DOCTOR OF BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION THESIS

Identifying the path through which entrepreneurial proclivity influences competitive advantage in international service ventures: Do dynamic capabilities, marketing capabilities and international marketing strategy fit matter?

Thesis submitted in accordance with the requirements of the University of Liverpool for the degree of Doctor of Business Administration by

By

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ABSTRACT

Entrepreneurial proclivity and competitive advantage have received significant attention from an international performance perspective within the context of the manufacturing sector but not for the service sector. While the manufacturing-focused research has contributed to the development of firm internationalisation through improved strategies, the international business climate has been largely unstable and continuously evolving with appreciable shift of interest to emerging economies for foreign direct investment (FDI) opportunities that will leverage technology to drive innovation; especially in the services sector. This is to foster the survival and expansion of international sales and internationalisation. The irony is that international service firms increasing growth has contributed immensely to the services position in the global trade, and there is need for international marketing theory and practice based on services internationalisation, and not just the current understanding and international marketing strategies solely rooted in the manufacturing sector. In response to this lacuna of knowledge in the existing knowledge and professional practice, this mixed methods action research inquiry attempts to shed light in the field through the development of a comprehensive framework of the precedence of competitive advantage in the context of international service ventures, and to further identify if the study findings can bring actionable knowledge and change in the researcher's organisation. A major problem being addressed by this research is an in-depth understanding on why some international service ventures are successful in expanding their business internationally? What are the drivers of competitive advantage behind these international service ventures? Based on the dynamic capabilities theory and international marketing strategy literature reviewed, a set of research hypotheses developed and

empirically tested affirming that the development and adoption of certain dynamic capabilities enhances the marketing capabilities available to international service ventures. This further fortifies the international service venture ability to achieve a proper fit between the international marketing strategy being pursued and the environmental context of implementation. Data collected from 260 international service ventures in Nigeria. The study findings formed the basis of reflection and discussion within the researcher workplace focus-group in order to identify how they could bring actionable knowledge and change in the researcher's organization. The study results reveal a positive relationship between international marketing strategy fit and competitive advantage. International entrepreneurial proclivity found to be a significant precursor of sensing and reconfiguring processes where the actual influence fluctuates across different entrepreneurial proclivity aspects. By using mixed methods action research through a cyclic approach as an insider action researcher, the researcher was able to apply the survey findings in practice through focus-group taking action, evaluating the action and monitoring through quantitative and qualitative approaches within the context of the conceptual framework in order to solve this workplace-based problem and also to improve his practice. The findings discussed in light of existing knowledge, and possible limitations of the study considered. As a DBA action research project emphasis is placed on the implications/relevance of the research findings to scholars, business practitioners, managers, policy makers, investors and international service venture development. Future research opportunities identified and discussed.

KEYWORDS:
International entrepreneurial proclivity, international dynamic capabilities, marketing capabilities, marketing strategy fit, international service advantage, competitive advantage, international service venture, internationalisation of services.

CHAPTER I

Introduction

1.1 Introduction

This thesis presents the research work and stages followed by the researcher in an endeavour to investigate the drivers of competitive advantage in the context of international service ventures. The study examines how dynamic capabilities influences marketing capabilities available to international service ventures, the fit between the international marketing strategy and the environmental condition of implementation under the umbrella of international entrepreneurial proclivity and competitive advantage in international service ventures. The research addressed workplace-based problem of his service-based organisation losing competitiveness (struggling to cope with new market realities) in international business venture. Sichtmann, von Selasinsky & Diamantopoulos (2011) stated that research focus devoted to the international service ventures performance has been inadequate which makes this work timely from the scholarship and practice context. This chapter discusses the research context, the researcher's role in the organisation, researcher's interest, emphasises the contribution of the study and ends with a framework of the thesis structure.

1.2 Research context (background of organisation and role of the researcher)

This mixed-methods action research study was an insider action research (IAR) carried out in an indigenous Information Technology (IT) company currently internationalising its service. The company was founded in 2001, and has built a reputation as a top-class IT service provider offering cloud infrastructure, software development, business intelligence, business solutions and end-to-end systems integration.

In its 16 years of existence, the company has grown to be a vibrant, forward looking organisation with offices across the country (Lagos, Port Harcourt and Abuja) and international operations in Ghana, Kenya, Cameroon, Cote D' ivoire among others. It prides herself in her ability to gain a thorough understanding of clients' businesses by using appropriate technology as a bridge between where the client is and where they want to be. As a technology company, it has diversified within the IT Industry by building in-house competencies and acquired companies that brings required business advantage. The international venture core services are cloud-based solutions, software development and specialised financial services solutions. The business was at a bleeding period due to decrease in earning and increasing macro uncertainties which had tamed the business competitiveness as revenue and projections nose-dived at a geometrically rate.

The researcher in the context of this research is an industry thought-leader, subject matter expert (SME) and veteran of over 18 years, and has worked and taught professionals in the field across the country, and internationally. The researcher was the business group director for the Cloud and Enterprise business, and was in the center of this problem directly responsible for this business division international service operation which was the core focus of this research work. A lot is at stake for the researcher, colleagues, and other stakeholders as this situation became "transform or die" situation, and hence reflect how critical this thesis work supported the researcher in his practice and scholarly-pursuit, hence a double-edge sword in this pursuit of setting higher-standard and pace with meaning and purpose beyond the researcher's generational inclinations.

The Cloud and Enterprise (C & E) business contributes 50% of the total revenue with 20% of the contribution from the international service venture. Based on business projection of about 80% contribution over the next 3 years, the international venture projection is triple-digit YoY revenue growth forecast. The issue at hand is that that the international service venture has not been that competitive and the local operation in Nigeria is suffering severely from the economic downturn that has shrunk the business due to macro-economic factors like decline in oil prices, pipeline vandalization in the Niger delta area among others.

At a macro level, Nigeria economy over the last 40 years have been largely dependent on oil, exporting crude and importing refined petrol. The global decline in the price of oil has a negative toll on the economy to the extent that the country had to find alternatives, or practically collapse. As this reality unfolds and sensitisation on diversification rises, Nigerian economy became the largest in Africa, ahead of South Africa after it was rebased in 2014, and of major interest is the realisation that services took a major leap as the main driver of the non-oil sector which grew from 35% to 50% (National Bureau of Statistics, 2014). Considering the enormous opportunities and potential the services industry brings to the Nigeria economy, amidst increasing pressure to "change or die" as a nation, it is extremely crucial to have an understanding of how to grow this industry in an effective and efficient manner, and thereby grow the economy. The current landscape is immature and lack the requisite foundation for the expected growth and development. It is thus important to ensure the right growth levels, governance and policies are in-place to ensures the increasing dependence/projections based on international ventures is firmly rooted in predictable practice. This further calls for concern because of the macro-economic climate has been hash due to increasing pressure on the foreign exchange earnings from crude oil (the major source of national revenue which continues to free-fall in the international market). As the country struggles to save its local currency (Naira) fighting naira devaluation, and reduce inflation, internationalisation of services has taken the centre stage at the heart of this aspiration, thereby make this research timely and of critical relevance in the national transformation journey.

There has been significant growth in the international trade volume and the increase in globalisation of markets have led to more research inquiries into factors contributing to ventures success in international market. World Trade Organisation (2015) reported an increase of 20% of total world export was in commercial services, with average growth rate of 8% over the last two decades. Nonetheless, the focus has been largely on the key drivers of export and international performance (Lu et al., 2010) but limited research in the services sector (Clark, Rajaratnam & Smith, 1996), and practically none in eliciting competitive advantage in international service ventures. The increasing disruptiveness through economic liberalisation in the international business environment coming from the emerging markets continues to attracts foreign investments (Lu et al., 2010), and technology complements this as enabler that bridges the divide through innovative services and business model that promotes digital transformation (Knight & Cavusgil, 2004).

The entire business is looking at the international operations to be the saving grace, but this is more complex and complicated because the international operations has not developed to meet such level of growth expectation. A lot goes into running a profitable international services venture that contributes substantially to an economy. This situation could be likened to a messy workplace problem (Churchman, 1967) as the local business is declining, and international business (prophesised to profitability does not have a proven record, and also witnessing similar challenges). Hence, the overarching research question is ”How do i improve the competitive advantage of my company’s international service venture?”, and this was codenamed “winning through transformation”.

The study focussed on the international cloud and enterprise operations in Ghana. The study involved the international operations division of the organisation, which comprises of the divisional champions (upper-level managers) across seven business units comprising the marketing and operations, sales, technology/services, software development and finance. These are the chief marketing director (CMO), international operations director (IOD), chief financial officer (CFO), Software Development Director (SDD), chief technology officer (CTO), international sales director (ISD), and the researcher, and facilitator; whose role was the business group director for cloud (BGD), and the country general manager (GM) was the sponsor for this programme. The Accounts Technical Unit (ATU) comprises of the Core Sales Account Executives (AE), Solutions Sales Professional (SSP), Technical Sales Professionals (TSP), support roles like Technical Account Managers (TAMS) and consulting roles like Architect, Project Managers (PM) and Consultants. The Account Technical Unit is subsequently referred to as ATU.

This research investigates relationships among several constructs, namely, international entrepreneurial proclivity, international dynamic capabilities, international marketing strategy fit and international service advantage. It is pertinent to state that these variables have been examined within the context of international service venture. This encompasses entrepreneurial proclivity of services owners and their ability to dynamically sense and proactively adjust to environmental factors, market fluctuations and its dynamics to realise a marketing strategy fit that delivers the desired competitive advantage. This is further compounded when considering the foreign market forces, culture, political interplays and uncertainties of services delivery across the ocean. The underlying factors that tangibly yields the competitive edge of international services organisations have been understudied, and there has been no experiential attention given to the investigation of relationships among these constructs within the context of international service venture assessing how entrepreneurial proclivity influences international service competitive advantage, among other constructs, be it empirically or qualitatively within a research-practice praxis.

Having reached a tipping point due to increasing competition and reliable analytics, the company is well aware of the problem of macro-economic challenges, inexperience to cope with new market realities in the international operations, and hence clamour for a value proposition that is radical and revolutionary. There is no direct answer to this problem and what then emerges for “the company” is the journey of this scholar-practitioner going through this risky path of bridging unprecedented gap as a professional and DBA scholar with the mandate of making a change. The mixed method action research speaks of classical organisational change. The first touches on new mindset (mind shift) from the “traditional-ways” of doing things that is fixated to “possibilities mindset” that objectively assess the possibilities of profiting from cloud for the company, customers, and extended partners, and this was put to test in the cyclic cycle of action research going through taking action, evaluating the action and monitoring the impact within a workplace-based focused group that benefitted from the findings of rich-quantitative analysis insight of existing 260 services organisations in the same vertical, in the country. The second pertains to "creating the capabilities needed" to be ahead (competitive edge) in relation to the new mindset to realise the cloud and enterprise potentials of which going through the continuous evaluation, monitoring and reconstructing helped in the transformational process for the organisation as the outcome of monitoring provided needed incentives most of the time to trigger the team to maintain the new-normal, an improved state of competitiveness. The researcher's role encompasses short, mid and long-term business strategy that ensures profitability, all-green scorecard at tactical and strategic level including identification of opportunities and threats, and proactively alerting the business to respond in a timely fashion.

Finally, the researcher has started benefitting from the insight gained during this thesis in his new role as a business executive director in a services firm that just started internationalising its service venture, and this opportunity to document this transformation presents a living reference for scholar practitioner and policy makers.

This study is the first mixed methods action research based effort which attempt to close this gap.

1.3 Objectives of the study

The objective of this research is of utmost importance; in that it guides the entire research process. Based on this premise, this research main objective is to primarily:

i. Solve the researcher's workplace-based problem by answering the question "How do I improve the competitive advantage of my organisation's international service venture?"
ii. Contribute to scholarship by the developing and empirically test a conceptual model that helps international business ventures improve their competitiveness

In order to achieve (ii) above, there is need for a clearer path to obtain this goal. The list below provides these additional details with tangible means of assessing successful model for future reference:

i. To develop and empirically test a conceptual model of the antecedence of competitive advantage in the context of international service venture. This will be based on previous knowledge in the areas of international entrepreneurial proclivity, international dynamic capabilities, international marketing capabilities, international marketing strategy fit and international service advantage.
ii. To empirically examine the factors influencing international dynamic capabilities, these being sensing, reconfiguring and how this relates to international marketing capabilities.
iii. To empirically identify the factors influencing entrepreneurial proclivity; these being proactiveness, risk-taking and innovativeness.
iv. To provide capabilities-building perspectives with international marketing strategy literature and also show that international marketing capabilities assist

organisations to achieve a proper fit between its marketing strategy and environmental context.

v. Seek to improve the understanding of how entrepreneurial proclivity influences international dynamics capabilities, which then influences the international marketing capabilities, and subsequently international marketing strategy fit.

1.4 Contribution of the Study

As stated earlier, research attention given to international service ventures in the international marketing theory and practice has been insufficient (Sichtmann & vonSelasinsky, 2010), and the call is for more international services oriented research (Akaka, Vargo & Lusch, 2013). The findings from this work contribute to existing body of knowledge since the extensive search of literature shows that there has been no empirical data or research in this sector in Nigeria, and a strong reference for future research (Johnson & Duberley, 2000). The findings from this research will help scholars and practitioners bridge the gap in the following areas and ways (Bourner & Simpson, 2005):

i. Practice-based model tested and proven to help organisation's improve the competitive advantage of their international service venture.

ii. Empirical evidence for the critical role of international entrepreneurial proclivity in the development of dynamic capabilities relevant to international activities and service strategies.

iii. Empirically confirm that dynamic capabilities have a substantial positive effect on the development of international marketing capabilities, thereby further differentiating substantive capabilities from dynamic capabilities.

iv. Integrated capabilities-building perspective with international marketing strategy literature and contingency theory.

v. Show that superior competitive advantage comes from proper fit between marketing strategy and environmental context of implementation, which is largely dependent on the international marketing capabilities.

vi. Develop the first locally conducted reference for action researchers and practitioners in the international service ventures field linking theory with practice.

1.5 Structure of the Thesis

This thesis comprises of eight chapters where each have a unique orientation logically related to each other. Figure 1 presents the sequence of the chapters as conducted in this research study.

Chapter One is made up of the context of this study and also presents the research topic. It explicitly states the research objectives and also touches on the contribution of this research to the current body of knowledge.

Chapter Two provides the theoretical background to this study, presents review of pertinent literature and ideas that others have created around this workplace-problem regarding dynamic capabilities and international marketing strategy, international entrepreneurial proclivity and international service advantage.

Chapter Three presents a conceptualisation of the factors related to international service venture competitive advantage and entrepreneurial proclivity. Factors that are potentially related to entrepreneurial proclivity, dynamic capabilities, marketing strategy fit and service advantage were included within the construct. The research topic was positioned in the international service venture context. A number of hypotheses were developed based on the relevant entrepreneurial proclivity, dynamic capabilities and international marketing strategy literature. Mixed methods action research (MMAR) approach was adopted in this research and this covered: the research designs, mixed methods, action research. mixed methods methodological framework, dimensions of organisational culture; the data generation sources; the method of communication; the operationalisation and measurement of the constructs; the methodology of the research; administration of the research; and statistical approaches used.

Chapter four provides an account of the descriptive findings generated and the results of statistical analysis presented.

Chapter five is action research based chapter that reintroduces the workplace-based problem, described the context, builds on the quantitative research conceptual model aligned to the action research methodology and methods of inquiry, the course of events and outcomes going through three action research cycles; with personal reflection through "reflective pauses" (Coghlan & Brannick, 2010: 147) and systematic process of learning from results of action taken, and the transformation from those interventions. Coghlan & Brannick (2010: 10) stated that "in any action research project there are multiple action research cycles operating concurrently with different time spans, and each cycle entails how the project is conceived, what is intended, and the cycles of action and the outcomes, both intended and unintended". This was followed by subsequent self-reflection as IAR, in the light of experience and extrapolation of usable knowledge.

Chapter six documents the main conclusions drawn from this research work. Implication of this study to international service ventures, practitioners and also help academic researchers in the creation of new knowledge that will assist to successfully cope with emerging realities. The also acknowledged the limitations of this research work and opportunity areas for future research.

Chapter seven concludes this thesis with the final reflection accounting for the researcher's practice and the contribution the study has made to the professional development of the researcher and practice.

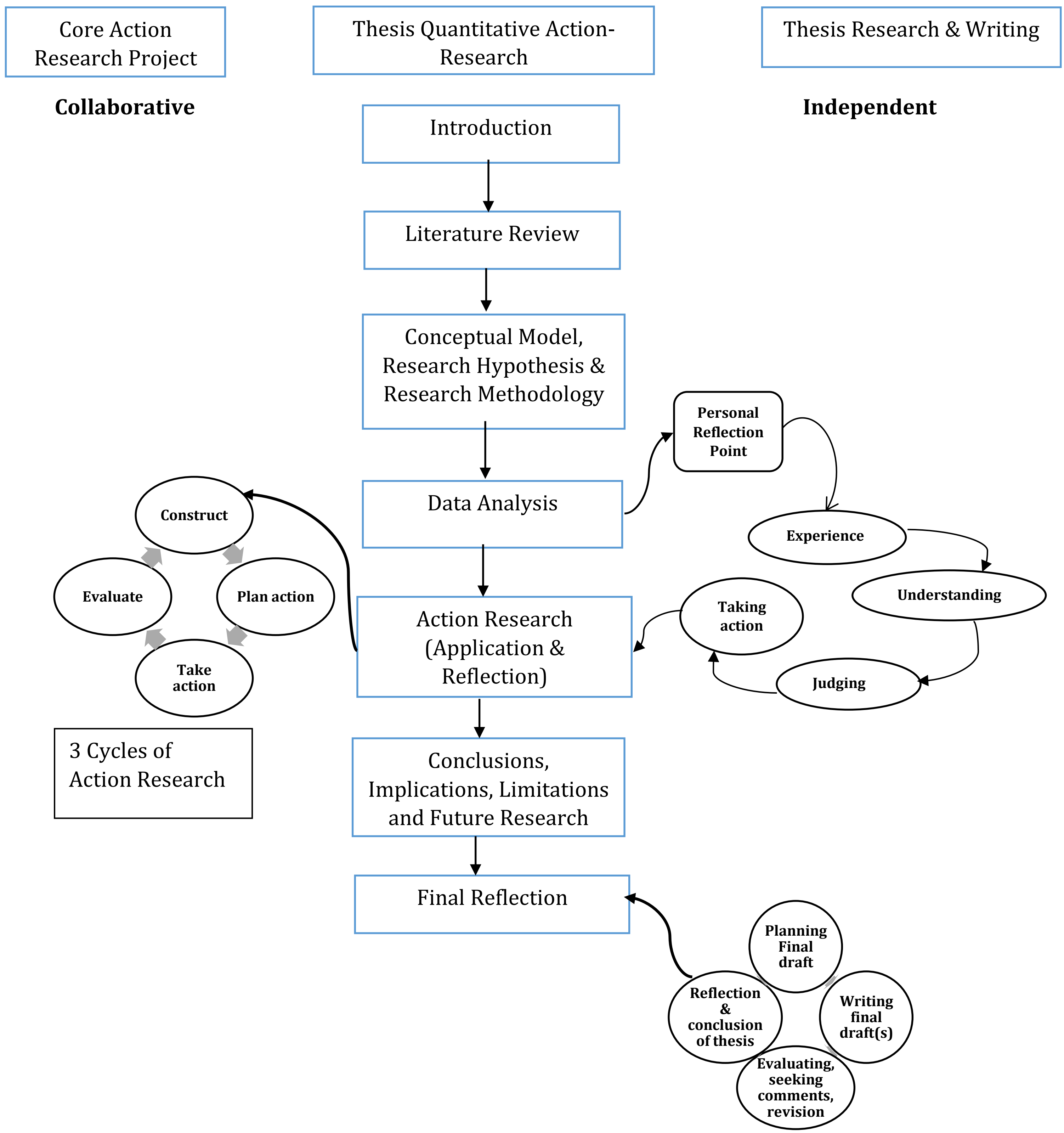

Figure 1: All-Up Structure of the Study (Quantitative – Action Research)

CHAPTER 2

Literature Review

2.0 Literature Review

This chapter provides a comprehensive review of the relevant literature. Three main objectives covered in the following context. The first is to identify gaps in literature which shows promising areas for this research study; second is the foundation to develop the conceptual model and hypotheses guiding this research work; and third is to effectively locate this work in extant literature with a view to effectively communicate how it contributes to existing body of knowledge.

