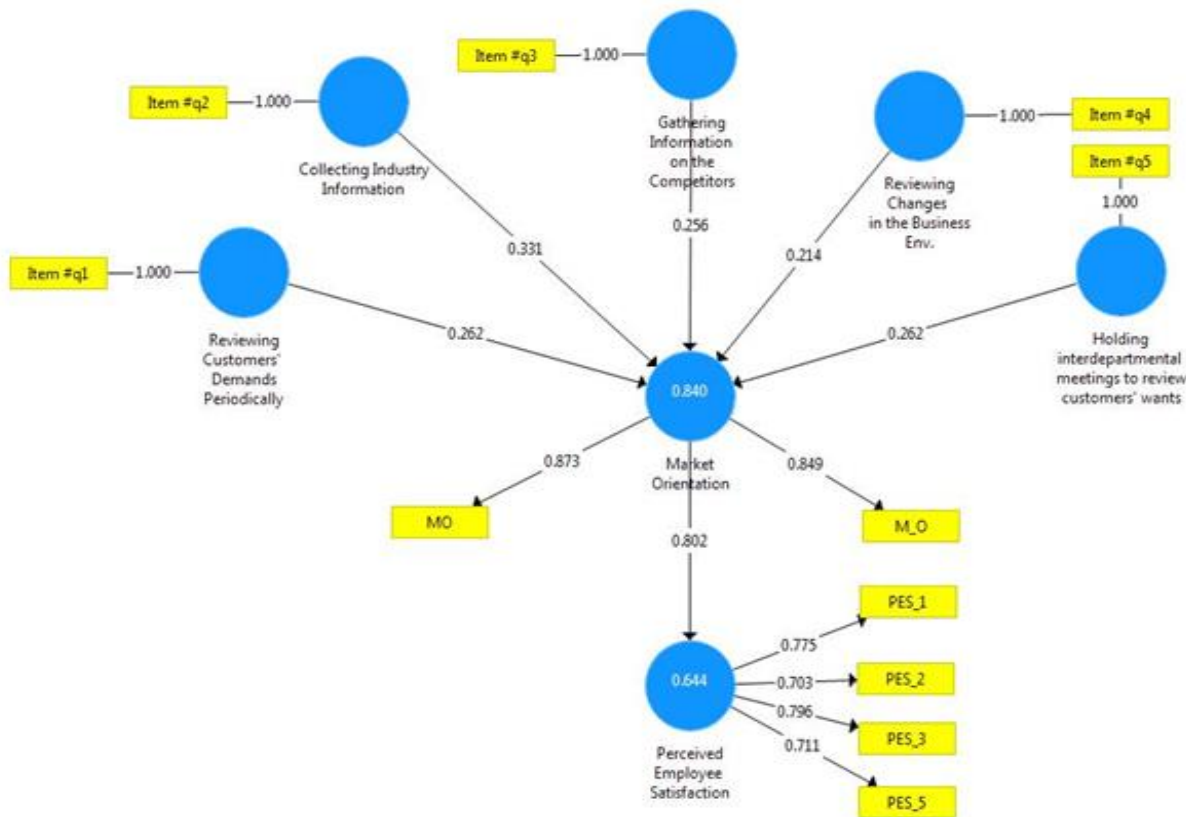
All research variables measured the market orientation of women entrepreneurs and the influence on employee satisfaction using Likert scales. The use of Partial Least Square – Structural Equation Modelling (PLS-SEM) technique was adopted for data analysis. The data collected was analysed using five (5) items to measure market orientation and five questions to determine perceived employee satisfaction. The items in the market orientation scale comprised statements such as periodically reviewing customers' want, collecting industry information, gathering information on competitors, reviewing changes in the business environment and

interdepartmental meetings holding from time to time during which market trends are discussed on a scale of 1 to 5.

The responses to all items in each variable were cumulated and analysed as presented. Judging that all items were reflective of the minimum acceptable value for a factor loading 0.60 (Fornell & Larcker, 1981). The composite reliability revealed all constructs as having values higher than 0.60. Having removed a few factor loading less than 0.6. The results are presented in Figures 2, 3 and 4, respectively.

