LINKING WOMEN ENTREPRENEURS' QUALITY STANDARD ORIENTATION TO CUSTOMER SATISFACTION IN NON-OIL EXPORT TRADE

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ABSTRACT

Quality standards compliance is a factor critical to customer satisfaction. It determines the entry and positioning of export enterprises in the global market. Quality standards compliance has been a difficult task for women entrepreneurs in the Nigerian non-oil export. They struggle with production, process, and packaging standards compliance due to profound knowledge regarding recommended social and environmental sustainable quality standards, and lack of modern infrastructure and technology. Quality standard non-compliance has reduced their visibilies and prices of Nigerian origin products and services, which significantly hinders their growth. This research revealed the empirical evidence on the assessment of how quality standards orientation of women entrepreneurs facilitates customers' satisfaction. The study adopted a quantitative approach and analysed using correlation, regression, and Structural Equation Modelling (SEM).

A sample of 416 women entrepreneurs in the agribusiness, textile, as well as the information and technology business processing outfit (ITBPO) were selected. The data mined via the structured questionnaire retrieved from the respondents exhibited the conclusions from the descriptive and hypothesis analysis. The findings revealed that the relationship between quality standard orientation and women entrepreneurs' perception of customer satisfaction is confirmed to be directly significant with a beta value of 0.685, which indicates a substantial degree of association. Although the R^2 value in this study was moderately weak, the indicators of quality standards orientation variable collectively explained 47% of the variability of women entrepreneurs' perception of customers' satisfaction. Overall, the results established that quality standard orientation is a significant predictor of perceived customer satisfaction.

Key-Words: Quality Standards Orientation, Customer Satisfaction, Women Entrepreneurs, SMEs, Non-oil Export.

INTRODUCTION

Export in Nigeria has been the pivot of spurred entrepreneurial development that advances the expansion of the agricultural, manufacture, service, financial, entertainment, communication, and technology sectorial productivity. However, export has been labelled as a masculine path based on the perception of women as being incapable of accomplishing entrepreneurial feats and as unfit to excel in the sector (Dileo, 2018). But in recent times, many women are productively engaged in export activities, but are situated in the informal

segment and are mostly for survival. With improved effort in the education and training of women entrepreneurs recently engaged in by Nigeria Export Promotion Council in collaboration with the SheTrade initiative anchored by International Trade Centre (ITC), some women entrepreneurs own or manage small businesses with employees' in agribusiness, manufacturing, textile, service, and other real sector value chains with a sustainability perspective. However, intense competition in global economic trade makes quality a pivotal factor in achieving competitiveness. The ever increasing demand for quality product and services stimulate organisations to adopt and invest in resources that will aid the implementation of total quality management in their operations. The quality requirement from exporters has so advanced that the inability to meet the standard leads to rejection of the products/services by the consumers or the importers (Abeykoon, 2015). This implies that quality standards determine the entry and positioning of export enterprises in the global market. Existing literature showed the relationships between quality standards and innovation performance (Pekovic, 2009; Yusr, 2016).

Quality standards orientation enhances the end-to-end processes of an organisation, coordination of high-level rational activities develops a system that stimulates efficiency and eliminates failures. Emphasised meeting quality standards as critical to customer satisfaction. Women entrepreneurs in non-oil export are, however, constrained by inadequate information and resources which inhibits the compliance with quality standards. They have issues regarding sanitary and phyto-sanitary requirements, problems of quality packaging and labelling, product-specific standard conformity, and inability to meet up with supply-side quantity and price competitiveness. They struggle with production, process, and delivery standards due to profound knowledge regarding recommended social and environmental sustainable quality compliance, and lack of modern infrastructure and technology. Quality standard non-compliance has reduced their visibilities and prices of Nigerian origin products and services which significantly hinders their growth through a reduced access of women entrepreneurs to broader foreign markets (Okafor, 2010; Moses, 2016; Shmiln, 2017). But attaining positive financial performance for firms is revealed to be significantly tied to quality standards (Ngambi, 2015; Psomas, 2016). Hence the need to removing these barriers to orientation, innovation, and growth might be critical to women entrepreneurs' higher performance.