This literature review starts with a systematic examination of the internationalisation of services literature because this research context focuses on international service venture (ISV). This helps to identify important areas of research and then proceed to assess the research work conducted in the field. Considering the diverse and complex nature of this work, in-depth literature review was carried out to get insight on the overarching subject of dynamic capabilities, international marketing strategy (IMS), international marketing capabilities (IMC), international marketing strategy fit (IMSF), international entrepreneurial proclivity (IEP) and international service advantage (ISA).

2.1 Internationalisation of services

Fundamental questions often asked when the subject of internationalisation of services comes up is that of globalisation and technology versus human relevance, and the role of emerging economies versus developed ones especially when assessed in the context of infrastructure, business growth and competitiveness. My first attempt here is to debunk the myth that human relevance is on the decline because of internationalisation of services. I will rather say that technological advancement and globalisation has created unimaginable platform for emerging economies to compete favourably with the developed ones using the human capital, and economic liberalisation to their advantage.

Most organisations today are gradually coming to terms with the significant role of knowledge-worker and human capital in their business development/venture performance. There has been dated debate on the likelihood of knowledge-worker being extricated by the technological advancement of the information age, and globalisation. The reality has been contrariwise, rather the knowledge worker - professional role has become elevated with the expectation to innovatively leverage technology to drive business differentiation. Competitiveness has now transformed to organisational agility, dynamism, cost effectiveness of services, service quality, ability to evolve and scale on-demand.

Internationalisation of services has been a very hot topic widely talked about but with very limited research to show for it when compared to the manufacturing sector (Cavusgil & Naor, 1987; Böhmann et al., 2011). Edvardsson, Edvinsson & Nystróm (2012: 17) argued that "internationalisation of services is a very important research field, but with very few published studies" just as Ström (2013: 407) also noted that the "service industry has been less competitive and internationalised compared to the manufacturing sector". Winsted & Patterson (1998: 294) concluded that "this sector is under-represented in international trade", and this was corroborated by Akaka, Vargo & Lusch (2013) call for more research with services orientation as a vital requirement to develop the international marketing practice.

This section of the chapter sets the tone as it looks into the what, the why, entry modes, trends and obstacles to internationalisation of services and thus presents the context within which this doctoral research work was conducted. The research focused on service organisations in Nigeria internationalising their offering. As described in Chapter one, this is indeed timely, just as Ström (2013), Cicic, Patterson & Shoham (1999: 101) highlighted that services industry is an evolving field and "the fastest growing sector in international trade".

To further communicate the sense of urgency, Lovelock & Wirtz (2007 (2007: 6) narrated a paradox of living in a services economy, but yet, the "academic study and teaching of marketing is still dominated by the manufacturing perspective". The subsequent sections expand on how the researcher has scrubbed the literature on the Internationalisation of services, espouse existing etymology and located this research work in the literature, with a view to contribute to both scholarship and practice.

2.1.1 What is Service Internationalisation?

Attempts to define Services dates back to the late eighteen and early nineteen centuries, and numerous definitions have evolved on this important subject. Most contention has been largely linked to peculiarities of services ranging from perishability, inseparability, variability and immateriality when compared to goods and manufactured products. Other scholars have argued that services can now be seen as separable (its production and consumption) and many services today are designed to produce reliable and resilient value for their beneficiaries.

Kevin (2013) noted that "services holds an extensive definition, ranging from "pure services" like knowledge, expertise and experience in financial services to hybrid services like restaurants, providing tangible product but with a heavy element of personal attention as part of the entire package", emphasizing "why product offerings must be based on consumer relationship". Lovelock & Wirtz (2007: 15) defined "services as economic activities offered by one party to another, most commonly employing time-based performance to bring about desired results in recipients themselves or in objects or other assets for which purchaser have responsibility in exchange for their money, time, and effort, service customers expect to obtain value from access to goods, labour, professional skills, facilities, networks, and systems; but they do not normally take ownership of any of the physical elements involved". The subject of ownership and non-ownership however remains germane.

Having established the definition of services, Clark, Rajaratnam & Smith (1996: 15) view service internationalisation as when "it crosses national boundaries and have some type of engagement with a foreign culture" while Javalgi et al. (2003: 186) on the hand defined services internationalisation as "a process through which a firm move from operating solely in its home market to international or foreign markets". Internationalisation of services is relatively less-researched subject area compared to the manufactured product export, and this is for obvious reasons.

Many scholars and practitioners have argued that manufacturing sector principles are applicable to the service internationalisation (Cavusgil & Naor, 1987) while others contest the direct applicability of manufacturing theoretical concepts because they face different challenges when exporting services (Sichtmann & von Selasinsky, 2010; Johanson & Vahlne, 1990) and some have gone further to define areas of similarities and differences. Services complexity like difficulty in evaluating service quality before delivery

(Parasuraman, Zeithaml & Berry, 1985) and cultural factors that influences mode of delivering services in international markets are some of the factors that identified as the root cause of these differences.

Services have unique characteristics when compared to the manufactured products, and a key feature is its intangibility which many have primarily used to classify and distinguish one form of service from another, case in point is telecommunication, educational or medical services compared to “services embedded in goods like hotel and hospitality or software” (Patterson & Cicic, 1995: 60). Brouthers, Brouthers, & Werner (2008) argued that it is unwarranted to a priori assume that international business theories and concepts developed within the context of manufacturing firms are equally relevant and valid in the context of service organisations. The conclusion on this matter according to Patterson & Cicic (1995) is that services intangibility is presented as a continuum from highly pure professional services to a mix of services embedded with goods. Arguments on the peculiarities of services that it cannot be seen, touched, felt is based on performances, experiences, people-based (legal services) nature or equipment based (telecommunications).

2.1.2 Why Service Internationalisation? (Motivation)

There has been plethora of researches and strategies on internationalisation from export of goods perspective based on four state cycle of “market knowledge, commitment decisions, current activities, and market commitment” and this largely start via agent, then sales subsidiary, and eventually “production in the host country” (Johanson & Vahlne, 1977). The truth remains that there is limited researches in the area of services. Even though a number of authors have argued on the similarities between manufactured goods and services (Boddewyn, Halbrich and Perry, 1986), others have debated on their obvious differences and need for different approach based on obvious peculiarities (Lovelock & Wirtz, 2007), one thing that stands out today is the disruptive nature of technology fostering globalisation, faster access to information and higher competition. All these factors have accelerated the rise in the need for services internationalisation today.

Without any gainsaying, globalisation has played a significant role in creating business opportunities for services organisations to internationalise (Patterson & Cicic, 1995). Vandermerwe & Chadwick (1989) observed that globalisation is actively driving services internationalisation. Services sector continues to play a vital role in international trade contributing 25-35 percent of world trade as at 1985 (Patterson & Cicic, 1995) and as at 2011 forms 30-35 percent of the global trade (Böhmann et al., 2011: 7).

Globalisation is a fundamental trend for today's companies of which services sector unquestionably expected to play a vital role in this development because its growth and survival also hinges on internationalisation. Javalgi et al. (2003) and Etemad-Sajjad (2015: 169) emphasized that "services is the most dynamic and promising area of economic activities throughout the world" thus increasing services internationalisation opportunities. Technological advancement and advent of e-commerce, through the ubiquity of internet has changed the landscape for the services sector, as we now see huge cross-boundaries trade from matured to emerging markets and global services exchange diffusing the thin-line of separation, entrenching service internationalisation into the core-fabric of world trade thus becoming more crucial source of economic development for both emerging economies and developed ones. Braga (1996: 34) corroborated this stating that "advances in information technology have vastly expanded the range of services that can be traded internationally and developing countries" like Nigeria stand to gain a lot from this profiting from services export opportunities and access to services not available locally, though with some caveats on the intent to develop required human and physical capital required.

Internationalisation of services is accelerated by desire for profitability, quality, growth, "incentives by the host governments" in emerging economies, and "a freer flow of capital throughout the world" (Altinay & Roper, 2007: 117). There is need to move beyond the traditional reactive and provider focused strategies by adopting a proactive and customer centric strategies to be successful in services internationalisation (Edvardsson, Edvinsson & Nystróm, 2012: 22). They also observed that "for organisations to succeed internationally, they must be able to offer competitive services at home, have financial resources and management capacities for international growth" (:24). This is because "building up a business alone abroad is connected with great risk and above all, often takes a considerably longer time than calculated".

A number of scholars have argued that having stable economy at home before taking economic risks abroad is important (Edvardsson, Edvinsson & Nystróm, 2012), as this will not put the parent business in danger. A good understanding of the marketplace will inform proper timing for internationalisation, a crucial and decisive factor, just as management capacity also have its implications. Interesting finding by Edvardsson, Edvinsson & Nystróm (2012: 25) shows that "building up confidence among potential customers and proving that the services offered are dependable" is more important than just offering services that have obvious competitive advantages or financial resources to weather start-up stage losses.

Edvardsson, Edvinsson & Nystróm (2012: 25) stated that "since a service is an abstraction and its implications difficult for a customer to judge, criteria other than those that have to do with the service itself often form the basis for a customer's judgement, such as when employees convey confidence, show competence, good judgment and commitment". Being able to show "tangible proof of knowledge and competence", otherwise known as result is thus important. Based on the context above, some of the motivation for services internationalisation are articulated below:

2.1.2.1 Globalisation & Need for Expansion

Globalisation of world market has definitely increased opportunities for services internationalisation but the amount of empirical research focused on internationalisation of services "remains relatively low" (Samiee, 1999; Groonroos, 1999; Clark & Rajaratnam, 1998). Murray, Gao & Kotabe, (2011: 252) also alluded to this view in that "globalisation and rapid development of international trade have made it imperative for companies from emerging economies to seek expansion opportunities". Service firms are following their clients expanding territories and Winsted & Patterson (1998: 294) captured this as a "shift to services in economies of most developed countries as manufacturing activity has shifted to low-wage economies".

2.1.2.2 Market-based Policies

According to Boso et al. (2013: 708) " emerging economies are undergoing enormous institutional transformations, and this presents considerable openings and challenges for business growth as these economies stimulate economic growth/poverty reduction by embracing market-based policies". Whether tangible products or services, Johanson & Vahlne (1977) stated that firms internationalise after establishment in its local market as a means of expansion or business growth, and this has been a practice that spans several decades. Is this still the trend today? Is there a difference in emerging market like Nigeria? These are some of the questions that have never been addressed and yearning for answers to guide entrepreneurs investing in Nigeria, and Africa at large. Braga (1996) argued that Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) is "the main means of international delivery of services", so what is the regulatory outlook and appetite in lowering known barriers (price controls, legal barriers to economic activities, state monopolies) to FDI? Despite Nigeria's adoption of General Agreement on Trade of Services (GATS) through application of GATT framework, liberalisation has been slow due to its non-integration into Nigeria's national law and the previous delay on the request to establish a fourth mode of service supply which is the presence of natural persons (Oyejide et al., 2009). This is still a progressive report to previous experience and thus is in line with Braga (1996: 37) argument that "immediate liberation could be limited, but the arrangement paves way for upcoming multidimensional liberalisation". Samiee (1999:320) presents a coherent summary in that "there is still much work to be done to reach the generally low level of barriers negotiated in merchandise trade".

The internationalisation of services field is evolving and firms are expanding significantly despite being considered as a more risky venture than the manufacturing export business (Carmen & Langeard, 1980). Services is now a major "driving force in the global economy" and now considered "the largest element of developed nations" (Javalgi et al., 2003). Lovelock (2007: 6) stated "the size of service sector is increasing in both developed and emerging countries" and went further to show that private service industries account for two-third (80 percent) of US gross domestic product (GDP). The million dollar question is this: is it similar in Nigeria? And Africa at large? Goswami, Mattoo & Sáez (2012: 1) wrote that "since the mid-1990s, service exports of 20 developing countries including Nigeria have grown by over 15 percent annually", and this include modern services that are skill-intensive and of high-value like information, business services and information communications technology (ICT). Nigeria economy was rebased in April, 2014 after 23 years becoming the largest economy in Africa, and the services sector grew from 25 percent to 50 percent while manufacturing grew from 2 percent to 7 percent. Trade Economics (2015) stated that "services is the largest sector of Nigeria economy, accounting for about 50 percent of total GDP", but just like most emerging economies, this is yet to be harnessed.

2.1.2.1 Professional Services Niche Opportunities

Local clientele expansion into other markets naturally creates opportunities for services internationalisation (consulting, legal). This research work did cover a number of professional service firms internationalising their offering, of which the findings and patterns interpreted will be highly valuable to both practitioners and scholars.

2.1.2.2 Advancement in Technology & Changes in Government Policies

Considerable majority of all new jobs, skilled and unskilled are created by the service businesses operating within a remarkable array of industries (Lovelock, 2007). Why is this so? "Service industries are the main investors in IT around the world" (Braga, 1996: 35). The advancement through expansion of electronic networks and interconnectivity offered by the Internet has not only increased cross-border long distance rendering of services even in high-touch services like education and health services but also introduced new products like "financial derivatives", and faster access to market information (airline reservation system) among others. Case in-point is this online DBA programme leveraging technology to enhance long-distance education.

Recent technological improvements has drastically reduced communication costs and the "reduction in trade barriers have allowed services to move en-masse into the global market environment" (Atuahene-Gima, 1996; Patterson & Cicic, 1995). Winsted & Patterson (1998: 294) recognised technology as the "unifying effect that has made national boundaries less significant than in the past" while Braga (1996: 34) concluded that "the internationalisation of services is at the very core of economic globalization".

The reality is that the services industry has been the fastest growing sector in international trade (Cicic et al., 1999) and the shift towards service-based economy has been evident since 1970 of which the main portion of total economic activities in USA, France and Hong Kong has been from the services sector since the early 1990s (Samiee, 1999). The trend is now growing in emerging countries in Africa, of which Nigeria plays a very significant role and as economies develop moving up the scale of affluence, there will be demand for more services. Beyond the traditional service export through tourism, Nigeria stand a chance to take advantage of long-distance services (data entry, software programming, etc.) which will continue to expand (Braga, 1996) as means of higher exports even as the country invest more in human capital and infrastructure development.

2.1.2.3 Gain insight and knowledge that can benefit the Parent company

Edvardsson, Edvinsson & Nystróm (2012: 25) recognised how job rotation foster employee commitment through knowledge transfer, corporate core values and culture. Edvardsson, Edvinsson & Nystróm (2012: 25) research was limited to Swedish market and as such only conceived internationalisation of "newly established service companies as important part of overall strategic development because it's so small with limited growth possibilities". However, technological evolution and advancement of e-commerce has actually flawed this conclusion. Javalgi et al. (2011, 174) argued that "one of the most significant drivers in the outsourcing of services to off-shore locations has been the dramatic advances in telecommunications and information technology, with advances penetrating even the most impoverished regions of the world". It has even been observed that "services sector exports of a number of developing countries are growing faster than their goods exports thus contributing to export diversification" serving as alternative conduit for faster economic development and scarcity assuagement (Goswami Mattoo & Sáez, 2012: 1)

2.1.3 Challenges of Services Internationalisation

Patterson & Cicic (1995: 57) argued that there is “limited empirical knowledge of services internationalisation”. Tradition, human capital, entrepreneurial ability, policies, labour mobility and regulations that naturally shields domestic companies from foreign competitions have been foundational challenges that services firm internationalising faces globally, and Nigeria has had her fair share of this from neighbouring countries. Braga (1996: 34) substantiated this when they stated that the lack of enabling regulatory environment for services industries and lack of required infrastructure and investment in human capital for the information age as top barriers to services internationalisation. Simply put, Goswami, Mattoo & Sáez (2012:2) summed the above up stating that “barriers to trade in services are more complex than trade in goods”.

While regional cross/transnational trade agreements and united fronts like Economic Community of West Africa (ECOWAS) has enhanced liberalisation, lack of relevant information has further mystified this growing sector compounded by lack of generally accepted service classification methods (Clark et al., 1996). Extensive technical know-how and contacts required to maintain quality has also made services internationalisation very risky and expensive (Winsted & Patterson, 1998).

Patterson & Cicic (1995: 75) identified “cost, perceived risks, motivation and benefits” as major challenges to services Internationalisation, though with a caveat that this is at a varying degree for various groups of services. Cicic, Patterson & Shoham (1999: 86) concluded that “internationalisation is more risky for a service business than it is for a manufacturer because the latter group may undertake the process more gradually thereby learn from experience".