Evaluation of the Inner Structural Model

The structural model is the inner model in structural equation modelling. It measures the path coefficients (R2) values and significant values. PLS-SEM is used for path analysis because PLS do not need any distribution assumptions. Boots strapping method finds the significance (Chin, 2010; Sanchez, 2013). The default bootstrapping in PLS is 500 subsamples to gain significant results (Wetzels et al., 2009). This study calculated 5000 subsamples in bootstrapping to achieve more precise results and path coefficient values for market orientation and perceived employee satisfaction.



**FIGURE 2
PREDICTIVE RELEVANCE (PATH CO-EFFICIENT) OF MARKET ORIENTATION
AND PERCEIVED EMPLOYEE SATISFACTION**

The Hypothesis has one exogenous variable (market orientation) and one endogenous variable (perceived employee satisfaction). The coefficient of determination/ r-squared, path

coefficient (β value) and T-statistic value, effect size (f^2), the predictive relevance of the model, and Goodness-of-Fit (GOF) index were the necessary standards for evaluating the structural model as presented in Figures 2 and 3 respectively. Path estimates are calculated by using Maximum Likelihood Estimation (MLE), considered being tolerant to violations of normality assumptions in most of the psycho-behavioural studies (Fornell & Larcker, 1981). Results of structural models and path analysis for market orientation and perceived employee satisfaction have been presented in Table 4 and illustrated in Figure 3.