Literature Review and Hypothesis Quality Standard Orientation

Quality, as defined by Aaker 1991, from the customers' perception, is the overall value or superiority of the product/service to its intended purpose often based on the reliability and performance. Peri, 2006 posited that quality attribute comprises of the product features anticipated for, the psychological approval, guarantees and assurances, packaging necessities and marketing requirements. Standards are production and trade guidelines which provide consistency of protocol definition. It shows the constancy of materials, processes, products/services requirements, characteristics or specifications acceptable for a purpose. According to ISO, standards apply to any product attributes or production characteristics, create common expectation through the facilitation of communication and joint production; allow necessary foundation for the functioning of internal matters and exchange of products. It can be a means of differentiating products and services. Standards are essential because they aid customers' choice of products/services among a variety which are seemingly similar; facilitates common expectations via communication and joint production, culminating into an exchange of products/services. Standards harmonise the International markets functioning requirements.

Quality Standards and Export Activities

Quality standards regulation, termed non-tariff measures in global trade is a precondition for exporters' successful market entry, visibility and sustainable competitiveness (Daugbjerg, 2012). Topical technical requirements information is of the utmost importance to firms intending to export. They need to be aware and adapt their processes and products to the target-markets' mandatory and voluntary technical compliance in other to satisfy consumers' expectations and satisfaction (Olayinka, 2014). Due to proliferation of products/services engendered by globalisation, countries enact a growing number of quality standards to protect the health and safety of their citizens as they ensure the satisfaction of their varying demands.

Product and service standards premised on conformity assessment procedures, sanitary and phytosanitary measures and other technical regulations, according to International Trade Centre (Unnevehr, 2016), have been the main restriction on Africa's exports to markets in developed and developing countries. Technical requirements compliance is a challenge that exporting SMEs need to resolve to access and gain competitiveness in foreign markets. Export to SMEs is a high-risk venture. In comparison, SMEs are at a disadvantage in pursuing quality requirements owing to finance and human capital limitations. At the same time, large organisations, due to size, have a comparative advantage in financial strength for getting certifications and having economics of scale in the production of high-quality goods (Acs, 1997; Pekovic, 2009). International Trade Centre found that African exporters' efforts at complying to these requirements in their targets international markets, increase their costs and thus constitute the non-tariff trade barriers.

Perceived Customer Satisfaction

Customer satisfaction is an adequate response to a specific consumption experience or evaluation of conformity on the one hand and perceived mismatch between previous perceptions and actual performance of the product after use on the other side (Sitanggang, 2019). As competition and other environmental influences increase globally, it is evident that there is a growing emphasis on quality improvement and cost reduction to achieve customer satisfaction and enhancing organisational value (Iwarere, 2011). Satisfaction then is a psychological condition resulting from the purchase or consumption experience. Customer satisfaction implies meeting consumer demands or acting to fill a need or a desire. Each perception of product /service sale shapes consumer satisfaction which in turn is evaluated subjectively on a set of criteria identified as customer perceptions of the product/service. Thus, organisations now recognised the critical importance of being customer-oriented and customer-driven in all activities. The power of customers, according to Kotler, 1997, lies at the heart of an organisation's achievement of competitive advantage. Consumers perceived product quality from an array of product-related attributes that can either be intrinsic or extrinsic. It is extrinsic when the physical feature of the product gives expected fulfilment; while being intrinsic when it gives psychological satisfaction. A product/service is defined as a quality product/service when it matches the required characteristics expected by the customer. Customer expectation premised on norms and product/services life cycle. Satisfaction evolves when perceived performance exceeds expectations, but when perceived performance is below expectations, consumers believe that the product/service is not satisfying (Iwarere, 2011; Sitanggang, 2019).