Erramilli & Rao (1993: 19) surfaced the scarce but important impact of entry mode in that "the choice of the correct entry mode for a particular foreign market is one of the most critical decisions in internationalisation". Patterson & Cicic (1995: 61) argued that "service firms are forced to choose from reduced set of market entry modes when internationalizing". Erramilli (1991) and Erramilli & Rao (1993) found that tangible variation in entry-mode choice occurs when low-specificity firms are pressed to share control (franchising, joint ventures, exclusively owned affiliates) and varying degree of ownership.

Other scholars at various times have emphasized International Trade Policies, Internationalisation Process in Specific Industries and the role of services firms in creating national competitive advantage based on understanding of the degree of contact required (Chase & Steinberg, 1979). High contact services like hotels and hospitality requires high level of interaction between the provider and client during service delivery while others like communications and financial services often leverages technology requires less degree of interaction. Pla-Barber, León-Darder & Villar (2011: 152) concluded that "entry mode choice in the manufacturing firms cannot be directly transferred to the internationalisation of soft-service firms". Patterson & Cicic (1995: 60) presented the intangibility of services as a double-edged sword with opportunities and problems (inability to inspect before buying, reliance on past experience, and word-of-mouth (WOM) to make decisions). This intangibility has also been seen by many as the greatest enemy of services internationalisation, especially when we think of cost to build the brand image, need for product differentiation, sensitivity, cultural differences from the home country of export and other associated risk of internationalisation (Dahringer, 1991 cited in Patterson & Cicic, 1995).

Dated but of relevance is Johanson & Vahlne (1977: 26) position that insufficient knowledge of market opportunities often due to language difference and culture as constraints to internationalisation. They supported that internationalisation is considered as a promising growth strategy but many organisations have failed in this venture due to the experience factor. Murray, Gao & Kotabe, M (2011: 253) revealed that "organisations from an emerging economy like Nigeria are usually less skilled in exporting, especially to customers in developed nations". Nevertheless, Goswami, Mattoo & Sáez (2012: 1) observation is that "developing countries like Nigeria have their services export growing faster than goods export and labelled this vital role that services sector continues to play in international trade as "service revolution". The new government commitment to revamp the education, health sector, creation of enabling environment for FDI and accelerated proactive policies through the Lagos free trade zones and access to land are signs of the good things to come.

The table in the appendix shows the chronological findings and future research areas recommended by scholars in the internationalisation of services field, and these were synthesised to locate the major areas that this thesis would be contributing to the existing body of knowledge.

2.1.4 Services Classification & Categorisation Framework – Localization to Internationalisation

The first major attempt towards services classification scheme was by Lovelock (1983), which focussed on "the nature of service act, the nature of the relationship a firm had with its customers, the degree of customization or standardization, the nature of supply and demand for the service and the manner in which the service is delivered" (Patterson & Cicic, 1995: 59). It however did not address service classification from international perspective.

While Lovelock (1983) contributed in its own time to local services advancement, the international framework was still far-fetched. Globalisation opened an enormous range of services fit for internationalisation like computer, internet and ICT, corporate services, consulting, medical, communications and broadcasting services. Patterson & Cicic (1995) made the first empirical attempt at closing this gap through their services classification framework. Patterson & Cicic (1995: 58) canvassed for services classification beyond the known services-industry classification, one based on international operations (mode of entry, organisational attitude, etc.) using "levels of service tangibility and face-to-face delivery" (Altinay & Roper, 2007: 168).

Patterson & Cicic (1995) associated high-contact services to higher start-up cost for local presence; customised services thereby require both technical and interpersonal skills through expert recruitment to foster quality service delivery and brand development in the foreign country. Nicoulaud (1989 cited in Patterson & Cicic, 1995) concluded that "value added customised services are the most successful based on high-degree of tangibility and face-to-face contact”. They also stated that some services types do lend themselves to international market more than others. On the other hand, low-contact services classified as having lower cost of internationalisation and reduced perceived risk given the possibility to standardize. Patterson & Cicic (1995) concluded that “value added customised services are the most successful based on high-degree of tangibility and face-to-face contact”. They also stated that some services types do lend themselves to international market more than others.

Cicic, Patterson & Shoham (1999) identified two general patterns of services internationalisation; the first being services with high-level of inseparability, and this is considered strong candidate for internationalisation because of its swift process which assumes immediate presence in foreign market while the second is the separable services, considered to be similar to manufacturing because of its gradual process.

Lovelock & Yip (1996) on the other hand proposed “a people, possession and information process-based system” while Clark & Rajaratnam (1999) proposed four types of international service which are “1. Contact-based services, 2. Vehicle-based (communications) services, 3. Asset-based services, 4. Object-based services)”. Braga (1996: 37) concluded that “the most active trade channels of the twenty-first century will be via intangibles rather than goods”. Service industries will be responsible for the “roads” of the global “info structure” and they will be the major providers of the content to be traded electronically (Braga, 1996). The adoption of free trade zones and friendly investment policies are essential for countries to exploit the benefits internationalisation of services promises. This is notably true for emerging economies, of which Nigeria is a major hub.

2.2 Dynamic Capabilities and International Marketing Strategy

The increasing marketplace complexity emerging from globalisation, customer sophistication and accessibility to competitive information has raised the demand for better quality, innovative services and more value for money. Regrettably, most organisations are not ready for this reality and most business leaders will humbly endorse this assertion showing their lack of insight to navigate this disruptive reality (Day, 2011). This research builds on the resource-based view (RBV) of the firm (Barney, 1991; Barney, Wright & Ketchen, 2001) and the dynamic capabilities extension (Teece, Pisano & Shuen, 1997) articulated in this section provides the theoretical foundation for this study execution. The broader definitions of resources which included assets, capabilities and relevant firm-specific attributes like organisational processes (Barney, 1991) largely associated with the early studies on the RBV has evolved and researchers today predominantly adopts the refined model because it offers clearer and concise difference between resources and capabilities (Lu et al., 2010).

Day (1994: 38) distinguished assets from capabilities by defining the former as the resource endowments that business has accumulated over time, and the latter as the adhesive that brings the assets together and enables them to be deployed effectively. Capabilities are deep-rooted in organisational practices, and routines, and therefore are the most valued, and non-substitutable resources possessed by the firm (Moorman &

Slotegraaf, 1999). Early definitions of capabilities have been static in nature without any explanation of how capabilities are developed or how it can be adapted to market and environmental changes (Day, 2011). This gap affected many businesses globally, and the emerging markets have had their fair-share of this struggle to maintain their competitiveness and or expand to international markets because of their inability to reinvent themselves and adapt to emerging realities. This huge gap in the capabilities literature found its solution in the dynamic capabilities theory. According to Day (2011: 186) "dynamic capabilities theory puts the spotlight on how organisations acquires and deploys its resources to better match the demands of the market environment". Teece et al. (1997: 516) defined "dynamic capabilities as the firm's ability to integrate, build, and reconfigure internal and external competences to address rapidly changing environments". Morgan (2012: 108) defined dynamic capabilities (DC) as "the firm's ability to engage in market-based learning and use the resulting insight to reconfigure the firm's resources and enhance its capabilities in ways that reflect the firm's dynamic market environment". Information is now available online at the speed of light, and big data emerging from unconventional sources like social media and digital/viral marketing channels with social sentiments now shaping customer's buying preference, patterns and decisions. Again, majority of businesses are daunted by this proliferation of data and unimaginable flood of feedback that must be tracked from divers technological sources to make strategic business decisions. Local and international service ventures are in shock as to how to respond to this market changes, with more pressure on international service ventures that have to compete in foreign markets and yet had to deal with complexities like cultural peculiarities, local laws, regulations and several macro-environment uncertainties. Some of the imminent questions that marketing strategists attempt to answer are; How does a firm remain competitive and profitable in dynamic market environment amidst uncertainties and market disruptions? How and when should firms reconfigure their resources and upgrade their capabilities?

Day (2011: 186) recommends three key functions of dynamic capabilities as, "(1) sensing environmental changes that could be threats or opportunities, by scanning, searching, and exploring across markets and technologies; (2) responding to the changes by combining and transforming available resources and adding new resources; and (3) selecting an appropriate organisational configuration and business model for delivering value to customers and capturing the economic profit."

Morgan (2012: 108) advised firms to continually develop systematic ways of discovering, categorising and capturing "personal, group and organisational learning about the company's present and potential markets" which provides the insight into when and how to effectively upgrade the firm's capabilities and reconfigure its resources. Anything short of developing required DCs poses a serious threat to a firm's sustainability, and as organisations becomes rigid (Leonard-Barton, 1992), it fails to meet the evolving market needs/trends leading to lower performance. Vorhies, Orr & Bush (2011: 738) argued "maintenance of superior performance is dependent on the firm's ability to successfully redeploy resources and capabilities, not just within the firm, but also from one business environment to another, thus enabling a firm to expand into new product markets". Wilden & Gudergan (2015: 182) found that "despite research into how marketing and technological capabilities affect performance and service advantage, there is still lack of sufficient understanding of how firms can align these capabilities with the changes in their environment – (technological, competitor, and market conditions), as well as how frequent dynamic capability utilization might facilitate this capability alignment". Fang & Zou (2009: 744) emphasize "firm's capability to respond to external market changes efficiently and promptly is hinged on the ability to integrate, build, and reconfigure internal and external competencies to address rapidly changing environment".

There are different conceptualizations of dynamic capabilities and perspectives on its constituent components towards value-creation has evolved ranging from Eisenhardt & Martin (2000) resource-based view (RBV) of the firm looking at firm's competitive advantage from resources and capabilities perspective, resource-advantage (R-A) theory and dynamic capabilities on resource utilization under competitive pressure in firms differentiated by their sizes (Jeng & Pak, 2014), to the trio of market learning, resource reconfiguration and capability enhancement (Morgan, 2012). Day (2011) also considers marketing capabilities relating to the marketing mix development as static. Nonetheless, marketing capabilities plays a crucial role as predictors of firm's ability to effectively implement planned marketing strategy (Morgan, Katsikeas & Vorhies, 2012). The evolution has been from RBV that was critiqued as static theory and evaluated as inadequate for today's changing and highly dynamic environment to that which correlates marketing and technological effects of sensing and reconfiguring processes in separate environmental conditions towards value maximisation (Wilden & Gudergan, 2015). These studies essentially "claim that sustained competitive advantage must be based on the firm's renewal and reconfiguration of its resources and capabilities through DCs" (Barrales-Molina et al., 2014: 398).

It is interesting to also discover that there is a common argument between organisational learning and DCs theories for firm capabilities improvement linked directly to the firm's ability to embed new market knowledge (Vorhies, Orr & Bush, 2011; Slater & Narver, 1995; Cadogan & Diamantopoulos, 1995). Slater & Narver (1995) from organisational learning theory also emphasised that "learning and utilising market intelligence underpins firm capability development" which is in line with Eisenhardt & Martin (2000) argument that DCs encompasses firm's ability to embed new market knowledge to transform and adapt existing resources developing new capabilities.

The environment (market, competitor and technology) in question does play a major role in determining the relevance and likely positive or negative impact (from rigidity) of DCs utilization (Wilden & Gudergan, 2015). Dynamic capabilities examined from sensing by looking into how firms intuitively learn about their customers, competitors, market environment and reconfiguring processes by outspreading and modifying capabilities in response to market and technological changes. Dynamic capabilities have been positively associated with sensing and reconfiguring, since this endears organisational memory which correspondingly improves operational capabilities and predictability (Wilden & Gudergan, 2015). Firms that engage in frequent sensing processes tend to increase their market knowledge thereby increasing their marketing capabilities, marketing strategy fit, overall firm performance and international service advantage (Cadogan & Diamantopoulos, 1995; Newey & Zahra, 2009). This was further ratified by Day (2011: 186) description of dynamic capability as "the capacity of an organization to purposefully create, extend, or modify the resource base", and these are capabilities that enable organizational fitness, as well as support environment development for common good.

Findings from Wilden & Gudergan (2015: 181) shows positive DCs of marketing and technological effect through frequent sensing and reconfiguring in environment with high competitor turbulence and a negative association in a stable environment. Marketing capabilities shows positive relationship with firm performance in highly competitive environment while technological capabilities were found to be more effective in stable environment. This research attempt to unveil the pattern in Nigeria as a reference point comparable to other emerging market in Africa, and across the world in general. Emerging markets are typically associated with high competition and thus more turbulent, and one can thus deduce the need for constant scanning of the market by sensing and adapting by reconfiguring the firm's resources to boost its capabilities. DCs theory did posit that "firm's resources and capabilities need to be continually changed in order to deliver sustained competitive advantage in dynamic environments" (Day, 2011: 108). Zahra, Sapienza & Davidsson (2006: 918) went further on DC's application, as "the abilities to reconfigure a firm's resources and routines in the manner envisioned and deemed appropriate by its principal decision-maker(s)". This position firms to prospect opportunities through innovative and probable effective ways, it is not a surety for organisational success or survival.

According to Zahra, Sapienza, and Davidsson (2006), marketing capabilities can be viewed as substantive capabilities, which contribute to problem solving and outcome achievement, and which mediate the relationship between dynamic capabilities and performance. Remarkably, appreciable number of previous studies have found a positive direct impact of marketing capabilities on competitive advantage and performance outcomes in international business setup (Lu et al., 2010; Murray et al., 2011). As elucidated in this chapter and probing from a marketing theory standpoint, it makes sense to suggest that any attempt to investigate the internal process that links dynamic capabilities, marketing capabilities and competitive advantage should also take into consideration the crucial role of marketing strategy. Customers perception of value they derived from suppliers is often formed assessing the acquisition cost and combination of benefits that make up the total package. In essence, the relevance of superior capabilities is to the extent that it facilitates the development of an effective marketing strategy that yields a superior value to the target customer (Morgan et al., 2004).

This study hence proposes that the possession of superior dynamic capabilities does have a positive effect on the development of a firm's (otherwise static) marketing capabilities. The upgraded marketing capabilities enable a firm to develop a marketing strategy that reflects changing market trends and environmental conditions. For firms that transcend domestic boundaries, the major concern when developing international marketing strategies is to achieve a proper fit (or co-alignment) of strategy with the environment in which it is implemented (Katsikeas, Samiee & Theodosiou, 2006). Thus, the researcher proposes a positive relationship between international marketing capabilities and international marketing strategy fit. Easterby-Smith et al., (2008) argued that most existing dynamic capabilities research are largely theoretical. It is noteworthy to mention previous research has shown that capabilities can also be context specific (Ethiraj, Kale, Krishnan, & Singh, 2005). The literature insight evaluated in this chapter ranging from concepts to empirical perspective were applied per relevance. As presented in the previous section, this study considers international service venture as a unique context that offers a suitable empirical setting to investigate the link between capabilities, strategy, and competitive advantage. It thus presents a strategic opportunity to contribute to existing body of knowledge while empowering the practice with a pragmatic reference.

2.3 International Entrepreneurial Proclivity

Lumpkin & Dess (1996:137) identified new entry as the essential act of entrepreneurship and entrepreneurial orientation or proclivity as "how new entry is undertaken". Many organisation faces the dilemma of whether to internationalise or not at some stage of their development and decision made at this phase comes with its consequences which can be grounded in Covin & Slevin (1991) argument that risk taking, proactiveness, and innovation as underlying elements of entrepreneurial posture. Firm's pursuit for expansion in international markets can be seen "as an act of entrepreneurship" (McDougall & Oviatt, 2000). The firms that intend to take advantage of foreign market opportunities must adopt an entrepreneurial orientation to be able to navigate the inherent uncertainty, complexities and risks (Knight & Cavusgil, 2004). Lumpkin & Dess (1996:136) argued that the essential act of entrepreneurship is novel entry and this which is in line with Zhou, Barnes & Lu (2010: 886) definition of entrepreneurial proclivity "as organisation's predisposition to accept entrepreneurial processes, practices and decision-making". Possession of an entrepreneurial orientation lead to certain processes, practices and decision-making activities that lead to new market entry (Lumpkin & Dess, 1996:136).

Some major drivers for international entrepreneurial consideration have been globalisation that continually blurs international boundaries, technological advancement (electronic commerce), opportunity for resource maximisation through international operations among others (Zahra, Ireland & Hitt, 2000). The fundamental question remains how could firms get deeper insight to unravel the principles behind the success of some firm's early internationalisation like the "born global" firms that are able to achieve success early in global markets relative to those that internationalise late, and others that remains local (Cavusgil & Knight 2015).

This is not only for businesses with international operations but also applicable to businesses without international interest, and a good reference for local businesses considering internationalising their services. Zhou, Barnes & Lu (2010: 886) define entrepreneurial proclivity "as organisation's tendency to accept entrepreneurial processes, practices and decision-making". Firms entrepreneurial values speaks to firms agile-eyes for international opportunities and promptness in developing required capabilities, which can still be related to the sensing and reconfiguring capabilities of an organisation have been recognised as the underlying advantage for firms' early internationalisation (Wilden & Gudergan, 2015; Cavusgil, & Knight, 2015). Entrepreneurial proclivity has been recognised as a crucial influence in "both the initiation and subsequent performance outcomes of internationalisation" (Zhou, Barnes & Lu, 2010: 885).

The pattern of argument has been that firms with entrepreneurial proclivity does make early dive into the international market and this has been linked to their knowledge, skills, exposure and inner drive that propels them to see opportunities where others do not see, and take advantage of it through their foresight and far sight (Andreea, Danis, & Cavusgil, 2012). These entrepreneurs are known to debunk the traditional internationalisation strategy that advocates "foreign experiential knowledge as the rudiments for success" by mostly depending on their entrepreneurial instincts, knowledge and vision to exploit international opportunities by acquiring required skills, knowledge, capability, experience to be successful thus having the first-to-market advantage and continually recreate and reconfigure the firm amidst emerging competition (Yiu et al., 2007; Zahra, 2005). How does international entrepreneurial proclivity affect firm dynamic capabilities? What about market maturity especially in emerging economies like Nigeria? What about lack of key resources and marketing capabilities rampant in emerging economies? These and many more will be unveiled through the findings of this research work.

McDougall & Oviatt (2000: 903) "defined international entrepreneurship as a combination of innovative, proactive, and risk-seeking behaviour that crosses national borders and is intended to create value in organisations". Lumpkin & Dess (2001) investigated proactiveness and competitive aggressiveness dimensions of entrepreneurial orientation or proclivity drawing from theory and empirical research. The entrepreneurial proclivity's influence on "market-scanning happenings and responsiveness" conceptualisation (Matsuno et al., 2002). Embracing calculated risk taking and aggressive measures from emerging-markets firms remains the most competitive strategy to balance the reality of unavailability of resources and capabilities in the global marketplace (Yamakawa et al., 2013). Two general theoretical perspective takes dominance and these are entrepreneurship focus " demonstrated through characteristics of entrepreneurial orientation or proclivity" (Covin & Slevin, 1989).