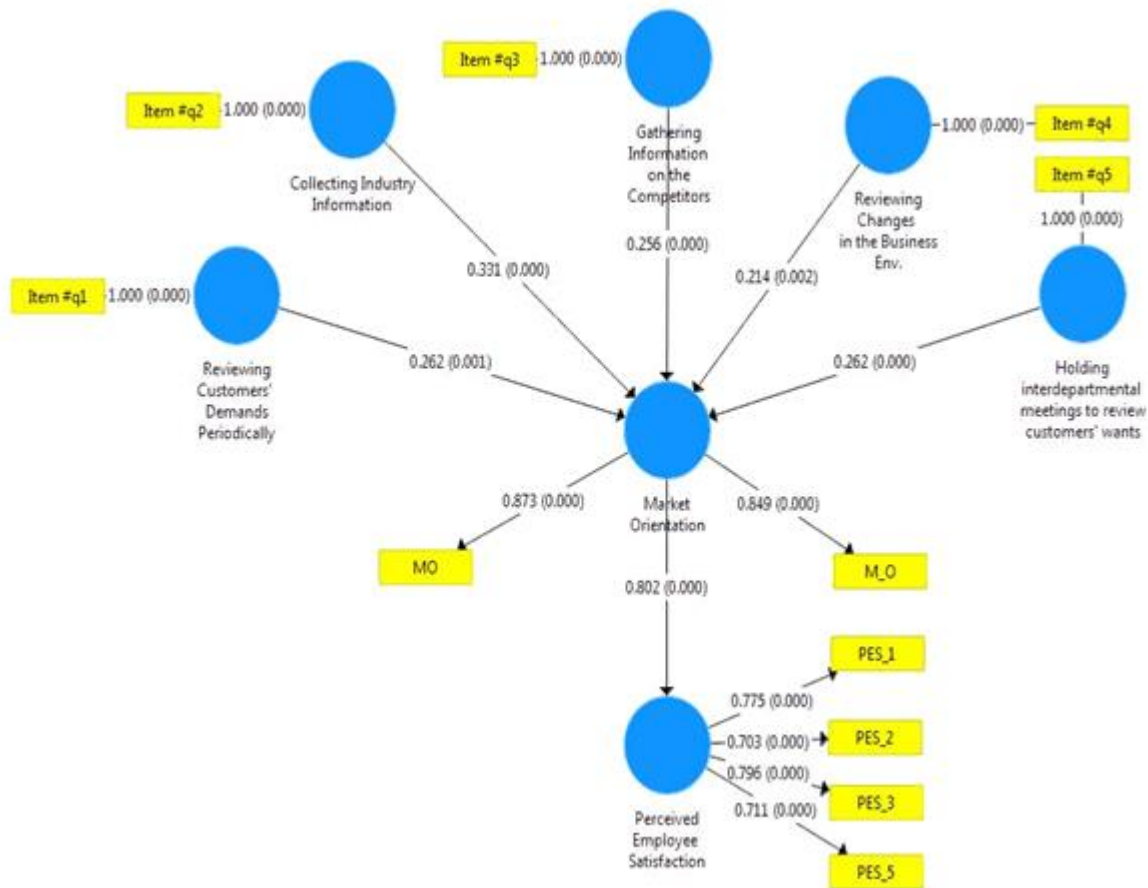


FIGURE 3
PATH CO-EFFICIENT AND P-VALUES FOR MARKET ORIENTATION AND PERCEIVED EMPLOYEE SATISFACTION

Market orientation significantly and positively influenced women entrepreneurs' perception of employee satisfaction. The items measure to achieve this premised on the periodical review of customers' want, collection of industry information, gathering information on competitors, reviewing changes in the business environment and regular interdepartmental meetings hold from time to time during which market trends. The path co-efficient affirmed that periodical review of customers' want #q1 indirectly and significantly influenced women entrepreneurs' perception of employee satisfaction ($\beta = 0.150$, $f^2 = 0.124$, $p < 0.05$). The indirect influence of collecting industry information was observed to influence women entrepreneurs' perception of employee satisfaction #q2 ($\beta = 0.246$, $f^2 = 0.158$, $p < 0.05$).

Gathering information on the competitors #q3 also recorded a positive and significant impact on women entrepreneurs’ perception of employee satisfaction ($\beta=0.175$, $f^2=0.111$, $p < 0.05$). Reviewing changes in the business environment #q4 indirectly and significantly influenced employee satisfaction ($\beta=0.204$, $f^2=0.166$, $p < 0.05$). The indirect influence of having interdepartmental meetings hold from time to time during which market trends are discussed have an impact on women entrepreneurs’ perception of employee satisfaction #q5 ($\beta=0.202$, $f^2=0.151$, $p < 0.05$). Overall, the relationship between market orientation and women entrepreneurs’ perception of employee satisfaction is confirmed to be directly significant with a beta value of 0.584, which also indicates a strong degree of association.

The indirect effect (IE) of the path co-efficient as depicted in Table 4 indicated the effect size of each item of the exogenous (independent) variables on the endogenous (dependent) in a PLS-SEM model. The effect size (also known as f^2) indicates the substantive impact of all the items. f^2 measures the strength of each predictor variable in explaining endogenous variables. Cohen (1988) recommended a guiding principle for determining the effect size. The values of 0.02, 0.15, and 0.35 respectively, signify small, moderate, and large effects of an independent construct on dependent construct; while the f^2 values of less than 0.02 shows that there is no effect. Basically, the effect size of #q1 ($f^2=0.124$) is relatively weak; #q2 ($f^2=0.158$) is relatively moderate; #q3 ($f^2=0.111$) is relatively weak; #q4 ($f^2=0.166$) is relatively moderate; and #q5 ($f^2=0.151$) is relatively moderate. The result showed that the effect size of market orientation on women entrepreneurs’ perception of employee satisfaction is relatively moderate.

The value of R² explained the variance between endogenous variables (Henseler et al., 2009; Hulland, 1999). According to Henseler et al. (2009) and Hair et al. (2013), an R² value of 0.75 is considered substantial. An R² value of 0.50 is moderate, and an R² value of 0.26 is considered as weak. In this study, the analysis showed that the indicators of exogenous (independent) variable collectively explained 37.3% of the variability of women entrepreneurs’ perception of employee satisfaction. In sum, the analysis provided evidence that the Hypothesis is supported. Hence, the R² value in this study was weak. The established regression equation and model that showed the effect of market orientation on women entrepreneurs’ perception of employee satisfaction was expressed as:

$$Y = 0.611 + 0.150 \text{ PRCW} + 0.246 \text{ CII} + 0.175 \text{ GIC} + 0.287 \text{ RCBE} + 0.202 \text{ INDM} \dots\dots\dots\text{eq. (iii)}$$

- Where: Y = Perceived Employee Satisfaction
- PRCW = Periodically reviewing customers’ want
- CII = Collecting industry information
- GIC = Gathering information on our competitors
- RCBE = Reviewing changes in the business environment
- INDM = Interdepartmental meetings hold from time to time

By implication, the Null Hypothesis (H₀), which stated that market orientation does not have significant effects on women entrepreneurs’ perception of employee satisfaction is rejected. The finding then indicates that Market orientation of women entrepreneurs does influence employee satisfaction, which established that market orientation is a significant predictor of perceived employee satisfaction.