Quality Standards Orientation and Customer Satisfaction

Quality standards compliance is pivotal to accessing foreign markets, and to engender customer satisfaction. Several empirical studies conducted evaluated the positive or negative effect of quality standards on export. For instance, a study found that quality is a vital antecedence of customer satisfaction. It evolves increased loyalty to product-specific private label trade, in terms of customer retention rate, a new customer attraction, and market share, which in turn increase organisation medium and long term profitability (Atiyah, 2016). Confirmed that customer satisfaction leads to customer loyalty via the indirect effect of product quality. Survey also pointed up the advantages of enforcing food safety and food quality standards in terms of knowledge spill over to noncertified activities, increased revenues, and improved food safety of delivered produce. However, discovered that export extensive margins of fish and coffee, standards were trade-inhibiting in fish and coffee, but enhanced vegetable export. In contrast, the intensive margin of export of coffee and vegetable principles was trade-inhibiting, but it improved fish export. Duong, 2017 showed that Vietnam transacted lower trade with nations observing SPS measures compared to non- SPS measures, even though it increased when importers' income increase. Based on the preceding, the study tests the following hypothesis in the null form: HO. Export quality standards orientation does not facilitate perceived customers' satisfaction.

Problem Formulation

This study examined the influence of standard quality orientation on women entrepreneurs' customer satisfaction in non-oil export using a descriptive survey research design. Specifically, the study adopted a quantitative approach to elicit information from 416 female entrepreneurs and export managers in Lagos state. They include women entrepreneurs registered with the Nigerian Exporters Promotion Council (NEPC). The exporting firms in Lagos are four hundred and sixteen (416) operating currently in medium and low-technology agribusiness, textile industries, and ITBPO clustered under the umbrella of different women business groups located in Lagos state (NEPC Conserve List, 2019). The respondents were conveniently and purposively selected. The (quantitative) via the use of a questionnaire was adopted and analyzed using correlation, regression, and Structural Equation Modelling (SEM) to obtain results.

Presentation of Data

Four hundred and sixteen (416) copies of questionnaire were distributed among the selected female entrepreneurs and export managers. Out of the four hundred and sixteen (416) copies of the questionnaire distributed, only four hundred and two (402) representing 80.2% response rate was valid, as shown in Table 1. The response rate was considered good and adequately acceptable for the analysis.

Table 1
RESPONSE RATE

Sample Size	Number	Percentage
Correctly filled Returned	402	96.7
Not Returned and not filled	14	33
Total	416	100

The researcher was able to achieve a high response rate by frequent visitation and familiarisation with the target respondents. Moreso, the copies of questionnaire were distributed at their various meeting points.

Problem Solution

The data presented below depicts the descriptive analysis of the respondent women entrepreneurs to the research question below:

How does the quality standard orientation of women entrepreneurs facilitate customer satisfaction?

Table 2 QUALITY STANDARD ORIENTATION AND PERCEIVED CUSTOMER SATISFACTION		SA	A	U	D	SD	Mean	SD
Quality Standard Orientation								
Regular collection of information about product/service quality	Agribusiness	39	84	15	5	1	4.076	0.757
	Info-Tech	62	121	14	3	1	4.194	0.668
	Textile	25	25	5	2	-	4.28	0.773
Total		126	230	34	10	2	4.183	0.733
Ensured quality measures in the procurement of resources	Agribusiness	37	69	29	7	1	3.93	0.841
	Info-Tech	74	102	19	5	1	4.209	0.756
	Textile	23	25	8	1	1	4.228	0.756
Total		134	196	56	13	3	4.122	0.783
Followed procedures that meet customers quality requriement	Agribusiness	41	88	13	1	1	4.159	0.665
	Info-Tech	71	101	24	2	3	4.169	0.788
	Textile	19	28	72	2	1	4.087	0.871
Total		131	217	44	5	5	4.138	0.775
Perceived Customer Satisfaction								
Taking prompt corrective action to address customers complaint	Agribusiness	37	89	10	5	3	4.055	0.808
	Info-Tech	82	99	14	2	4	4.258	0.795
	Textile	22	24	9	-	2	4.122	0.927
Total		141	212	33	7	9	4.145	0.843
Frequently experiences repeat sales	Agribusiness	34	72	34	1	3	3.923	0.828
	Info-Tech	60	107	25	6	3	4.069	0.821
	Textile	19	27	9	1	1	4.087	0.851
Total		113	206	68	8	7	4.026	0.833