Starting with Covin & Slevin (1991) model on the locus of entrepreneurship and its relationship to firm performance as revised by Zahra (1993: 9) found that " there are special needs of international ventures that Covin-Slevin model ignored based on the understanding that some ventures are created within established firms in search of growth opportunities, others are created with an international focus from the start" and also concluded that none of previous research, even Zahra (1993) gave sufficient attention to international entrepreneurial proclivity. Even though, there are more recent work like Zhou, Barnes & Lu (2010) that extended Zahra (1993), the argument across board has been that "almost all the empirical evidence has so far been obtained in more advanced economies, as there is relatively little research on this subject in emerging economies" (Yamakawa et al., 2013: 181)

International entrepreneurial proclivity has been said to position "firms to rapidly identify international opportunities and develop capabilities required to be successful" (Zhou et al., 2010). It also promotes superior level of information scanning actions, which enables firm to quickly develop foreign market knowledge and at also respond effectively to changes in the external market environment (Zhou, 2007). Entrepreneurial activities can thus be regarded as the starting point for the creation of dynamic capabilities (Zahra et al., 2006). Internal processes and efforts are thus required to build dynamic capabilities rather than often common perception that focus on acquisition from market transactions (Zhou & Li, 2010). This study took already existing work to the next level by assessing international entrepreneurial proclivity in international service ventures and also serve as an answer to Lumpkin & Dess (2001: 431) call for "theoretical development and empirical research directed at this construct for the enhancement of both normative and descriptive theory". The researcher thus proposes that international entrepreneurial proclivity (orientation) is such an internal process that leads to the creation of dynamic capabilities that are unique and hard for competitor to immediately copy, and which initiate a chain-of-effects that leads to achievement of sustainable competitive advantage in international markets.

2.4 International Service Advantage

Practitioners continues to see an upward trend in services just as scholars acknowledge through research that the highest percentage of global gross domestic products (GDP) does not only comes from services, but this has been on annual increase (Kaleka, 2011). As expatiated earlier in this chapter, services-orientation and differentiation is less popular when compared to the traditional low-cost and goods-differentiation common model of today. Services differentiation is a paradigm shift with unique competitive advantage that entrepreneurs must actively seek-after to remain relevant in today's kaleidoscopic world (Bitner & Brown, 2006 cited in Kaleka, 2011). Nigeria as emerging market is a good example of such economy experiencing this transition with huge potential for transformation through its services sector. Nigerian economy was rebased by the National Bureau of Statistics in July 2014, and this resulted in the revision of its "nominal, real GDP estimates as well as growth rates of GDP", with the most substantial growth coming from the services sector, especially in ICT, Arts and entertainment, hotels and restaurants, and recreation services (National Bureau of Statistics, 2014).

Despite the emergence of the services sector as major national growth driver, the biggest revenue generating segments like financial services, entertainment, and hospitality still suffers from increasing customer churn, and as customers increasingly becomes more knowledgeable there is loss of customer confidence and plunged customer satisfaction has become the order of the day. Kevin (2013) categorised this "lack of truly customersatisfying service” as a global problem and went further to introduce a new paradigm of efficiency termed “service-ability”. It is thus essential for services-based international service venture to understand the thin line between “serviceable and service able” (Kevin, 2013: 8) in order to establish real service advantage. Customer total satisfaction has been identified as pre-requisites to secure loyalty and other significant competitive advantage (Kevin, 2013) which add up as service advantage. This section inquires deeper into current understanding of service advantage, took a step beyond the current limitation that focuses on manufacturing firms to service firm internationalisation (Parasuraman, Zeithaml & Berry, 1985, Kaleka, 2011) and further espoused service advantage from having “culture of service” to understanding technology as an enabler “and not a barrier between business and customers” (Kevin, 2013).

2.4.1 What is Service Advantage in International Service Ventures?

International service venture’s ability to package services tangibly as a vivid brand, service quality, fulfilment and complementary offering “to generate customer value and improve venture performance” (Kaleka, 2011: 41) influences and gives credible insight into international service venture service advantage. This encompasses but not limited to customer’s ability to evaluate the brand image, service level offered in the marketplace, level of service compared to competition among others. Kaleka (2011: 41) defined service advantage as “reflection of the status that a firm has achieved in a specific market as a result of its service”, hinged on the service quality and simply put as “the realisation of the firm’s service differentiation strategy”. However, Service advantage transcends service quality (purely customer focussed) in that it pays attention to other factors like perception development based on word-of-mouth (WOM) and competition in the international market. How does a service company achieve service fulfilment in international service venture, such that it meets customer's service needs relative to competition? And the manner in which the pre-sales stage was managed, post-sales support and the service quality (Porter, 1980).

"Service quality is customer valuation of the level of service the firm provides relative to their expectations". The good news is that service quality, SERVQUAL is "most wide-spread measurement instrument" and research largely conducted in service firms shows that it covers reliability, responsiveness, assurance, empathy, and tangibles.

The international dimension of this research introduced additional layer of complexity ranging from cultural differences (being knowledgeable to develop strategies and adaptive mechanisms), to market/government regulations/institutional characteristics (Brouthers, Brouthers & Werner 2008). Kaleka (2011: 42) argued that "international business has devoted scanty attention to the role of services in establishing and maintaining successful ventures with overseas partners". International market institutional and cultural differences influence customer frame of reference and expectation from international services venture, which subsequently affect and influence its service advantage in such markets. It is thus important to evaluate these factors so as to have a better insight towards greater service advantage (Kaleka, 2011).

Kaleka (2011: 43) service advantage model was adapted for this research assessing the service companies experiential and financial resources through three firm capabilities,: (1) "product development capability, which speaks to ease of making tangible the service offering, how it is packaged and delivered, (2) "ability to acquire valuable international service venture market related information", and (3) "the ability to develop good relationships with customers in the international venture market". This is a more acceptable approach despite the scantiness of studies in this area (Morgan, Kaleka, and Katsikeas, 2004), and there are others like Ha-Brookshire and Dyer (2009 cited in Kaleka, 2011) that have actually established positive relationship between service advantage and performance with foreign business associates.

The service advantage operationalisation was based on formative construct established through measurement relationship where international services ventures were asked to assess their offering relative to their main competitors in the international venture market based on service offering "(product) accessibility, technical support, after-sales support, delivery speed and reliability" (Kaleka, 2011: 49).

2.5 International Marketing Strategy Fit

It is widely believed that globalisation has led to increased competition and international service ventures are now faced with the challenges of reinventing themselves for survival, relevance, growth and profitability. The debate has largely been to what extent should standardisation of services be if it offers lower costs and higher margins compared to customisation often necessitated by competition, local laws pertaining to tariffs, taxes, standards and patents (Jain, 1989). While some researchers present standardisation from economies of scale perspective using global brands, others have shown this could yield less effective result once it is in variance with the environment in the international foreign market (Zeriti et al., 2014, Yip, 2003). The question is how do we define the boundary? What are the parameters and yardstick for standardisation or adaptation of marketing programs in the context of “fit” and how does it affect international service advantage? Jain (1989) argued that this is not a dichotomous decision but a blend of standardisation and customisation, especially in international service venture. Some have claimed that adoption of “strategic fit” concept has been slow despite wide acceptance of standardisation and customisation while others have voted contingency theory based on combination of the two as means of enhancing service advantage, once there is fit between the strategy deployed and the context of its implementation (Hultman, Katsikeas & Robson, 2011; Zeriti et al., 2014).

Katsikeas, Samiee & Theodosiou (2006: 868) stated that “ correctness of a particular strategy can be defined in terms of its coalignment or fit” with environmental contingencies”, citing few researches like Aldrich (1979), Porter (1980) and Venkatraman & Prescott (1990) which alluded to positive effect of strategy fit on performance and eventual service advantage. Hsieh & Chen (2011: 12) substantiated the fact that “strategic fit concept helps firms manage their resources more efficiently, reduce operational costs, respond to environmental changes, and take advantage of new opportunities”. It is however revealing that they all recognise the paucity of empirical research in firm international marketing strategy fit and the international service venture environmental factors. Varying results and divergent findings have been widely cited on this subject largely due to inconsistent concepts and operationalisation and this further complicated the process of defining established theory and management practice (Xu, Cavusgil & White, 2006). Nevertheless, Vorhies and Morgan (2003) observed that researchers have applied the theory of strategic fit widely in management and marketing just as Katsikeas, Samiee & Theodosiou (2006: 868) adopted “strategic fit framework to understand performance consequences of international marketing strategy at the subsidiary level". Hultman, Robson & Katsikeas (2009: 2) took this further by assessing the "strategic fit-performance link in the export context", which has contributed to strategic fit – service advantage association as it pertains to firm's service differentiation strategy compared to competitors offering in the marketplace when assessed from customer's perspective.

International service venture marketing "strategic fit asserts the necessity of maintaining a close and consistent linkage between the firm's strategy and the context within which it is implemented" (Katsikeas, Samiee & Theodosiou, 2006: 869). This is based on the premise that appropriately linking the "marketing strategy with the environment leads to superior performance and service advantage", or better rendered as "creation of a fit based on the interaction between external dependencies and internal capabilities" (Hsieh & Chen, 2011). The environment comprises of market conditions (international customer needs and preferences) that prevail in the international service venture, economic environment, legal environment, political environment, marketing infrastructure and cultural environment. Jain (1989: 71) framework for determining marketing program standardisation was reviewed based on a number of factors like target market, market position, nature of product and environment but his conclusion primarily emphasised decision based on economic payoff in financial performance and competitive advantage. Day (1999) also confirmed that a firm's environment matched to appropriate international marketing strategy influences such firm's performance. Based on these premises and several others, international marketing strategy has been recognised as major instrument for attaining "fit between a firm and its external marketing conditions" (Katsikeas, Samiee & Theodosiou, 2006: 870; Lukas et al, 2001). This established strategic fit as a performance assessment instrument of international service venture marketing strategy, explaining how strategy fit as “degree of marketing program standardisation” in the international market venture and that of its environmental factors have positive affect on business performance, and how this translate to service advantage. Environmental factors have been subject of contention, especially the argument by Xu, Cavusgil & White (2006: 2) that it is not only external (uncontrollable) factors that matters but internal fit (structure, management systems, organisational culture) of an organisation “can also enhance the positive outcomes of a standardized marketing strategy through certain organisational characteristics that may facilitate the execution of a standardised marketing plan”. Cavusgil & Zou (1994) earlier called for a wider assessment perspective based on full range of goals set by a firm that pays attention to strategic goals like expanding to a particular international market and not just financial goals of the firm. The authors went further to explain the basis for “fit” as “organisation’s ability to identify the key components of strategy and reconcile competing or conflicting ideas and forces more coherently than ineffective organisation” (Xu, Cavusgil & White, 2006: 3).

International service venture is an interconnected network of people, processes and functions, and often with propensity to create more centralised structure, with standardised marketing programmes from the headquarters passed down to the international markets and subsidiaries (Samiee, 1999). The success of standardised marketing strategy also depends on top-down and bottom-up information flow with input from subsidiaries and overlapping market segments across international markets identified and targeted. Jain (1989) warned against “implementation of standardised marketing program without consideration of local specific characteristics as highly ineffective".

This research assesses marketing strategy fit of services organisations international service venture and the venture service advantage among other things. Katsikeas, Samiee & Theodosiou (2006: 869) argued that "marketing strategy is the main mechanism for achieving fit between an organisation and its external market conditions" but with emphasis on performance. This work took a step further looking deeply into how marketing strategy fit relates to the service advantage. This is crucial for entrepreneurs and businesses today looking for strategic fit with service benefits and edge above their competitors with emphasis on customer loyalty. Marketing strategy fit with service advantage surfaces often-unfounded information in the market based on word of mouth with intentional strategy to tackle competitors (Kaleka, 2011). It took cognisance of the challenges in the international market ranging from culture, local laws and the fact that firm overall performance varies from market to market depending on the differences in their strategic imperative and environmental conditions, thus the concept of strategic fit. It also ensured a given service line in a specific international market was used as the reference of assessment. This work went beyond the existing limitations and known barriers of unidimensional international service venture measurement by using multidimensional measures (Katsikeas et al., 2006) and operationalisation of the marketing capabilities in the context of marketing strategy fit and service advantage association by going deeper into identifying specific contextual factors (environmental contingencies) that have substantial effects on service advantage. This multidimensional approach provided "comprehensible construction of "multidimensional, interdisciplinary knowledge relating to the domains of a specific concept and the marketing problem being addressed" (Katsikeas, Samiee & Theodosiou, 2006: 871).

2.6 Summary

This chapter provided the theoretical foundation that guided this research work and how it is documented in this thesis. The major area of discussion in this review of literature are as follows: firstly, examination of the international service ventures and identification of areas that require attention, like the limited research attention devoted to performance of international service ventures and service orientations in the international market theory and practice; and secondly, presentation of fundamental aspects of the literature on international entrepreneurial proclivity, international dynamic capabilities, international marketing strategy fit and international service advantage. A key outcome of this review is that, even with the relatively considerable body of research already published with respect to international entrepreneurial proclivity, there has been no empirical evidence regarding how international entrepreneurial proclivity influences the creation of dynamic capabilities relevant to international activities and service strategies. The following chapter will attempt to address this gap and also offer a conceptual framework regarding the factors associated with international entrepreneurial proclivity and dynamic capabilities in international service venture.

CHAPTER THREE

CONCEPTUAL MODEL, RESEARCH HYPOTHESES & METHODOLOGY

3.0 Introduction

Exhaustive review of relevant literatures covered in the last chapter provided required conceptual and empirical context for this research. Despite the limited research attention in international service ventures domain, available literature and studies in international business venture and exports of services were scrutinised/analysed and specific gaps were found as it pertains to firm competitive advantage. While there are existing findings, largely from the manufacturing sector on international export performance, that has given more insight into opportunities and dynamics of engaging in international business ventures, the need for further research based on services orientation cannot be overemphasised. This chapter presents a comprehensive conceptual model of the antecedents of competitive advantage in international service venture. The drivers of competitive advantage in international service venture were integrated into the conceptual model through detailed research hypothesis that espoused the important role that international entrepreneurial proclivity, dynamic capabilities, marketing capabilities, international marketing strategy fit and international service advantage plays in firm competitive advantage in international service ventures. The conceptual model and detailed research hypothesis were developed to guide the execution of this research study and this provided the first insight into the main issues to the international service ventures in Nigeria (being first of its kind) and also brought to light common themes and problem areas of interest across service ventures internationalising their operations. The cross-cultural scholarship and practical applications based on structural and operational characteristics from a process compared to results orientation formed part of the reflection (Hofstede, Hofstede & Minkov, 2011).

Furthermore, the chapter focused on the methodological approach adopted which was mixed methods utilising an action research orientation. Ivankova (2015) argued that application of mixed methods in action research is not new, and the combination can "assist stakeholders in developing better appreciation for a data-driven decision-making process by capitalising on the advantages of integrating quantitative and qualitative methods" (Ivankova, 2017: 1). In addition, the application of mixed methods research is on the rise in many disciplines and there has been more frequent discussion on the growing use of quantitative and qualitative data in action research projects to the extent that some consider this as third methodological movement (Tashakkori & Teddlie, 2003; Lopez-Fernandez & Molina-Azorin, 2011; Cameron & Molina-Azorin, 2011). Mixed methods methodological framework for workplace-based action research is a means of enhancing participant engagement with study results. Mixed Methods Research (MMR) has been adopted in this research because it has helped to generate more credible and persuasive conclusions in addressing this complex research situation (Teddlie & Tasshakkori, 2009; Johnson & Onwuegbuzie, 2004).

A clarification of the process followed in combining designs was provided, which design method is predominant and why they were sequenced, and the design methods interactions and iterations through action research systematic, cyclical collaborative nature that brought together the scholar practitioner and others affected by the issue under inquiry (Vogt, Gardner & Haeffele, 2012). This study capitalised on the "advantages of integrating quantitative (testing hypothesis developed to guide the investigation) and qualitative methods through (interviews and observations)" to reach a "more validated and complete answers to this" complex workplace-based problem. This methodological approach encompasses: the mixed methods research design; methodological challenges and steps; data generation sources and methods of communication; operationalisation and measurements of the constructs; methodology of the survey, interviews and statistical approaches used.

3.1 Research Design

A research design is defined as the framework through which various components of a research project are brought together or plan for a study, and it guides the data collection and analysis of a research problem, and this is regarded as a major methodological decision in research (Malhotra, 1999). Research design provides the bridge between the research objectives and that which is to be done to achieve the set objectives in the course of execution. There are known and generally adopted ways of classifying research design that is based on number of set criteria tied to the research objectives like exploratory, descriptive and causal research types (Gill & Johnson, 2002). The quality of a design is seen as a question of the overall logic of the research approach taken, and partly how articulate the various components are. Scholars generally agree on three main criteria that research design must meet, and these are attainment of the research goals; control over extraneous independent variables and, generalisability of the empirical findings to other contexts. The issue of recognising and deciding upon the most suitable research design for this research work was majorly informed by the nature of this research objectives.

Strang (2015) research design conceptual model shown in Figure 3 below was adapted in this research due to its robustness, application to business and management disciplines, relevance to theory and practice among others.