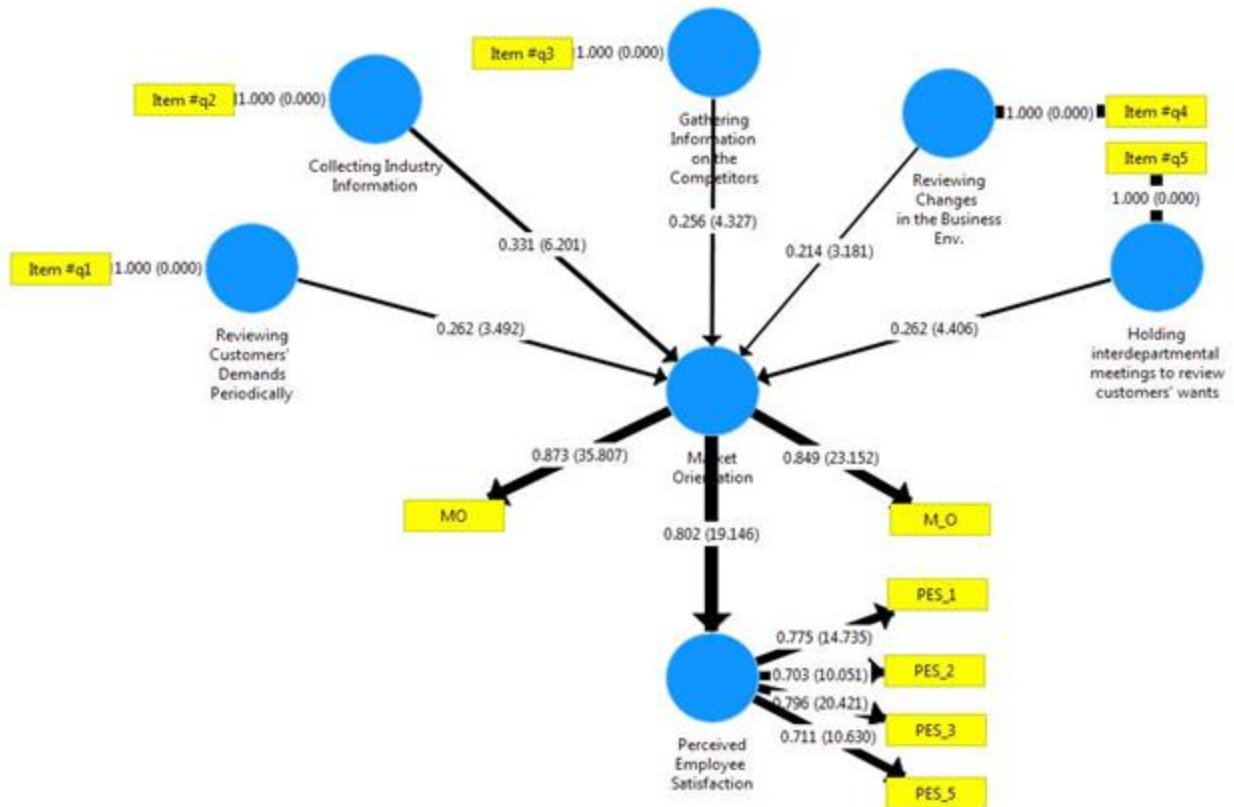


FIGURE 4
PATH CO-EFFICIENT AND T-VALUES FOR MARKET ORIENTATION AND PERCEIVED

Employee Satisfaction

Estimation of path coefficients (β) and T-statistics

There existed a similarity between the path coefficients in the PLS and the standardised β coefficient in the regression analysis. By the β value, the significance of the Hypothesis was tested. The β denotes the expected variation in the dependent construct for a unit variation in the independent construct(s). The higher the β value, the more the substantial effect on the endogenous latent construct. On computing the β value of every path in the hypothesis model, the significance level was verified through the use of the T-statistics test. The path co-efficient is presented in Table 5.

Model Fit and Goodness of fit Index

Model fit analysis runs through Standardised Root Mean Square Residual (SRMR), and Normed Fit Index (NFI) values in PLS under model fit, factor analysis in PLS algorithm. The minimum acceptable value for SRMR is less than 0.08 (Hu & Bentler, 1998). In this research, the SRMR value of market orientation is less than 0.8. The CMIN/DF indicates an acceptable fit when a hypothetical model is < 3 (Ferron and Hess, 2007). The decision rule adopted to

determine the acceptability of the model includes CMIN/df must be < 3; RMSEA/SRMR <0.8; NFI, CFI must be > 0.90 (Ferron & Hess, 2007; Fornell & Larcker, 1981). The relative Chi-square = 301.83; CFI=0.937; NFI=0.905; SRMR=0.062 as displayed in Table 6. The model fit indices satisfied the critical threshold, which indicated a fitting model.