The table showed the strength of quality standard orientation and perceived customer satisfaction of the respondents measured with the aid of five (5) point Likert's scale- strongly agree (5), Agree (4), undecided (3), disagree (2) and strongly disagree (1). The result showed that 356 (88.5%) of the respondents (female/women entrepreneurs) believed that they have a regular collection of information about product/service quality, 34(8.5%) were indifferent. In comparison, 12(3%) of the respondents had an opposing view. 330(82.1%) of the women entrepreneurs stated that they ensured quality measures in the procurement of resources, 56(13.9%) were unconcerned, and 16(4%) had a contrary view.

For procedures to meet customers' quality requirement, 348(86.6%) adhered to procedures for customers' quality requirement, 44(10.9%) not very good at it, while 10(2.5%) were unconcerned. 353(87.8%) of the respondents often take prompt corrective action to address customers' complaint, 33(8.2%) of the respondents were, and 16(4%) had an opposing view. So 319(79.4%) of the respondents often experience repeat sales, 68(16.9%) had an average, whereas 15(3.7%) had fair repeat sales.

The table also showed the mean and standard deviation of each item of measurement of quality standard orientation and perceived customer satisfaction on the research instrument across the non-oil exporting activities in the agribusiness, textile, as well as Information and Technology Business Processing Outfit (ITBPO) in Lagos state. The mean represents average measures central tendency while standard deviation measures the extent of variation compared to mean.

The decision rule for mean on a Liker scale of five (5) indicates that when the mean value is between 1.00-1.80, it is said to be a strongly disagree; for a mean value between 1.81-2.60 is a disagree; 2.61-3.40 is undecided; while 3.41-4.20 is agreed and 4.21-5.00 is strongly agreed. The standard deviation rule state 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 difference compared to mean. The average mean of the questions (q) q1, q2, q3, q4 and q5 represented the specific items of measurement for quality standard orientation across the selected non-oil exporting activities. It has a mean value of above 3.90 on a scale of five (5). Averagely, the respondents' agreed to each item in the questionnaire, and this demonstrated the degree of their orientation regarding quality standard compliance.

The next step was the test of the hypothesis, which further gave insight to the quality standard orientation of the selected women entrepreneurs.
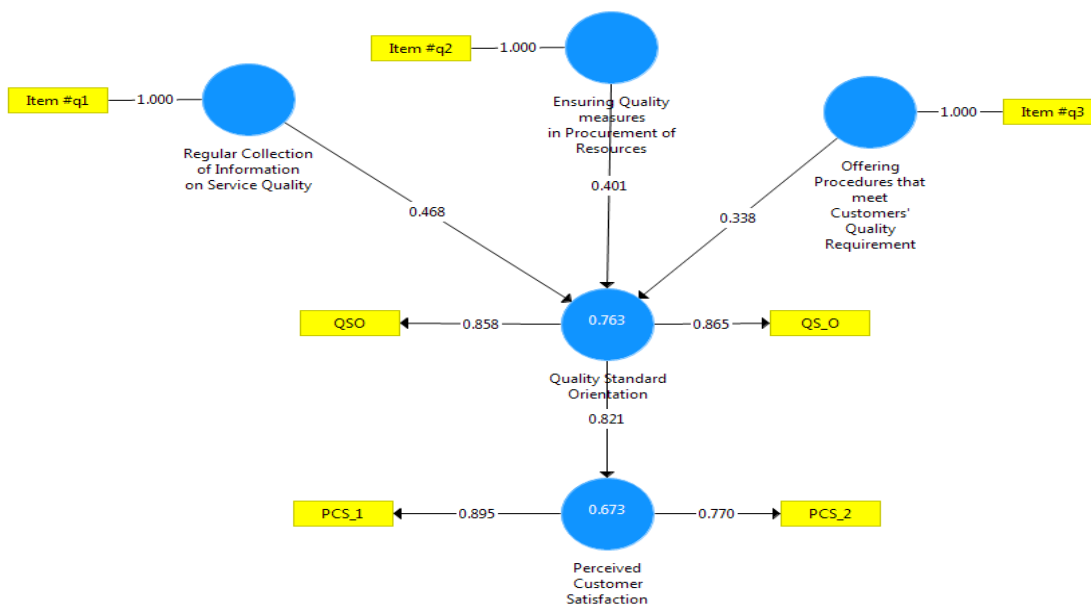
   H0   Quality standard orientation has no significant impact on perceived customer satisfaction.