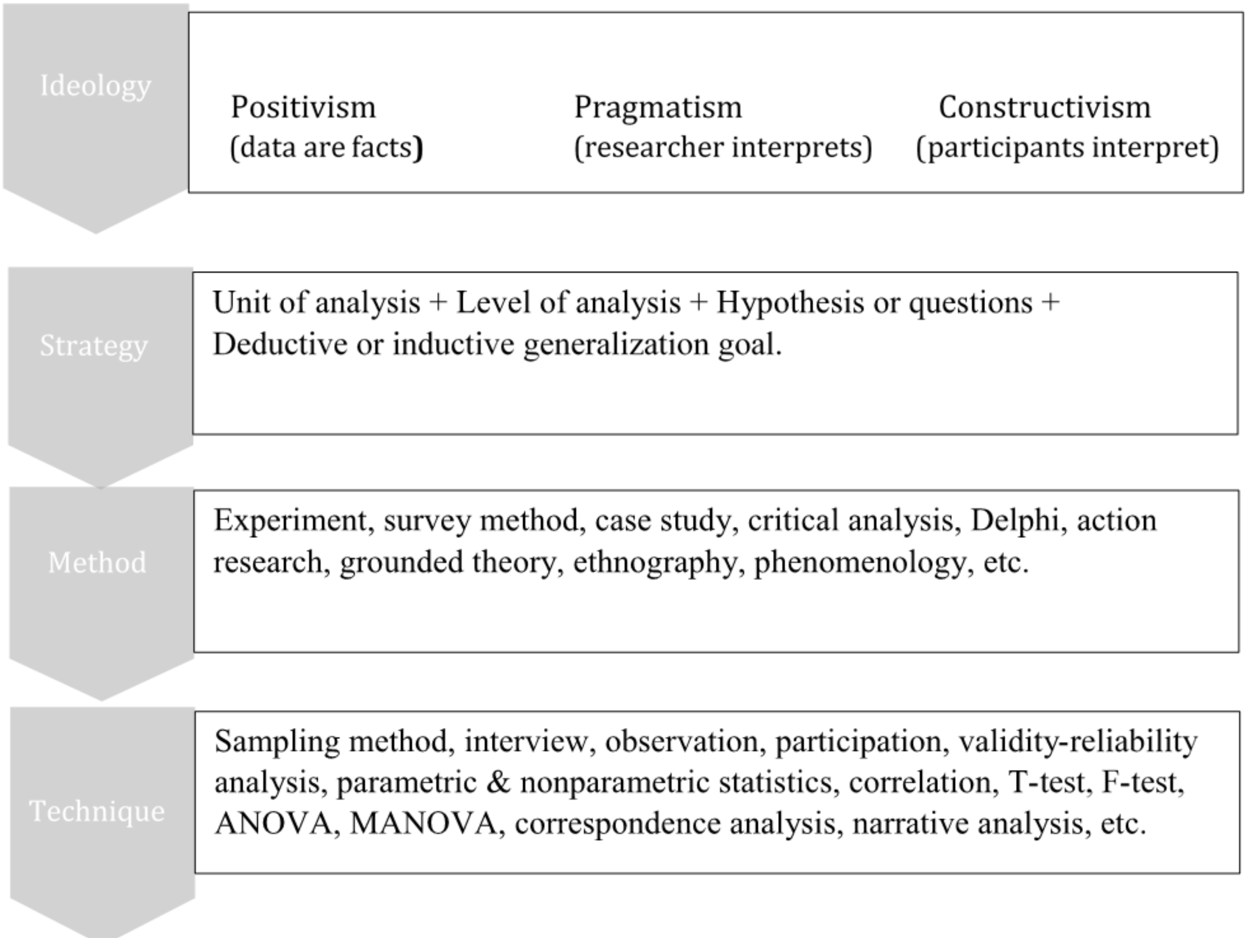

Figure 2: Research Design Typology Conceptual Overview

Source: Strang (2015) 'The Palgrave Handbook of Research Design in Business and Management', [Online]. DOI: 10.1057/9781137484956 (Accessed 30 April 2016).

As shown in Figure 2 above, all research is driven by the researchers' ideology in combination with the strategy (Strang, 2015). The ideology list above is not exhaustive as the likes of post-positivism, interpretivism and social constructivism are not expressly stated; nonetheless, this is presented as a continuum with unique flexibility with no rigidity in the left to right mapping. Strang (2015: 18) stated that "a business and management scholar's philosophical attitudes are generally categorised on the basis of axiology (theory of beliefs), epistemology (theory of knowledge), and ontology (theory of being)".

The research strategy covers the unit and level of analysis, with the research questions or hypotheses, deductive (quantitative) and inductive (qualitative) goals from prediction, hypothesis testing to deeper understanding, discovery, and sensemaking of critical workplace-based problem. This is the focal point for the research ideology, and advancing on a research can only happen after the research adopts an ideology. This research is rooted in a multi-paradigm perspective and different methodologies that enacts dialogues between paradigms (Hassard, 1991). Due to the nature of this inquiry, a Mixed Methods Methodological Framework for Action Research (MMAR) has been adopted (Ivankova, 2015). This implies a mix of post-positivist worldview (ideology) which has been proven to be the best fit for "understanding the quantitative results of empirical measurements of particular variables and the constructivist view which is the best for the understanding of qualitative results". The MMAR follows the cycle of action research methodological steps (Coghlan & Brannick, 2010) and also benefited from combining two approaches, especially the synergy in integrating MMR into the practical action research process.

Ivankova, Creswell & Stick (2006) justified the rational for MMR as taking advantage of the strength of the complementary value each of quantitative and qualitative methods brings and further identified six most often used research design (three concurrent and three sequential) out of "about forty MMR reported by Tashakkori & Teddlie, 2003".

This study used sequential MMR design in a mixed methods methodological framework for Action Research (Ivankova, 2017). The sequential explanatory design has been categorised as highly popular among researchers (Creswell et al., 2003), a procedure for collecting and analysing first quantitative and then qualitative data in two consecutive phases within a single study. This was integrated into the MMAR framework and the conceptual aspect of it enlightens and improves each of the three (3) cycles of action research (AR) of this study steps going through six iterative phases (diagnosing, reconnaissance, planning, acting, evaluation, monitoring). Graphical model of the research design, the methodological steps in action research process and mixed method methodological framework for AR were presented in this chapter and these provided "better understanding of the characteristics of the design which included the sequence of the data collection, priority of the method, and the connecting and mixing points of the two forms of data within the study" (Ivankova, Creswell & Stick, 2006).

The purpose of this MMAR through sequential explanatory study was to identify factors contributing to service ventures competitive advantage in international markets by obtaining quantitative results from a survey of 260 service ventures internationalising their operations including the researcher's organisation and then followed by insider action research where the earlier findings enriched the action research cycle of dialogic activity. A random sample of 1000 firms was first selected for inclusion in the study from the Nigeria Business Directory, 367 eliminated for refusal to participate or failed eligibility criteria while the rest of 633 firms were contacted but eventually 258 completed and usable questionnaires. The researcher engaged workplace-based stakeholders on the issue, and also articulate the theoretical and practical basis of action (Coghlan & Brannick, 2010).

The primary goal of this DBA research study was to determine how to improve the competitive advantage of service ventures internationalising their operations through the development, implementation and evaluation of a new model of competitive advantage using MMR and AR approaches (Ivankova, 2017). Study shows that research nature is changing to more of transdisciplinary, socially accountable, reflexive mode 2 research type (Gibbons et al., 1984). This study is thus a mode 2 knowledge creation based on the application of MMAR framework presented in this chapter, followed by 4.0 Data Analysis, before transitioning to action research phase in 5.0 based on same problem definition going through cycles of action and reflection with the aim of improving the researcher's practice and also contribute to existing body of knowledge (Zuber-Skerritt & Perry, 2002). Oftentimes, the major interest lies in Mode 2 knowledge production towards bridging rigour with relevance (Shrivastava, 1987), and attain success not just on the traditional dimension of scientific excellence but assessed by disciplinary peers, efficiency, usefulness and ability to fulfil multi-stakeholders' expectation judged by communities of practitioners from diverse professional culture.

The rest of the chapter elucidated on the choice of MMR, dealt with procedural issues in the MMR sequential design like Priority to which approach (Starting with the quantitative phase of the research), Implementation (whether quantitative and qualitative data collection and analysis come in sequence, or concurrently), integration (stage(s) where mixing or integration of quantitative and qualitative methods occurs).

3.2 Mixed Methods Research (MMR) – Laying the Foundation

Johnson et al. (2007: 123) defined MMR as "a type of research in which elements of qualitative and quantitative research approaches (like use of qualitative and quantitative viewpoints, data collection, analysis, inference techniques) for the broad purposes of breadth and depth of understanding and corroboration". Creswell (2015) defined "mixed methods research as an approach in which the researcher collects, analyses and interprets both quantitative and qualitative data, integrates the two approaches in various ways and frames the study within a specific design".

According to Tashakkori, Teddlie & Johnson (2015: 618) MMR is an "eclectic, pragmatic approach to employing combination of research tools to answer multifaced questions by seeking multiple, multi-layered answers". Hence, this study has incorporated one or more methodological strategies and techniques (MMR for AR) into this single research, so as to access some parts of the phenomenon of interests that would not have been possible by the use of a single method alone (Morse, 1991). Johnson & Onwuegbuzie (2004) further emphasised that mixed methods yield a "more complete knowledge necessary to inform theory and practice" through the additional insight and understanding that might be missed when a single method is used.

3.2.1 What is Mixed Methods Research?

Tashakkori & Creswell (2007 cited in Ivankova, 2017: 3) defined mixed methods research (MMR) as a research approach that stresses "the use of both quantitative and qualitative data, as well as meaningful integration of quantitative and qualitative methods within a study with the purpose of generating more credible and persuasive conclusions about the research problem." They argued that MMR help gain a better understanding of the research problem, acquire more complete picture of the issue at hand through answers obtained to "the exploratory and confirmatory questions in the single study". Hence, MMR was intended for this study “to create a synergistic effect such that the result from one method help develop or inform the other method” (Hesse-Biber, 2010: 5)

The prime reason for mixing quantitative and qualitative methods in this research study was to reach defendable decisions by using the results from the quantitative method to inform the action research (another method) for development purposes. Considering the context of this study and in line with information earlier provided, quantitative method became significant as the research intent to determine the international service ventures competitive advantage. This relies on measuring and quantification which was used in such a way that it improved the researcher’s workplace-based knowledge and realities as documented in the action research chapter. Vogt, Gardner & Haeffele (2012: 109) stated that "In many discussions of mixed method research designs, the underlying assumption is that the “mixing” always involves combining quantitative and qualitative methods. Elaborate typologies have been proposed to help determine and classify the predominant methods within mixed method designs. The authors espoused on “combined designs” whereby two or more qualitative approaches could certainly be combined, or two or more quantitative approaches in a single study design. Guetterman (2017:384) also explained mixed methods can be mixing paradigms, disciplines, and methodologies citing “a study with two different quantitative approaches as mixed methods”.

Ivankova (2015) stated that "mixed methods research often consist of multiple quantitative and qualitative stands that researchers implement sequentially".

3.2.2 When Should Mixed Methods be Used?

The primary aim of combining methods is for completeness, and this is because both methods helped to more comprehensively inspect the subject/issue of interest than it would have been with one method alone. It has also provided an enriching and improved information which could not have been attained using just one method. A major advantage of MMR is that it is straightforward and provide opportunities for more insights from the quantitative results.

Weathington, Cunningham & Pittenger (2012: 409) addressed this from a general perspective and stated that "a mixed method is most appropriate if you think a combination of quantitative and qualitative methods will help answer your research question as clearly as possible" (Teddlie & Tashakkori, 2009). Wisniewska (2011) advised researchers to use mixed methods when dealing with complex problems from different perspective of which result of one often trigger the need to design a further step in the inquiry with the use of another method, or enact questions for another method study. Morse (1991) stated this "can especially be useful when unexpected results arise from a quantitative study".

The mixed methods afforded the researcher the opportunity to answer both confirmatory and exploratory questions of this research leading to "research claims that was rich and stronger as the data came from variety of methods" (Johnson & Onwuegbuzie, 2004). It helped promote the process of creativity and imagination through the integration of different methods in this same study leading to a more persuasive and convincing results beyond the researcher workplace but a reference standard that has generated more interests in the industry, and around government quarters (especially in times like this when the Nigerian government is desperately looking for ways to grow the international service market to boost the economy through increase forex earnings among others).

3.2.3 How Should a Mixed Methods Study be Designed?

The overarching context for MMR design is that it must "be firmly rooted within a research context with the intention that the method or methods used foster a richer understanding of the research problem under investigation" (Hesse-Biber, 2010: 11). This must be built on "thoughtful mixed method planning" in which the researcher is aware of his particular standpoint, aware of organising framework and compliance to the guidance in its application in practice.

Schifferdecker & Reed (2009) recommended a seven-step guidance on a rigour perspective through "iterative research process of designing, analyzing, and publishing mixed methods research" starting with identification of the study design as mixed method, followed by decision-making on the weight of quantitative and qualitative data in the data collection process, through to the sampling strategies and validation, data collection, analysis, timeline and reporting. On another note, Lopez-Fernandez & Molina-Azorin (2011:1460) argued that how a MMR is designed is hinged on two main factors, and these are; "priority-weight-emphasis of approaches" and "implementation of data collection-time orientation". The first put emphasis of the weight each method carries in the course of implementation and the second emphasizes the order of data collection (simultaneous which is also known as concurrent, or sequential-two stage design). These two factors determine the ensuing design of which Johnson & Onwuegbuzie (2004) expanded through various data collection strategy and priority to nine MMR designs.

Molina-Azorin et al. (2012) observed that application of mixed methods in the entrepreneurship field has not been much, but admitted that this gap offers a lot of opportunities to improve entrepreneurship research, address specific issues and challenges earlier emphasized approaches. The researcher went through systematic and emergent process before arriving at this MMR rooted in the expectation that this will promote the process of creativity and imagination in the workplace and entrepreneurship field through the integration of different methods in this single study.

Ivankova (2015) conclusion on the MMR design influenced this work because of its emphasis and relevance to workplace-based action research (AR). Concurrent Quan + Qual design, sequential Quan → Qual design and sequential Qual → Quan design were established within a participatory action research context.

This MMAR started as a sequential strand (Quan → Qual → Quan) data collection and analysis. Ivankova (2015) espoused that this sequential implementation that involves different forms of data collection and analysis is such that the results from one method (quantitative) was used to inform the development of another method (qualitative) in this particular research study. The priority or weight of the methods was equal because the quantitative methods meaningfully informs the development of the qualitative method and builds on the previous method (Ivankova, 2015; Greene, 2007).

3.2.4 What are the Methodological Challenges in Conducting Mixed Methods Investigations?

The strength and weakness of MMR have been extensively discussed in the literature (Creswell, 2005, 2007) and starting with the methodological purists that contend a research should stay within one paradigm (either qualitative or quantitative) and not mix two together with arguments rooted in epistemological views that qualitative and quantitative research methods as incompatible (Morgan, 1998; Guba; 1985) while others have debated the possibility of achieving “more trustworthy findings relevant than using the approaches separately” (Cronholm & Hjalmarsson, 2011:88).

Just with any mixed methods design, researchers have to deal with priority issues, implementation, and integration of quantitative and qualitative approaches. Ivankova, Creswell & Stick (2006:4) presented this as “researchers always have to decide on the issues of which method to assign priority, implementation, how to integrate the results of both phases of the study to answer the research question”.

The researcher had to consider which approach had more emphasis on the study design; define the sequence of data collection and analysis; and also, decide at what point mixing or integration of the approaches occurs. These methodological challenges were taken into consideration in the research design and captured in the MMAR methodological framework visually presented in section Figure 4. The research questions, the study purpose and relevant methodological discussions informed how the methodological challenges were addressed (Tashakkori & Teddlie, 1998; Morse, 1999).

Familiarity with both qualitative and quantitative research, length of time and feasibility of resources to “collect and analyse both types of data” top the list of MMR limitations. The researcher was well aware of this ahead of time having had the training and capability required to conduct MMR, the researcher was also prepared for the longer time it will take to complete this research work, seeing ahead the transformation this research will be to his workplace and practice at large. Creswell & Plano Clark (2007) argued that "despite the value, conducting mixed methods research is not easy". As it may require more time, resources than a single method. Seeing the joy set ahead, the researcher endured the effort and time it took to complete this program.

3.2.5 Sampling Issues

The differences in quantitative and qualitative methods from a sample size and sampling techniques demands careful consideration due to the peculiar characteristics of each of the methods been combined. Hesse-Biber (2010: 49) wrote that “qualitative and quantitative approaches to sampling design involve different assumptions about the nature of the social world, where quantitative sampling design relies on “laws of probability” while qualitative samples are usually non-random and purposive”.

Hesse-Biber (2010) argued that very few mixed method researchers discuss the sampling issues and went further to report that “the most common type of mixed methods sampling design consisted of sequential design using multilevel samples”. This guidance is in line with the research work whereby the 260 service ventures were used for the larger quantitative sample and the researcher workplace stakeholders through action research for the second, smaller qualitative sample). Researchers have debated the most problematic issues with sampling is that most of mixed methods studies did not report their sample size, and this make it difficult to assess statistical inferences. This research work avoided such sampling issues hence made it possible "to conduct proper assessment of statistical power to the extent to which the quantitative findings are generalizable, and for the qualitative part, the sample size was provided to the extent to which the researchers obtained data saturation" (Collins, et al., 2007) determining the cycles of action research.

Wisniewska (2011: 62) identified three most frequently applied mixed method sampling strategies as; "basic mixed methods sampling, sequential mixed methods sampling, and parallel mixed methods sampling". Teddlie & Tashakkori (2009) also emphasised that a key design component in mixed methods research is deciding whether the research methods will be implemented in parallel or sequential manner.

The sequential mixed methods sampling was adopted because it fits the research questions/requirements and also integrate well into the action research approach and framework adopted based on Ivankova (2015) mixed methods methodological framework for action research. The researcher was able to use the result from the quantitative method to inform the development of the qualitative method using the MMAR framework.

3.3 Mixed Methods Action Research (MMAR - Applying Mixed Methods in Action Research}

Mixed methods action research (MMAR) study was a term coined by Ivankova (2015) during a course for students towards "practice-oriented research-based degrees". This is an integration of mixed methods research and action research rooted in the common features between both approaches within a study. While there is plethora of articles of studies that have applied mixed methods in action research, methodological framework for incorporating mixed methods in action research has been scarce. Marti (2015: 4) espoused that the research contributions in area of mixed methods design in AR are still scarce and mostly do not systematize “how quantitative and qualitative methods are integrated with participatory dynamics”. According to Marti (2015) and Greenwood & Levin (2007), a lot of researchers by default mainly associate qualitative research with Action Research (AR) but recent study has shown the differences between these approaches, especially from an epistemological and methodological perspective. Epistemological view shows that action research emphasizes cocreation of knowledge by taking action towards change while qualitative research focus on hearing and understanding meaning from actor’s point of view and from a methodological perspective; action research is not only rooted in qualitative methods but also in quantitative and mixed methods.

MMR has witnessed increased "cross-disciplinary" adoption as a sound and practical research approach (Plano Clark, 2007; Ivankova & Kawamura, 2010) that "can provide a rigorous methodological foundation" for action research. MMR fit into this context as it helps "address a range of knowledge generation and verification questions within a single study and also address complex practical workplace-based problems from different perspectives and securing a more systematic approach to action/intervention planning, implementation and evaluation.