Variables and Cross Loading	Path Co-efficient (O)	Indirect Effect (IE)	Std. Dev. (STDEV)	T Statistics (O/STDEV)	P Values
Periodically reviewing customers' want #q1 → Market Orientation	0.15		0.022	11.077	0.026
Periodically reviewing customers' want #q1 → Perceived Employee Satisfaction		0.124	0.02	6.733	0.007
Collecting industry information #q2 → Market Orientation	0.246		0.022	14.179	0.014
Collecting industry information #q2 → Perceived Employee Satisfaction		0.158	0.017	7.84	0.01
Gathering information on our competitors #q3 → Market Orientation	0.175		0.021	12.805	0.005
Gathering information on our competitors #q3 → Perceived Employee Satisfaction		0.111	0.014	7.175	0.002
Reviewing changes in the business environment #q4 → Market Orientation	0.287		0.091	10.34	0.017
Reviewing changes in the business environment #q4 → Perceived Employee Satisfaction		0.166	0.088	7.577	0.013
Interdepartmental meetings hold from time to time #q5 → Market Orientation	0.202		0.073	10.873	0.034
Interdepartmental meetings hold from time to time #q5 → Perceived Employee Satisfaction		0.151	0.059	7.081	0.015
Market Orientation → Perceived Employee Satisfaction	0.611		0.083	8.395	0
	R Square (R ²)		R Square (R ²) Adjusted		
Market Orientation → Perceived Employee Satisfaction	0.373		0.355		

Note: P-values <0.05 are desirable for reflective indicators

The goodness of Fit Index Calculation Construct	AVE	Model Fit	Estimated
Periodically reviewing customers' want	0.662	SRMR	0.062
Collecting industry information	0.873	d_ ULS	1.821
Gathering information on our competitors	0.701	CMIN/DF	0.273
Reviewing changes in the business environment	0.609	Chi-Square	301.83
Interdepartmental meetings hold from time to time	0.814	NFI	0.905
Perceived employee satisfaction	0.762	CFI	0.937
Average values	0.737	GFI	0.524
AVE x R ²	0.275		
$GOF = \sqrt{AVE \times R^2}$	0.524		

The measurement model indicated that all the model fit indices were in the acceptable range and above the recommended cut-off level as suggested by Fornell & Larcker (1981). The SRMR is an index of the average of standardised residuals between the observed and the hypothesised covariance matrices (Chen, 2007). The SRMR is a measure of the estimated model fit. When $SRMR = <0.08$, then the study model has a good fit (Hu & Bentler, 1998). The table showed that this study has 0.062 SRMR models suggesting it as a good fit.

Above all, the results established that market orientation is a significant predictor of perceived employee satisfaction. This implies that periodical reviews of customers' want, collecting industry information and gathering information on the competitors facilitate a supportive climate for new ideas breeding tasking the latent skills, competence and internal resources evolving satisfaction at work. In the same vein, timely interdepartmental meetings reveal market trends crucial to charting inclusive participation in decision making (Taggart, 2011).

In line with these findings, several studies have shown a significant and positive relationship between market orientation and employee satisfaction (Chi et al., 2009). To them, market orientation is central to achieving a strategic and distinctive advantage in the real business world. To identify opportunities in the market and evaluate the consequences of threats, women entrepreneurs should periodically review changes in the business environment and consistently invest in satisfying their employees. The finding is also in agreement with the results of Macdonald & Sharp (2000), which established that market orientation influences stakeholders' expectations.