The study adopted the use of Partial Least Square–Structural Equation Modelling (PLS-SEM) technique for data analysis. Smart PLS 3 used for SEM analysis is a tool used for theory testing in early stages. PLS also can be used on small sample size since it does not consider distribution assumptions (Astrachan, 2014).

All research variables, with the aid of Likert scales, were measured via a structured questionnaire. The data collected was analysed using three (3) items to measure quality standard orientation and two items to determine perceived customer satisfaction. The items in the quality standard orientation scale comprised of statements such as a regular collection of information on product/service quality, assurance of quality procurement of resources and offering procedures that meet customers' quality requirement discussed on a scale of 1 to 5. The cumulative responses analysed, as presented in Figure 1.

The research items are reflective of the minimum acceptable value for a factor loading 0.60. They have composite reliability values higher than 0.60. Few items that have a factor loading less than 0.6 were removed. The results are presented in Figures 1-3, respectively.

Structural Models and Direct Path Analysis for Quality Standard Orientation and Perceived Customer Satisfaction

FIGURE 1

PREDICTIVE RELEVANCE (PATH CO-EFFICIENT) OF QUALITY STANDARD ORIENTATION AND PERCEIVED CUSTOMER SATISFACTION
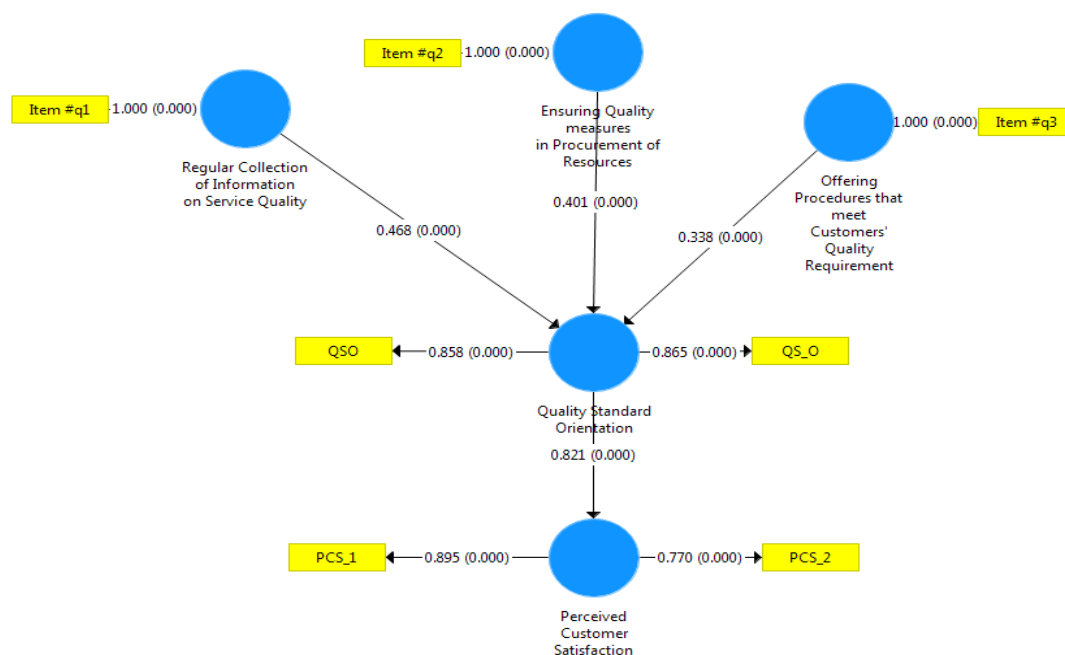
FIGURE 2