This study has adapted Ivankova (2015, 2017) methodological framework because it tangibly elucidated applied knowledge for designing and conducting MMAR in a pragmatic manner.

3.4 Action Research – Workplace-Based Participatory Action Research

Action research has been diversely defined from the different lens (worldviews and philosophical beliefs) of its application across various fields of study. Starting from the classical definition of action research by Carr & Kemmis (1986:162) "action research is a form of self-reflective enquiry undertaken by participants in social situation in order to improve the rationality and justice of their own practices, their understanding of these practices, and the situations in which the practices are carried out".

Action research has been known and applied at the beginning of the 20th century and hence predates mixed methods research that was recently established (Greenwood & Levin, 2007; Tashakkori & Teddlie, 1998). In its diverse application, action research common terms are action research, participatory action research, collaborative action research, practitioner research, community-based participatory action research, critical action research among others and this emphasizes the practical focus, participatory nature and value of reflection.

Ivankova (2015) associated the wide international recognition, cross-field adoption and growth of action research to its focus on solving practical issues that calls for immediate attention, individual development and practice improvement, and focus on social change with emphasis on empowerment-emancipation with flexible and pragmatic focus towards finding answers to important questions like "How can I improve what I am doing?" (Koshy, 2005, 2011). This workplace-based action research was born out of the quest to answer the question “How do I improve the competitive advantage of my international service ventures?” Hence, Hinchey (2008) overarching definition of action research as “a process of systematic inquiry, usually cyclical, conducted by those inside a community rather than outside experts; its goal is to identify action that will generate improvement the researchers believe important” clearly expresses the intent of this thesis work.

Reason & Bradbury (2008) described action research as a family of living inquiry that aims, in a great variety of ways, to link practice and ideas in the service of human flourishing. This workplace-based problem represents one of such lofty goals and according to Herr & Anderson (2005) " a major goal of action research is to generate local knowledge that is fed back into the setting", for that reason, the emphasis is on studying one's own professional or personal situation, clarifying what the organisation is trying to achieve, and creating conditions to remove obstacles (Kemmis & McTaggart, 2007).

The application of mixed methods in action research is not new and there is increase in use of quantitative and qualitative data in action research projects. There has been the argument that qualitative methods seem to fit action research efforts more than the quantitative methods (Mills, 2011; Ivankova, 2015) but it has been widely agreed that the research questions often necessitate action researchers to use both quantitative and qualitative data sources. Furthermore, Greenwood & Levin (2007: 6) rejected "widespread tendency for people to believe that AR must be qualitative research rather than quantitative research", as they use both quantitative and qualitative methods and also argued that action researchers "are obligated to be competent in all major forms of social research".

This is a workplace-based problem that the scholar-practitioner have to include business performance/attainment data and customer satisfaction report to augment qualitative narratives from within and without. Ivankova (2017) argued that "when action research is combined with mixed methods, it can help stakeholders to "develop better appreciation for a data-driven decision-making process by capitalising on the advantages of integrating quantitative and qualitative methods". "Action research scholars and practitioners cocreate knowledge, policy, practice through an iterative process of action and learning". The ability to combine quantitative and qualitative data within a study introduces a new level of experience which make possible "more validated and more complete answers to the poised research questions".

Action researchers crave the ability to tackle both "confirmatory and exploratory questions" as they "look for more comprehensive solutions to complex practical issues in professional world". Greenwood & Levin (2007) emphasized the reason why action researchers should be "knowledgeable about quantitative and qualitative data collection strategies and be able to use them effective when engaged in AR studies". The researcher was well aware of these requirements and acquired required expertise/competencies having had his previous Masters research work using qualitative research and doctoral conference papers using quantitative method.

It has been argued that "performing research in collaboration with the people affected by the issue for the purpose of taking action or making changes increases the likelihood that the research findings will be accepted and used by people" (Brachet, 2014).

Coghlan & Brannick (2010: 8) action research cycles of doing action research in your own organisation comprising of pre-step (context and purpose), and four basic steps;

constructing, planning action, taking action and evaluating action was adapted based on Lewin (1948) methodological steps in action research process as captured in Figure 4 below.

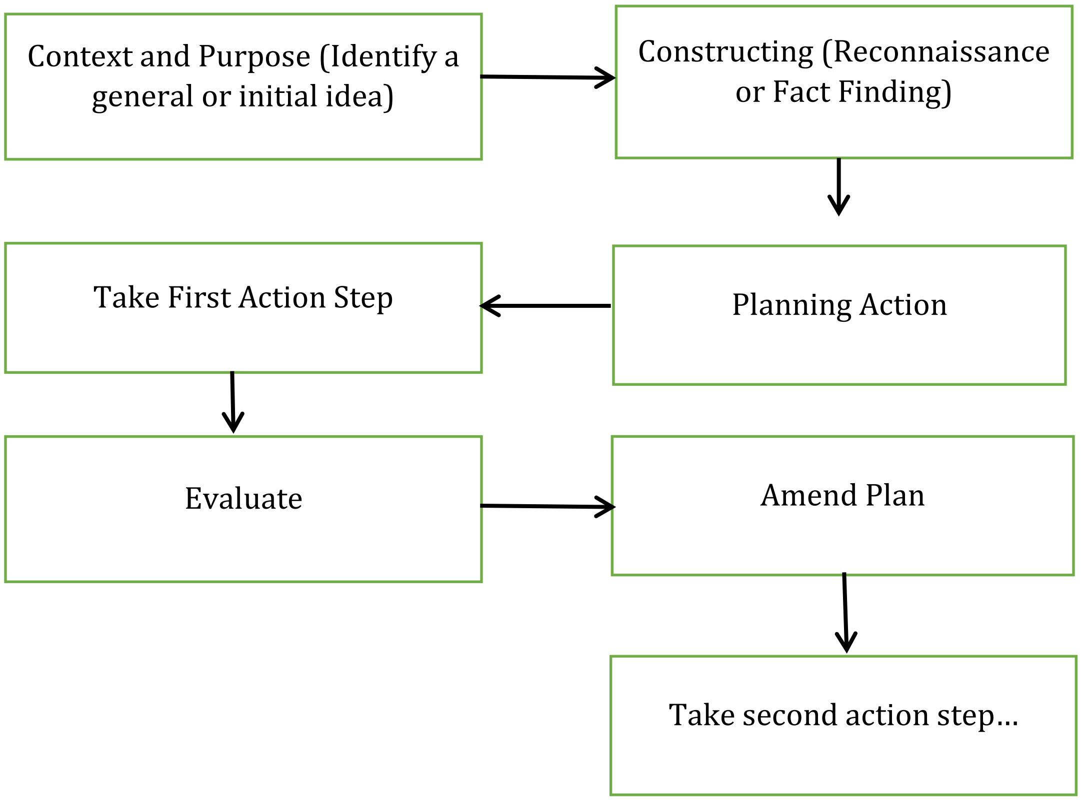

Figure 3: Methodological Steps in Action Research Process

Source: Ivankova, NV. (2017) 'Applying mixed methods in community-based participatory action research: a framework for engaging stakeholders with research as a means for promoting patient-centredness', Journal of Research in Nursing, 0 (0), pp. 1-13, [Online]. DOI: 10.1177/1744987117699655 (Accessed: 12 April 2017)

This workplace-based problem started with identifying a practical problem of significant impact and assessing its potential solutions. The problem in question is on how to improve the competitive advantage of the researcher business division competitive advantage in the international service venture. This phase encompasses fact finding about this situation which in the researcher's case was a black box as there has not been any quantitative or qualitative research conducted in the country looking into international service ventures.

The researcher embarked on a fact-finding mission of conducting a research to understand the state and factors influencing service ventures internationalizing their operations in Nigeria (this entails using standard research instruments comprising of a number of constructs based on conceptual model developed by the researcher to collect information from 260 international service ventures that participated in the survey, analysed and interpreted the data about the problem). The findings provided unprecedented insight into the state of international service ventures in Nigeria, common areas of problems identified and patterns and correlations of entrepreneurial proclivity and international service venture competitive advantage was espoused. This was followed by development of a plan for action and intervention to tackle the problem based on a workplace-based focus group, the first action was implemented and this was followed by an evaluation which was another process of collecting, analyzing and interpreting data based on action taken, and eventual monitoring which was testing and revising the action. This was a spiral of three cycles of action aimed at improving the researcher's practice (Coghlan & Brannick, 2010; Ivankova, 2015).

3.5 Mixed Methods Methodological Framework from Action Research

The Ivankova (2015) methodological framework for action research was found to be most suitable for this research work and adopted as it seamlessly followed the cycle of action research process and at the same time captured the combined effect of the" two approaches by integrating MMR into each step on the action research process" (Ivankova, 2017: 6). This framework in Figure 4 below is made up of "six iterative phases and these are diagnosing, reconnaissance, planning, acting, evaluation, and monitoring". The MMR enlightens and boost each step in the action research cycle.

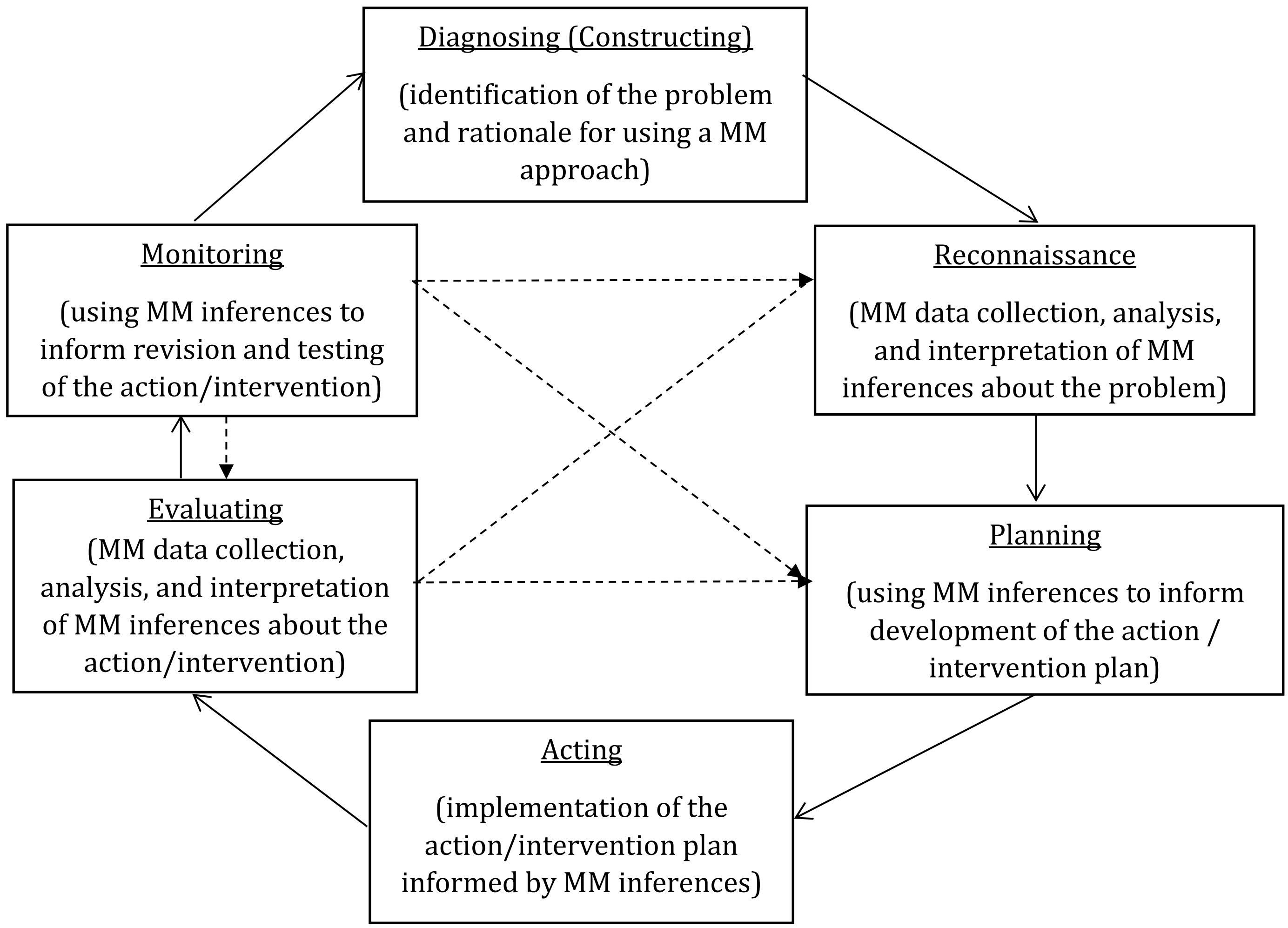

Figure 4: Ivankova (2015) Mixed Methods Methodological Framework for Action Research

Source: Ivankova, NV. (2017) 'Applying mixed methods in community-based participatory action research: a framework for engaging stakeholders with research as a means for promoting patient-centredness', Journal of Research in Nursing, 0 (0), pp. 1-13, [Online]. DOI: 10.1177/1744987117699655 (Accessed: 12 April 2017)

The methodological steps in Figure 3 are treated as individual phases shown as solid boxes

in

Figure 4 depicting the "cyclical sequence of the six phases" in the action research process. The dotted arrow shows other likely iterations of the study activities within the action research cycle.

The first phase is the **diagnosing**, or better called constructing (Coghlan, 2010) was where the researcher identified the workplace-based problem that worth solving. The previous conference papers, Doctoral Development Plan (DDP) process and reflexive practices (Susman & Evered, 1978; Antonacopoulou, 2004) of surfacing "what we don't know, we don't know" (Revans, 1981; Bourner & Simpson, 2005) are some of the repositories and emergent sources that informed the identification of this workplace-based problem which gave birth this research work (first, second and third-level of inquiry). The second phase of **fact-finding** (reconnaissance) was a very vital and significant stage where the researcher engaged in preliminary assessment of the problem through a MMR by conducting a survey of businesses internationalising their service to ascertain the commonality/significance of this research in the service industry vertical and also put to test the hypothesis deduced from the conceptual model developed by the researcher – this was based on over 18 years of experience of the researcher as a subject matter expert in the field of study and industry of interest.

Marti (2015: 172) documentary of Dabaieh (2013) stated that "possibly the most apparent way of integrating quantitative data in an action research project is to begin with an analysis of extant statistical sources as a way to contextualize the topic of the research and to justify the need for intervention". A condition of this study was that there was no previous research or data in this area of interest, hence there was not much knowledge that could be used as a platform for the study (Cronholm & Hjalmarsson, 2011). The researcher had to rely on primary data through survey (closed and open-ended questions) from 260 respondents in international service venture. The survey surfaced the depth of common problems and the hypothesis findings was a solid test for the researcher's conceptual model and this also informed the interview within the researcher's organisation which helped gain focus on likely underlying factors and this helped gain traction and make progress in a timely fashion and provided needed direction and richer context that jumpstarted the workplace-based focus group engagement (planning phase) as documented in the *5.3* The Core Action Research Project

The **planning phase** was a collective workplace-based engagement where a focus-group was setup comprising of select business division champions to reflect on the "mixed methods inferences from the preliminary assessment of the problem" (Ivankova, 2017:7) including the researcher's organisation. The insight was enormous and this paved the way into designing the action/intervention, which was the first-phase of the three cycle of action research. Within a total of eight constructs (two open-ended and five made up the conceptual model), twenty-two dimensions and ninety-six questions, the most significant factors out of multiple dimensions within a given construct (eighteen out of ninety-six) were identified through statistical analysis of the responses using the descriptives, common bias, principal component analysis (PCA), correlations, construction of additive scales from extracted factors, multiple linear regression, multicollinearity diagnosis and path analysis. The research instruments were all standard instruments that have been previously validated (Pallant, 2013). The findings like the significant factors per dimensions, and the important constructs relevant to the research inquiry helped in framing the cycle of action research focus group activities.

Acting phase is when the action was implemented. Table 54 presented details of the action research logic table which captured the inputs, outputs (activities and participation) and expected outcome (short-term, mid-term and long-term). The output activities detailed the intervention plan.

The next is **evaluation phase** where rigorous evaluation of the action implemented was done to ascertain whether it met the desired outcome that was set at the planning phase. MMR was used for the "analysis of the quantitative and qualitative data and interpretation of the integrated results from the two data sets". The details of this phase is under the *5.3* The Core Action Research Project.

Finally, the **monitoring phase** provided the opportunity to put to use the fresh inferences and insight generated from the evaluation of the action to make decision on what next to do which may lead to further revision and testing of action. This was captured in "Reflection" under the cycle of action report and in the *5.4* Survey Contribution Matrix to Action Research Accelerated Result.

The framework epitomises action research through its cyclical, systematic and collaborative nature and this was put into full use in this study where collaboration with divisional champions, with different stakeholders (sponsors and colleagues involved) and engaged in multiple roles and the outcome which in this case was a gradual workplace business transformation resulted in greater team work, effectiveness and business growth as this research objective became a shared vision across the entire operations.

The rest of the chapter focuses on the initial work done in developing the research conceptual model, the research hypothesis, details of the quantitative data generation sources, questionnaire and measure development and survey methodology.

3.6 Research Model (Conceptual Model)

Building upon the review of the literature presented in chapter 2.0, an integrated conceptual framework that can evaluate the relationship between entrepreneurial proclivity and competitive advantage and subsequently determine the factors that contribute to firms' success in international markets was developed, and shown in Figure 5 below. The model draws on the dynamics capabilities theory to provide empirical evidence on the fundamental role of international entrepreneurial proclivity in the creation of dynamic capabilities that is pertinent to international activities/service strategies and international marketing capabilities. It also embraced international marketing strategy literature and contingency theory to further understand how international marketing capabilities influences a firms' ability to achieve proper fit between its marketing strategy and the international environment where the strategy is implemented, and how this translate to greater competitive advantage from one firm to another.

This work contributes to body of knowledge in that it attempts to address existing gaps in international business ventures where focus has largely been on the major drivers of export performance in international market with emphasis on manufacturing firms (Knight & Kim, 2009; Lu et al., 2010; Hult, Hurley & Knight, 2004) while international service firms have received less attention (Akaka, Vargo & Lusch, 2013; Sichtmann, von Selasinsky &

Diamantopoulos, 2011). Brouthers, Brouthers & Werner (2008) highlighted the significant difference in services compared to manufactured products and how this negates the argument that assume equal relevance and applicability of business theories and concepts from manufacturing firms to services organisation.