DISCUSSION

The result revealed that market orientation significantly influenced women entrepreneurs' perception of employee satisfaction. The statistics lined with the descriptive showing that most employers ensure that employees are satisfied to facilitate customer's satisfaction with considerable personal sacrifice. To the respondents, market orientation is central to achieving a strategic and distinctive advantage in a real business world, but no without the aid of committed and satisfied employees. The result statistics revealed the respondents' value of employees' involvement in firm-wide intelligence gathering, dissemination, and diffusion of industry knowledge, information about competitors, periodic review of customers' want, and evaluation of changes in the business environment. Based on this, the women entrepreneurs hold interdepartmental meetings from time to time during which market trends are discussed to stimulate the ability to meet customers' demands and expectations, which often leads innovativeness and consequent customers' repeat purchase. This process ensured the engagement of employees' responsiveness for customer's satisfaction through passionate and satisfied participatory decision making, which usually stirs the latent skilled and competences of employees. Kohli & Jaworsky (1990) confirmed this ideology of employee involvement in sourcing firm-wide market intelligence and responsive diffusion of the knowledge generated across the board to enhance the adaptation to meeting customers' need and to proactively respond to change in the business environment thereby ensuring continuous higher performance.

Although, some women entrepreneurs in non-oil export identified having a skilled workforce and people management as a critical concern, especially with the cost of hiring qualified employees and employee turn-over (Ugoani, 2016). Yet, many agreed that market orientation requires employees' commitment and it is contingent on employees' satisfaction (Asaad et al., 2016; Igbaekemen, 2014). According to Narver & Slater (1990), employee

orientation, referred to as internal market orientation, pointed at the value of employee-centred climate in the heart of the market-oriented firm, which is characterized with a warm and supportive environment for employee satisfaction leading to superior customer satisfaction (Kawiana et al., 2018; Kumar & Kaur, 2019). Barney (1986) held that working as a team as a source of resources and capabilities fosters firm growth. Teamwork implies bringing diverse knowledge, competences, and experiences, resulting in novel ideas or improved processes and maximal allocation of resources for higher performance (Yang et al., 2019). It compensates for individual competence deficits. Hence women entrepreneurs' need for market orientation may not be in doubt for consequent customers' satisfaction.

The result is further corroborated by the works of Sollosy et al. (2015) who acclaimed that market orientation facilitates sales turnover as it helps to collect and use market information as well as focus on coordinating available resources to produce and deliver unbeatable valuation to customers. This supports the works of Aleksic & Jelavic (2017). They argued that SMEs with a high degree of market orientation continually look for different ways to sustain competitive advantage and to satisfy customers' expectation. Market-oriented Business-oriented businesses pay more considerable attention to identifying and meeting customer needs, realizing the economic environment in which they work, and adapting to market shifts and competitive environments. Every organisation should, therefore, embrace market orientation as a strategy which could be used to build capabilities to meet customers' needs and satisfaction to outpace the competitors.

CONCLUSION

This study therefore contributed to strategic management research showing the empirical research report of the significance of firms' market orientation on employee satisfaction, and the indirect effect on the consumers' preference, overall business health, financial and non-financial performance. This study established that the adoption of market orientation by female entrepreneurs enhanced their understanding of employees' needs leads to satisfying customer needs, as well as promoting market innovation via the gathering of information on customers, competitors and business environment change. Non-oil export business is tense and requires the pro-activeness of organisations to understanding, and satisfying consumers' expressed and latent needs better than the competitors. Creating superior value for the stakeholders demand a supportive climate for effective communication for new or improved ideas, participatory exploitation of potential opportunities, and investment in employees' motivation to achieving competitive long term relationship. Attaining sustainable competitive advantage by female entrepreneurs across the agribusiness, Textile, and Information Technology/Business Processing Outfit (ITBPO) led to continuous proactive probe on response to the varying preferences and demands of customers. Dynamic firms' strategies, procedures, policies within the operational environment, efficiently enhance the capability to meet customers' specific requests better than their competitors. It further revealed clear communication requirement for detailing the purpose and goals of the organisation, and distinct classification and understanding of the role of employees to improve the work environment, as well as increase employee satisfaction. Customer-focused approach to work advances employees' latent skills and competencies, thereby gratifying them psychologically. The customer-oriented employees behave and respond to customer needs in a manner that corresponds to the demands of consumers which are becoming more and more challenging because of their constant change in tastes. Moreover, firms should consistently evaluate all direct and indirect stakeholders relevant to their growth to

achieve and implement appropriate strategies. This orientation helps to identify who the competitors are, the technology they use and the potential customers' perception of the products/services.

The study, therefore, encouraged women entrepreneurs to invest in hiring and retaining motivated, skilled employees. Allow participatory interaction to drive consistent information gathering, process intelligence and execution of innovative ideas to stimulate and grow their satisfaction within a conducive environment to pursue competitive customers' satisfaction.

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