PATH CO-EFFICIENT AND P-VALUES FOR QUALITY STANDARD ORIENTATION AND PERCEIVED CUSTOMER SATISFACTION
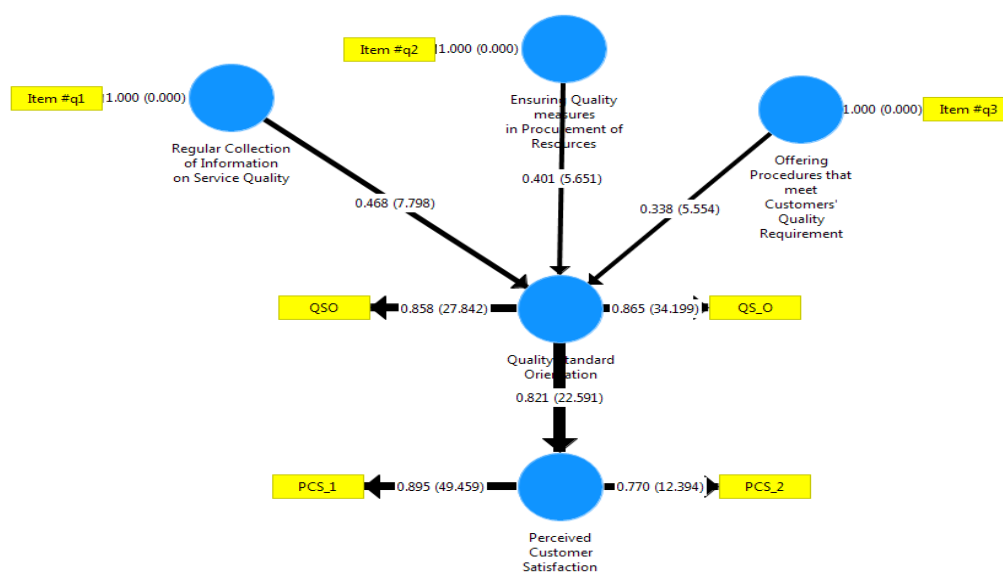
FIGURE 3

PATH CO-EFFICIENT AND T-VALUES FOR QUALITY STANDARD ORIENTATION AND PERCEIVED CUSTOMER SATISFACTION

Evaluation of the Inner Structural Model

A structural model is an inner model in structural equation modelling and can be measured through path coefficients (R2) values and significant values. PLS-SEM has been used for path analysis because PLS do not need any distribution assumptions. Boots strapping method is used to find the significance (Sánchez, 2013; Nanyunja, 2015). The default bootstrapping in PLS is 500 subsamples to gain significant results (Wetzels, 2009). This study calculated 5000 subsamples in bootstrapping to obtain more precise results and path coefficient values for quality standard orientation and perceived customer satisfaction.

The hypothesis has one exogenous variable (quality standard orientation) and one endogenous variable (customers' satisfaction). The coefficient of determination/ r-squared, path coefficient (β value) and T-statistic value, effect size ($f2$), the predictive relevance of the model, and Goodness-of-Fit (GOF) index were the critical standards for evaluating the structural model as presented in Figures 2 and 3 respectively. Maximum Likelihood Estimation (MLE) was calculated using the Path estimates, which is considered to be tolerant to violations of normality assumptions in most of the psycho-behavioural studies (Fornell, 1981). Results of structural models and path analysis for quality standard orientation and perceived customer satisfaction have been presented in Table 3 and illustrated in Figure 3.

Estimation of Path Coefficients (β) and T-statistics

The path coefficients in the PLS and the standardised β coefficient in the regression analysis were similar. Through the β value, the significance of the hypothesis was tested. The β denoted the expected variation in the dependent construct for a unit variation in the independent construct(s). The β values of every path in the hypothesised model were computed, the higher the β value, the more the substantial effect on the endogenous latent construct. However, the β value had to be verified for its significance level through the T-statistics test. The path co-efficient is presented in Table 3:

Table 3 PATH COEFFICIENTS					
Variable and Cross Loading	Path Coefficient	Indirect Effect(IE)	Std. Dev (STDEV)	T Statistics (O STDEV)	P Values
Regular collection of information on product service quality=q1 Quality standard Orientation	0.37		0.02	8.512	0.046
Regular collection of information on product service quality=q1 Perceived Customer Satisfaction		0.254	0.033	7.747	0.002
Ensuring quality measures in the procurement of resources=q2 Quality Standard Orientation	0.41		0.029	18.089	0.033
Ensuring quality measures in the procurement of resources=q2 Percevied Customer Statisfaction		0.281	0.04	7.026	0.015
Offering procedures that meet customers quality requirement=q3 Quality Standard Orientation	0.391		0.029	14.235	0.02
Offering procedures that meet customers quality requirement=q3 Perceived Customer Satisfaction		0.268	0.031	8.089	0
Offering procedures that meet customers quality requirement=q3 Perceived Customer Satisfaction	0.685		0.085	8.152	0.001
	Square(R^2)		Square(R^2) Adjusted		
Quality Standard Orientation → Perceived Customer Satisfaction	0.47		0.461		

This hypothesis predicted that standard quality orientation significantly and positively influences women entrepreneurs' perception of customer satisfaction. The path co-efficient affirmed that regular collection of information on product/service quality #q1 indirectly and significantly influence women entrepreneurs' perception of customer satisfaction (β=0.370, f2=0.254, p<0.05). The indirect influence of ensuring quality measures in the procurement of resources influence women entrepreneurs' perception of customer satisfaction #q2 (β=0.410, f2=0.281, p<0.05). Interestingly, offering procedures that meet customers' quality requirement #q3 also recorded a positive and significant impact on women entrepreneurs' perception of customer satisfaction (β=0.391, f2=0.268, p<0.05). Overall, the relationship between quality standard orientation and women entrepreneurs' perception of customer satisfaction is confirmed to be directly significant with a beta value of 0.685, which also indicates a strong degree of association.

The Indirect Effect (IE) of the path co-efficient as depicted in Table 4.2.2 is often used to indicate 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 $f2$) indicates the substantive impact of all the items. f2 measure 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 $f2$ values of less than 0.02 shows that there is no effect. Basically, the effect size of #q1 ($f2=0.251$) is relatively small/weak; #q2 ($f2=0.281$) is relatively moderate; and #q3 ($f2=0.268$) is moderately small/weak. The result shows that the effect size of quality standard orientation on women entrepreneurs' perception of customer satisfaction is relatively moderate.

The value of R2 explains the variance between endogenous variables. 0.75 value is substantial; 0.50 is regarded moderate and, 0.26 is considered weak (Henseler, 2009; Hair, 2013; Hulland, 1999). In this study, the analysis showed that the indicators of exogenous (independent) variable collectively explained 47% of the variability of women entrepreneurs' perception of customers' satisfaction. In sum, the analysis provided evidence that the hypothesis is supported. Hence, the R2 value in this study was moderately weak. The established regression equation and model that shows the effect of quality standard orientation on women entrepreneurs' perception of customers' satisfaction is expressed as:

Y=0.611+0.370 RCIPQ+0.410 EQMP+0.391 OPMC ……..………eq. (iv)

Where: Y=Perceived Customer Satisfaction

RCIPQ=Regular collection of information on product/service quality

EQMP=Ensuring quality measures in the procurement of resources

OPMC=Offering procedures that meet customers' quality requirement

By implication, the null hypothesis (H0), which indicates that market orientation does not significantly have combined effects on women entrepreneurs' perception of customer satisfaction; therefore, the assumption is rejected. Above all, the results established that quality standard orientation is a significant predictor of perceived customer satisfaction.

Model Fit and Goodness of fit Index

Model fit can be analysed 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. In this research, SRMR value of quality standard orientation is less than 0.8. The CMIN/DF indicates an acceptable fit when a hypothetical model is<3 (Ferron, 2007). The decision rule that is adopted to determine the acceptability of the model includes CMIN/df must be<3; RMSEA/SRMR<0.8; NFI, CFI must be>0.90. The relative Chi-square=316.37; CFI=0.940; NFI=0.913; SRMR=0.059 as displayed in Table 4. The model fit indices satisfied the critical threshold, which indicated a fitting model.

Table 4			
GOODNESS OF FIT AND MODEL FIT INDEX			
Goodness of Fit Index Calculation		Model Fit	
Construct	Ave		Estimated
Regular collection of information on product quality	0.615	SRMR	0.059
Ensuring quality measure in the procurement of resources	0.632	DULS	1.447

Offering procedures that meet customers quality	0.572	CMIN DF	0.219
Perceived Customers Satisfaction	0.697	Chi Square	316.37
Average values	0.629	NFI	0.913
Ave $\times$ R^2	0.296	CFI	0.94
COF (Ave $\times$ R^2)	0.544	GFI	0.524

The measurement model indicated that all the model fit indices found an acceptable range and above the recommended cut-off level as suggested by Fornell, 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 estimated model fit. When SRMR=<0.08, then the study model has a good fit (Hu, 1998). The table shows that this study model's SRMR was 0.059, which revealed that this study model has a good fit.

CONCLUSION

The results established that quality standard orientation is a significant predictor of perceived customer satisfaction. This implies that taking a regular collection of information on product/service quality and ensuring quality measures in the procurement of resources served as essential platforms for taking prompt corrective action to address customers' complaint. However, offering procedures that meet customers' quality requirement are crucial and have a significant path for customers' satisfaction (Shmiln, 2017).

In line with these findings, several studies have shown a relationship between quality standard orientation and performance, which is typically relatively strong and positive (Chi, 2009; Malik, 2013). To them, quality standard orientation creates a platform for achieving business sustainability. In collecting information about product/service quality expectation of the customers, women, entrepreneurs should consistently implement procedures that satisfy customers' quality requirement and ensure quality measures in the procurement of resources. The finding is also in agreement with the results of Abeykoon 2015, which established that when quality standard increases, profitability, market share and repeat purchase will also increase. Compliance with quality standards is key to accessing foreign markets and generating customer satisfaction. Strong capacity must, therefore, be developed to ensure quality exports and encouraged by adequate regulatory policies and infrastructural development, while cooperating and networking with established partners to meet the logistics and cost compliance. Nevertheless, the result of this study corroborated the works of that standard compliance could be improved where market institutions ensure risk reduction practices, and cost-effective controls, as well as capacity building and supply chain coordination, and incentives for food safety management support.

It is, therefore, concluded that compliance with quality standards has been a problem for most export companies, and this significantly hinders their growth (NEPC, 2016).

Attaining sustainable competitive advantage by female entrepreneurs across the agribusiness, Textile, and Information Technology/Business Processing Outfit (ITBPO) has led to continuous probe for how to proactively fix the varying tastes and demands of customers with the firms' strategies, procedures and policies within the operational environment efficiently, and the capability to meet specific requests better than their competitors. It broadens the understanding on the contribution of quality standard orientation on customers' satisfaction as it helps to identify the need for women entrepreneurs to regularly collect information about product/service quality expectation of the customers for them to be more efficient in their operations.

It is highly recommended to the management of the selected industries to ensure that employees are dedicated to customer's satisfaction continually. Satisfied employees can actively contribute to organisational success by having a customer-centric approach to their work. The customer-oriented employees behave and respond to customer needs in a manner that is congruent with the firm's market orientation thereby creating superior value for their employees as well as for their customers, which ultimately leads to better business performance. Product quality standards, particularly in terms of packaging, processing, and labelling, require various standards measures that must be up-to-date for small businesses. But, non-oil export women entrepreneurs have difficulty complying due to low knowledge of recommended quality standards and lack of modern infrastructure and technology (Okafor, 2010; Moses, 2016). Existing literature, however, shows the relationship between quality standards and

Performance in innovation stresses compliance with quality standards as critical to customer satisfaction. Achieving positive financial performance for companies is shown to be closely tied to quality standards (Ngambi, 2015; Psomas, 2016). This suggests the need to educate women entrepreneurs in non-oil exports about how to access and network the recommended institutions to support quality standards to enable competitive and customer satisfaction.

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