The proposed model comprises of five constructs, these are international service advantage, international marketing strategy fit, international marketing capabilities, international dynamic capabilities and international entrepreneurial proclivity. In formulating this model, fundamental theoretical foundation was considered, and exemplified below. For international service advantage, a standardised scale based on Kaleka (2011) was adapted to international service venture context. Kaleka (2011: 49) stated that "Service advantage was operationalized as a formative construct identified through measurement relationships". Assessment of how a firm's offering would compare with those of their main competitors in the overseas markets captured and this covers Service Accessibility, Technical Support, Aftersales service, Delivery Speed and Reliability. Kaleka (2011: 41) states that "service advantage reflects the position that the firm has achieved in the specific market as a result of its service. It is a surrogate for customers' perceptions of the firm's level of service offering compared with that of its competitors in that market".

Figure 5 presents the conceptual model that directed the execution of this study. As the model suggests, international entrepreneurial processes (proactiveness, risk-taking, and innovativeness) does assist firms to build relevant dynamic capabilities (sensing and reconfiguring). Consecutively, the dynamic capabilities facilitate the development of a firm's international marketing capabilities. International marketing capabilities enable firms to develop effective international marketing strategies that properly fit the environmental and market conditions prevailing in individual foreign markets. In conclusion, international marketing strategy fit has a positive impact on the achievement of competitive advantage in international markets. The proposed conceptual model was subjected to quantitative (hypothesis testing) and qualitative tests (focus-groups and observations) under the MMAR framework and the corresponding action, evaluation, monitoring through the cycle of action research.

3.6.1 Dimensions of Organisational Cultures

Even though organisational culture was not part of the research construct as presented in the model, it poses a strong relevance from a mediatory perspective and hence briefly espoused in this section. Hofstede (1980:13) defined culture as “collective programming of the mind which distinguishes the members of one human group from another”. Six dimensions distinguishing organisational structures were identified “describing the larger part of the variety in organisational practices” (Hofstede, 2011:20) even though some of the dimensions may not be relevant in countries like Nigeria as an example.

Hofstede & Hofstede & Minkov (2010) scoring profiles on the six dimensions of organisational cultures reveal four dimensions which are “process versus results”, “parochial versus professional”, “loose versus tight”, and “normative versus pragmatic” as applicable to the type of work the organisation does and the type of market in which they operate. Simply put, the four dimensions partly reflect the industry and business culture. Later section will assess the likely influence of the four dimensions on the outcome of the quantitative data analysis.

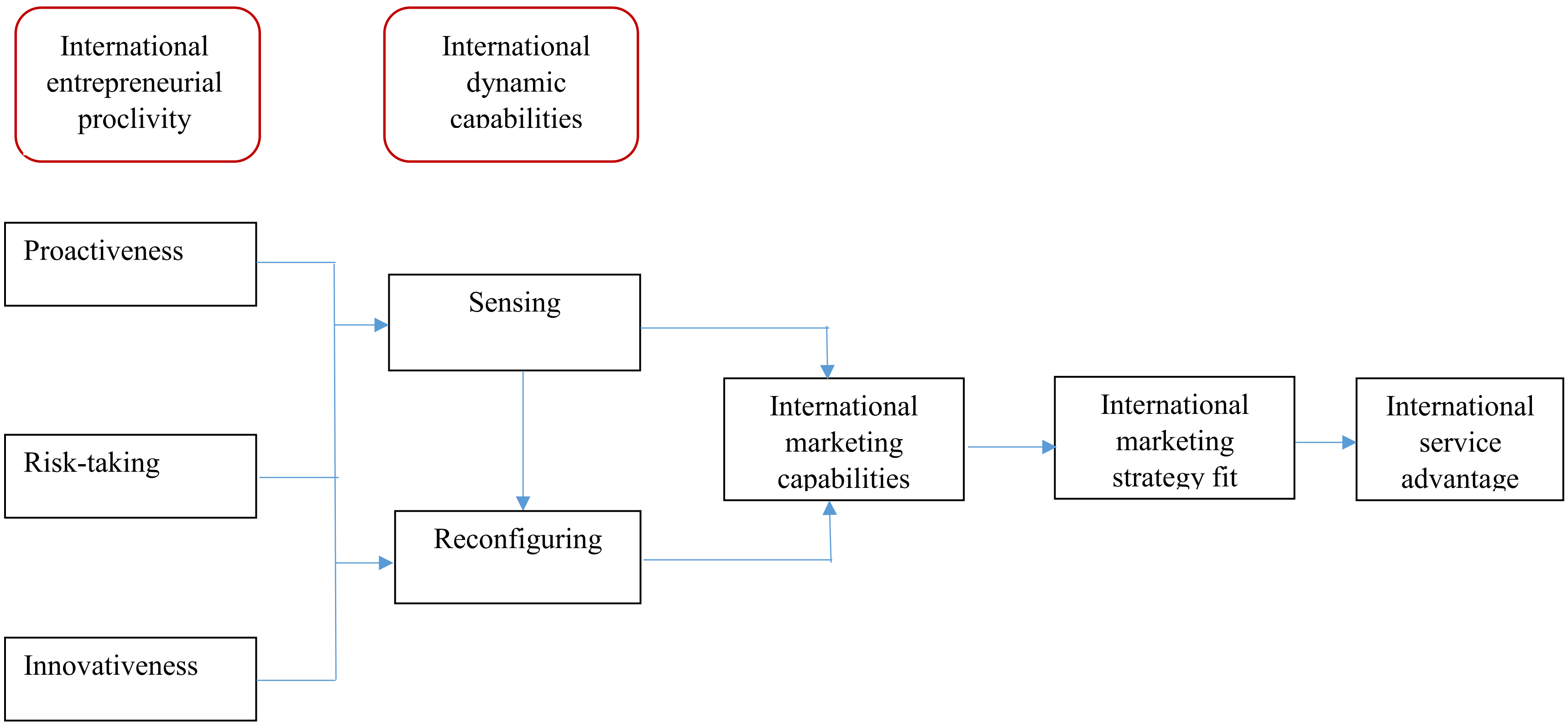

Figure 5: A Conceptual Model of Entrepreneurial Proclivity, Dynamic Capabilities, Marketing Capabilities, Marketing Strategy Fit, and Competitive Advantage in International Service Ventures

3.7 Research Hypotheses

As earlier explained, this research took a holistic approach and as such covers a number of variables and constructs in the conceptual model. Figure 5**Error! Reference source not found.** above shows the conceptual model for this research starting with how international entrepreneurial processes (proactiveness, risk-taking, and innovativeness) influences firms to build relevant dynamic capabilities (sensing and reconfiguring). Knight & Cavusgil (2004) described innovativeness as using creative managerial concepts for repeated enhancement of processes and support of research and development with the aim of solving firm's problem; while proactiveness is more about tenacity of tactics, aggressiveness towards competition and getting things done. Simply put, Covin & Slevin (1991) stated that innovativeness and proactiveness have been largely reported to be determinants of firm survival and success while Lyon, Lumpkin & Dess (2000: 1056) characterised risk taking "as the readiness to enter unknown markets or borrow to gather capital to enter into risky projects". Even though there is huge literature that support the premise that "entrepreneurial orientation affects business performance", there has not been any of such research on services export performance, and none has taken the holistic approach adopted in this study, within the international service venture context.

3.7.1 Research Hypotheses

Proactiveness and dynamic capabilities. A major characteristic of firm's proactiveness is the ability to constantly scan the environment for new opportunities (Day, 2011). Firms ability to operate internationally and at a global level presents huge opportunities and benefits

(Cavusgil & Knight, 2015). In particular, internationalisation is a key growth strategy pursued by entrepreneurial firms (Yamakawa, Peng, & Deeds, 2008; Lu et al., 2010). Being a strategic orientation, international entrepreneurial proclivity favours the adoption of an opportunity seeking behaviour, and the exploration of foreign markets in ways that may generate advantages to the firm (Boso et al., 2013). Proactive behaviour, as an aspect of international entrepreneurial proclivity connotes that entrepreneurial firms are first to exploit emerging and unexploited opportunities (Boso, Cadogan, & Story, 2012). Proactive firms compete in an aggressive manner by initiating bold strategies in the face of uncertainty, they go the extra mile to visit and observe foreign markets, endeavour to establish international contacts, and identify international business opportunities (Zhou et al., 2010). Proactive behaviour is identified by "continuous search for new market opportunities and analysis with various responses to changes in the environment, resulting in the introduction of new products and services ahead of the competition and overall re-evaluation of the business". This behaviour is expected to strengthen sensing, which is an important function of a firm's dynamic capabilities that signifies a firm's ability to learn about customers, competitors, and broader environmental forces in targeted foreign markets (Day, 2011; Zhou et al., 2010). Thus, sensing represents a crucial dynamic capability, which is directed by a proactive international entrepreneurial logic (Newey & Zahra, 2009). However, to exploit any market opportunities identified through sensing processes, a firm must also be able to reconfigure its resources and capabilities. As expatiated in chapter two, reconfiguring is another major form of dynamic capability, and this entails the adjustment of organizational resources and capabilities in response to changes in the conditions in foreign markets (Teece, 2009; Wilden & Gudergan, 2015).

Thus, international firms which are proactive in their approaches to international markets, are expected to engage more frequently in reconfiguring processes and adopt business models, structures, strategies, and methods that match the demands of the market (Zhou et al., 2010). Therefore,

H1a: Proactiveness in international venturing is related positively to frequent engagement in sensing processes

H1b: Proactiveness in international venturing is related positively to frequent engagement in reconfiguring process

Risk taking and dynamic capabilities. Zhou et al. (2010: 888) advocated for entrepreneurial firms to "carefully balance risk against opportunities when pursuing international expansion" in foreign markets, they are to be tolerant of possible risks that may arise, and have a shared vision against risks. Risk-taking is considered as a precursor for entrepreneurial firms that are striving to identify growth opportunities in foreign markets (Zahra, 2005). Internationalisation is an uncertain and risky process as it often brings firms into unfamiliar, hostile and demanding foreign markets (Zhou et al., 2010), especially in the context of Nigeria being an emerging market, into unfamiliar and potentially more challenging foreign markets. Uncalculated risk tolerance, however, can lead to market failure and significant losses if the firm does not concurrently employ effective market scanning and information acquisition mechanisms that will provide the necessary input for initiating effective responses to evolving market conditions. Therefore, the high risks associated with the entrepreneurial process (Hughes, Hughes, & Morgan, 2007) along with the inherent complexities involved in international expansion should urge firms to deploy more frequently relevant dynamic capabilities like sensing and reconfiguring (Wilden & Gudergan, 2015). The researcher therefore hypothesized that,

H2a: Risk-taking in international venturing is related positively to frequent engagement in sensing processes

H2b: Risk-taking in international venturing is related positively to frequent engagement in reconfiguring process

Innovativeness and dynamic capabilities. Lumpkin and Dess (1996: 142) "define innovativeness as a firm's tendency to engage in and support new ideas, novelty, experimentation, and creative processes that may result in new products, services, or technological processes". As this definition implies, firms adopting an entrepreneurial orientation are involved in exploratory learning though efficient innovative actions (Zhou et al., 2010). Innovative actions allow entrepreneurial firms to access various resources which may facilitate their internationalisation process (Oviatt & McDougall, 2005). Lumpkin and Dess (1996: 142) stated that "innovativeness represents a basic willingness to depart from existing technologies or practices and venture beyond the current state of art". To promote innovativeness, international entrepreneurial firms devote their efforts in encouraging new way of thinking, which are essentially directed towards the advancement of promising ideas that facilitate foreign market development strategies (Knight & Cavusgil, 2004; Zhou et al., 2010). Innovative approaches to internationalisation may involve finding unique ways to search for and exploit foreign markets, the encouragement of new product specifications, and the employment of novel ways to effectively and efficiently serve foreign customers (Zhou et al., 2010). Thus, the innovativeness dimension of entrepreneurial proclivity is expected to contribute significantly towards upgrading a firm's sensing capabilities, which reflect the ability to search and explore across markets and "learn about customers, competitors, and the broader market environment" (Day, 1994; Teece, 2009). Moreover, innovativeness is likely to enhance reconfiguring capabilities, since innovative firms are in a better position to conceive effective ways of reconfiguring external and internal competencies in addressing and responding to the conditions of foreign environments (Fang & Zou, 2009; Teece et al. 1997). Therefore, the researcher expectation is that the innovative values of entrepreneurial firms aids the extension and adjustment of a firm's dynamic capabilities (Wilden & Gudergan, 2015).

H3a: Innovation in international venturing is related positively to frequent engagement in sensing processes

H3b: Innovation in international venturing is related positively to frequent engagement in reconfiguring process

Sensing and reconfiguring. Day (2011: 186) presented dynamic capabilities theory as putting "the spotlight on how organizations acquire and deploy their resources to better match the demands of the external environment". The key functions of dynamic capabilities include sensing environmental changes (evolving as threats or opportunities), responding to external environment changes by linking and transforming available resources (or adding new resources through acquisition, mergers or collaboration) and identifying the optimal organizational configuration through learning about customers, competitors, the broader market environment to provide value to foreign customers (Day, 2011; Teece, 2009; Wilden & Gudergan, 2015). Dynamic capabilities enable entrepreneurial firm to rapidly grow and upgrade their new market information base, and through this means stay well ahead of competition (Day, 2011; Zhou et al., 2010). After detecting external opportunities, entrepreneurial firm may need to reconfigure its capabilities, to align them with external conditions, which oftentimes involves extending and modifying capabilities in response to market and technologies (Teece, 2009). The greater the extent to which entrepreneurial "firms engage in sensing and reconfiguring, the more their dynamic capabilities are fortified and are incorporated into organizational memory" (Wilden & Gudergan, 2015). Moreover, sensing procedures generate outcomes for the specifications of configured "operational capabilities "(Eisenhardt & Martin, 2000, Wilden & Gudergan, 2015). As a result, repeated sensing generates learning with respect to different characteristics of the external environment and associated opportunities and challenges (Teece, 2009). The more frequently the entrepreneurial firm is involved in sensing, the more often the firm is stimulated to react by exploring and identifying new capability configurations (Wilden & Gudergan, 2015). Therefore, the researcher hypothesized that:

H4: Frequent engagement in sensing processes is related positively to frequent involvement in reconfiguring processes

Sensing and marketing capabilities. Capabilities theory supports the view that efficient resource deployment, beyond resource possession "can lead to a sustainable competitive advantage for the firm" (Teece, 2009; Vorhies, Morgan & Autry, 2009). In order to efficiently deploy resources, entrepreneurial firms with an international business orientation should possess marketing capabilities that enable them to repeatedly deliver superior service to foreign customers (Noble, 1999). Empirical evidence reveals hierarchies of marketing capabilities that concentrate on tactical activities, whereas other capabilities emphasize organizing resources for deployment (Grant, 1996; Vorhies et al., 2009). Entrepreneurial firms that are involved in sensing activities can enhance their knowledge regarding foreign markets of interest and become more competent in serving their foreign customers (Morgan, Anderson & Mittal, 2005). Firms that are frequently involved in sensing processes are in the best position to recognize and understand the changing needs and preferences of foreign customers (Wilden & Gudergan, 2015: 183). These firms are also expected to realise that in order to offer greater customer value, they must dedicate substantial effort in improving and reforming their marketing capabilities, including product/service development, pricing, marketing communications, channel management, and marketing planning and implementation. Just as Zahra et al. (2006) argued, dynamic capabilities like sensing ensure that a firm's substantive capabilities (marketing capabilities) adapt to emerging market and environmental realities and thereby changes over time. Thus, through frequent sensing the entrepreneurial firm can learn how to achieve desired outcomes, coordinate its international marketing activities and improve its international marketing capabilities (Wilden & Gudergan, 2015; Zahra et al., 2006). The researcher thus hypothesized that:

H5: Frequent sensing relates positively to international marketing capabilities

Reconfiguring and marketing capabilities. Entrepreneurial firms are able to improve their presence in foreign markets growing their international market knowledge and through optimal the optimal use and alignment of available international marketing capabilities. The continuous access to foreign market information can stimulate reconfiguring procedures, including new capability configurations, which in turn may establish solid international marketing capabilities and contribute significantly to the elimination of inertia (Levinthal, 1991; Wilden & Gudergan, 2015). Zahra et al. (2006) relates with situations where managers faces the difficulty of making tough choices pertaining to resources and efforts to be allotted to a given capability amidst multiple capabilities that require further development. Given the crucial role of marketing activities in establishing, maintaining, and expanding profitable relationships with foreign customers, it is expected that firms that frequently utilize dynamic capabilities to transform and reconfigure their substantive capabilities, will assign priority to the development of their marketing capabilities. Available empirical evidence also indicates a positive relationship between reconfiguring and marketing capabilities (Wilden & Gudergan, 2015). Therefore, the researcher hypothesized that:

H6: Frequent reconfiguring relates positively to international marketing capabilities

Marketing capabilities and international marketing strategy fit. International venture managers are responsible for the development and execution of marketing strategies in foreign markets (Morgan et al., 2004). A critical part of the strategy process is the deployment of resources and capabilities and the initiation of actions necessary to efficiently implement such strategies (Morgan et al., 2012). In alignment with the dynamic capabilities theory, the strong correlates of planned international strategy implementation effectiveness are the capabilities employed in order to transform international marketing strategy decisions into relevant actions and tactics (Morgan et al., 2012). Entrepreneurial firms use standardized resources along with internal knowledge in an attempt to integrate these elements in ways that lead to the achievement of operational and strategic goals (Vorhies et al., 2009). Further, the international marketing strategy literature posits that international firms can enhance their outcomes in foreign markets by achieving a proper fit between their international marketing strategies and the specific environmental context in which they operate (Katsikeas et al., 2006). Contingency theory and the concept of strategic fit are now widely recognized as the proper conceptual frameworks for investigating the relationship between international marketing strategy standardization/adaptation and performance (e.g., Katsikeas et al., 2006; Hultman, Robson, & Katsikeas, 2009). It is noteworthy to state that there has been no previous study that ever attempted to examine the factors that enable firms to achieve the optimum fit between international marketing strategy and the environment. This research work proposes that international firms which possess superior international marketing capabilities, compared to their direct competitors, are able to develop effective international marketing strategies that better match the environmental and market conditions they confront in foreign markets. The researcher thus hypothesized that:

H7: International marketing capabilities influence positively international marketing strategy fit

International marketing strategy fit and international service advantage. Kaleka (2011: 41) define service advantage as “the position that a firm has achieved in a specific foreign market as a result of its service”. Based on this context, service advantage is considered as a significant component of the overall competitive advantage that enhances performance outcomes (Morgan et al., 2004). Empirical evidence reinforces the position of service advantage in influencing the firm’s performance (Ha-Brookshire & Dyer, 2009; Kaleka, 2011). According to Lee, Lee & Rho (2002) the “ability to conceptualize how firms can cope with environmental changes, by identifying and exploiting opportunities, is a strategic source of competitive advantage”. The level of service that firms deliver in foreign markets influences the customers’ final purchasing decision or the degree of service advantage that they achieve in relation to their competitors (Kaleka, 2011). The achievement of positional advantage in foreign markets poses challenges to international firms due to cultural distance as well as associated differences in the external environment (Brouthers, Brouthers & Werner, 2008). Thus, international firms can achieve a significant competitive advantage in targeted foreign markets to the extent that they will successfully adjust their international marketing strategies to match the prevailing environmental conditions. Empirical evidence supports a positive relationship between international marketing strategy fit and performance outcomes (Katsikeas et al., 2006; Hultman et al., 2009). The researcher thus hypothesized that:

H8: International marketing strategy fit influences positively international service advantage

3.7.2 Concluding Remarks

This chapter focused on the conceptualisation of the factors related to international entrepreneurial proclivity and international service venture competitive advantage. The conceptual model illustrated in Figure 2 shows the suggested relationship among specific variables and how entrepreneurial proclivity influences competitive advantage in international service venture. After a thorough review of the relevant literature, together with the exploratory interviews with international sales managers and executives of service organisations internationalising their offering, the set of hypothesised relationships is advanced as follows:

H1a: Proactiveness in international venturing is related positively to frequent engagement in sensing processes

H1b: Proactiveness in international venturing is related positively to frequent engagement in reconfiguring process

H2a: Risk-taking in international venturing is related positively to frequent engagement in sensing processes

H2b: Risk-taking in international venturing is related positively to frequent engagement in reconfiguring process

H3a: Innovation in international venturing is related positively to frequent engagement in sensing processes

H3b: Innovation in international venturing is related positively to frequent engagement in reconfiguring process

H4: Frequent engagement in sensing processes is related positively to frequent involvement in reconfiguring processes

H5: Frequent sensing relates positively to international marketing capabilities

H6: Frequent reconfiguring relates positively to international marketing capabilities

H7: International marketing capabilities influence positively international marketing strategy fit

H8: International marketing strategy fit influences positively international service advantage

3.8 Data Generation Sources and Methods of Communication

Lancaster (2005) noted that "when it comes to types of data, there are two types and these are primary and secondary data". Primary data has corresponding consequences on the data collection method and technique, and largely so because primary data does not just exist but generated through a research process for the purpose of immediate study or project. Primary data is often collected through techniques such as experimentation, interviews, observation and surveys. This research primary data was collected through surveys.

Secondary data, on the other hand, are existing data that previously exists in some form or other, which was not primarily gathered for the purposes of the immediate study. Oftentimes, secondary data is the starting point for data collection, and there are cost and time economies as all data collection expenditures have been incurred by the original author of the information (Sreejesh, Mohapatra & Anusree (2014). However, secondary data when used often poses two common problems, and these are lack of fit to address the research problem at hand and likely accuracy issues.

Despite the advantages of secondary data as presented above, there was no adequate information sources available to the researcher to fulfil the data requirements demanded by this research study. Therefore, primary sources have been considered as the most suitable form of data collection for this research work.

There are four generally acclaimed methods of primary data collection, and these are; observational research techniques. personal interviews, telephonic interviews and postal questionnaires. Lancaster (2005: 97) argued “that observation is an important and useful way for generating primary data, mainly in the social sciences, including management research and consultancy”. Observational methods have been grouped into categories based on the degree “to which the observations are systematic, or relatively unstructured and to which the observer is a participant or remains an outside observer” (Jonker & Pennink, 2010). So, observational technique presents actual observation of observed behaviour “as is” and not like interviews and surveys, which depend on what people say they do or feel (Lancaster, 2005; Partington, 2002). For the remaining three methods, the respondent is actively involved in the data generation process and thus considered most appropriate for this study, especially when one considers the time at hand and the nature of variables to be captured.

Sreejesh, Mohapatra & Anusree (2014: 10) observed that “declining costs of conducting online research activities coupled with the increasing number of Internet users have made the Internet a cost-effective alternative to traditional research methods for business research. The use of Internet for primary data collection directly from respondents is on the increase, and it is with various advantages like faster responses and feedback, convenience and maintaining confidentiality over the traditional survey method (Sreejesh, Mohapatra & Anusree, 2014). Data collection to test this research model and hypotheses was conducted through large-scale online survey among Nigerian service providers that are involved in international operations. The selection of Nigerian international service providers as the focus of this empirical investigation was based on several grounds. First, Nigeria is Africa's largest economy, whereas it is also the 20th largest economy in the world. Second, as an emerging economy Nigeria has achieved significant economic growth in recent years (with growth rates above 5%) and is considered as an emerging global power. Third, Nigeria has a well-developed service sector which is now the largest sector in the economy, accounting for about 50% of total gross domestic product (Trade Economics, 2015). Fourth, the research has a direct implication in solving the researcher's workplace-based problem. Finally, by focusing on a single country the researcher was able to control for potential extraneous factors that may have an influence on the results, like culture and institutional framework (Lu et al., 2010).

The strengths and weaknesses of each of the primary data collection discussed in this section was considered, and the decision was made to employ e-mail questionnaire survey for this study. Easterby-Smith et al. (2008: 220) stated that "web-based survey is fast gaining popularity over dispatching questionnaire to potential respondent". This decision was based upon a number of factors ranging from response matters; methodological issues; sampling considerations; and research constraints. These factors are addressed in the sections below.

3.8.1 Response Matters

The researcher took into considerations several issues associated with the response rate in this research work. Firstly, careful attention was given to the overall design of the questionnaire considering the fact that most surveys have produced low response rate, and there has been no documented research done in the international service venture sector in Nigeria (Johnson & Onwuegbuzie, 2004). Secondly, multiple data generation approaches were employed, ranging from placing telephone calls to each company to ascertain interest to participate in the research, eligibility of firm for inclusion, consent to participate before enlisting them to receive the survey. Thirdly, international service ventures in international operations for at least five years are more familiar with the use of online survey as means of collecting data. Thus, e-mail questionnaire sent to Nigerian service providers internationalising their offering will ensure that a good response rate is achieved. This e-mail questionnaire survey method had the rigour, replicable capability for wider sample, cost effectiveness and time savings through advanced tools (Grandcolas Rettie & Marusenko, 2003). Fourthly, the electronic message explained the purpose and objectives of the study and reassured respondents that all information provided would remain strictly confidential and no confidential information pertaining to the participating firm international operations will be revealed, and anonymity maintained. It was a voluntary participation and consent gained with approval before the invitation for participation was sent. Anonymity was guaranteed by the way the data was collected before participant enrolment for the survey and consent given prior to survey participation with the research objective, confidentiality clause clearly stated and option to withdraw at any time during the period of completing the survey to ensure reciprocity (Bell & Bryman, 2007).

3.8.2 Methodological Issues

The decision to adopt e-mail questionnaire explained in earlier section is also related to addressing a number of methodological issues. Firstly, all the variables included in the conceptual model were operationalised in previous empirical research and scales of measurement previously developed. When necessary, the researcher modified measurement items to reflect the international service context. In addition, extensive review of the relevant international entrepreneurial proclivity, international dynamic capabilities, international marketing strategy fit, international service advantage, and all measures were refined in personal interviews with 15 managers. Pretesting of the final draft of the questionnaire was done with a small sample drawn from the key informants in this study, the upper level managers in the following positions: marketing manager, international operations director/export manager, general manager, or chief executive officer. Secondly, considering the extent of large information sought in the questionnaire, a well-structured questionnaire largely closed-ended rather than open-ended questions were asked so as not to be too extensive, as this would not encourage respondents to complete the questionnaire. Thirdly, to attain the research objectives, the questionnaire clarity and ease of interpretation, extensive pre-testing of the questionnaire was conducted. Finally, the key informants aimed to answer the questionnaire, in this case the international operations/export manager was in the right position to provide the required information.

3.8.3 Sampling Considerations

The main objective of the sampling consideration was to incorporate all endogenous Nigerian service providers which engage in international operations for at least five years, and which derived at least 10% of their revenues from foreign markets. The Nigeria Business Directory link was used by the researcher, and a random sampling approach utilised, that is similar to those adopted by other similar empirical studies (Gill & Johnson, 2002; Easterby-Smith et al., 2008). A random sample of 1000 firms was selected for inclusion in this study. The sample was geographically dispersed, and this reinforces the external validity of the research based on its size and generalisability of the findings to other contexts. The researcher telephoned each company in order to identify a qualified key informant from upper management who was personally involved and therefore knowledgeable about the firm's international business activities. Telephone calls also enabled the researcher to verify the eligibility of each firm for inclusion in this study, obtain accurate contact details, and ask for managers' participation in the survey.

3.8.4 Research Constraints

Considering the fact that this was a self-funded DBA research inquiry, time and cost constraints top the list of considerations for the researcher. Personal telephone calls came at a cost as calls was placed to each firm to verify their eligibility for inclusion in the study. At the same time, the fact that e-mail survey could be completed within a reasonable period of time, compared to the high cost requirements of personally-administered interviews also gave credence to the adoption of the email survey method among others.

3.9 Questionnaire and Measure Development

Lancaster (2005: 130) stated that "designing questionnaires is more difficult than one might suppose". Churchill (1995) on the other hand sees questionnaire design as an art, of which the researcher adopted Churchill (1995: 397) nine-step systematic effective questionnaire development approach. The measures for this study constructs were all derived from the literature, and where required, measurement items were modified so as to reflect the international service venture context. It is important to document that all measures were improved on through personal interviews with 15 managers conducted in three major cities in the country with the highest concentration of industries, which are Lagos, Abuja and Port Harcourt. Thereafter, the researcher engaged five (5) academic researchers with substantial international marketing and strategy field experience to examine the face validity of the resulting scales and also serve as expert judges. This thus forms the foundation for this research work questionnaire design, presented below:

3.9.1 Information Sought (Step 1)

Being succinct on what one is investigating, and exact information requirements is crucial in questionnaire development as this affects the entire outcome of information and outcome of a research quality. Chapter Two and Three delved into the rational for the execution of this research. The constructs that are to be examined in this empirical inquiry are: *international entrepreneurial proclivity, dynamic capabilities, international marketing capabilities, international marketing strategy fit, and international service advantage.* It is important to acknowledge the fact that this research design is descriptive in nature, and sufficient knowledge exist today in the literature of the research hypothesis that could be developed. Hence, the information that this questionnaire intended to generate has the required foundation in the research hypotheses already developed to guide the execution of the study.

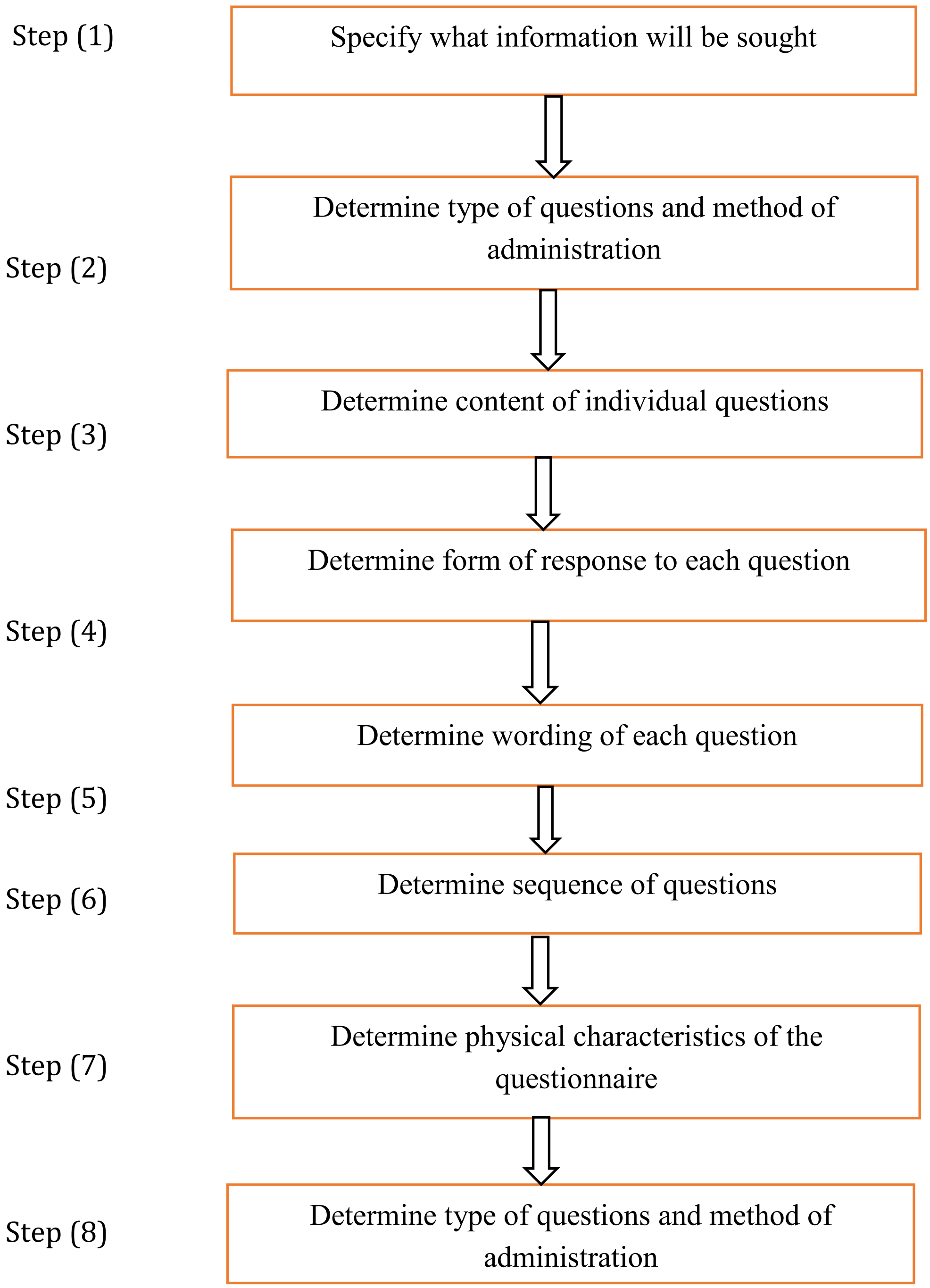

Figure 6: Research Questionnaire Development Process Source: Churchill (1995: 397)

3.9.2 Type of Questionnaire and Method of Administration (Step 2)

Once the information to be sought has been specified, the next stage for the researcher is to specify how the information is to be gathered, this is determining type of questions and method of administration. This entails specifying the kind of primary data being sought, method of data collection, the degree of structure that will be used in the questionnaire, and how this questionnaire will be administered. For this research work, e-mail approach was adopted whereby the URL link to the website where the questionnaire was hosted was sent. This was based on the premise that the constructs were operationalised and measured from previous empirical studies in the field of international entrepreneurship and international marketing theory and practice. As earlier explained, the online approach was adopted through email sent to each of the participating service firms after telephones calls have been placed to each of them to seek their consent and also assess their qualification to participate in the survey. Gill & Johnson (2002: 103) stated that "a key strategy that has become increasingly popular is the use of e-mail". This provided the researcher a two-in-one benefit through the preliminary screening (eligibility criteria was enacted and tested for inclusion in the study) which provided more insight into the firm's international business, identification of qualified key informant and also ask informant to participate in the research. This approach was deemed most appropriate in terms of fulfilling this research objective.

3.9.3 Individual Question Content (Step 3)

According to Creswell (2003) and Gill & Johnson (2002: 36), the process of operationalisation enables the construction of clear and specific instructions about what and how to observe, and thus enables testing of hypothesis and theories by confronting them with empirical data. Pallant (2013) stated that data collection "might involve the use of scales that have been designed to operationalise some underlying construct or attributes that is not directly measurable". This questionnaire is made up of large number of questions aimed at quantitatively measuring the constructs being investigated. Measures for all the study constructs were derived from the literature. The subject of operationalisation, measures used, items that make up the scales are discussed later in this chapter. The complete questionnaire is also provided in the Appendix B section.

3.9.3.1 International Entrepreneurial Proclivity

The construct of international entrepreneurial proclivity was operationalised following a systematic review of the empirical studies using the scale developed by Zhou et al., (2010). This construct is made up of three dimensions of entrepreneurial proclivity (proactiveness, risk-taking, and innovativeness) treated as distinct constructs in this research work. These represent regularly used items for the construct of entrepreneurial proclivity, as previously used by Lumpkin & Dess (1996), improved by Knight & Cavusgil (2004) to eight-item scale, and this was further refined and additional items added to achieve a more comprehensive measure containing fourteen (14) items, with seven-point Likert scales anchored by 1 = strongly disagree to 7=strongly agree. Respondents were asked to assess the proactiveness of their firm, in seeking opportunity and forward looking exploring business opportunities. There are five (5) questions adapted to international service venture context under Proactiveness construct, while Risk-taking and Innovativeness had four (4) and five (5) questions respectively. Some of the specific questions asked are stated as follows:

Proactiveness*: Our top management actively seeks contact with suppliers or clients in international service ventures.*

Risk-taking: *When confronted with decisions about international service venture operations, our top management is always tolerant to potential risks.*

Innovativeness: *Our top management always encourages new service ideas for international service ventures.*

3.9.3.2 Dynamic Capabilities

The dynamic capabilities (sensing and reconfiguring) was operationalised based on the same approach that the international entrepreneurial proclivity construct was operationalised. Similar to international entrepreneurial proclivity, the intensive reviews of applicable studies and pretesting was done with key informants.

Wilden and Gudergan (2015) twelve-item measurement scale was used to operationalise this constructs with seven-item reflective measurement for reconfiguring, and five-item reflective scale for sensing.

Reconfiguring processes was assessed on a seven-item measurement scale where activities like implementation of new strategies, adoption of new management methods, and renewal of business processes within the previous four years (2011-2015). Sensing on the other hand focussed on activities that enabled the firm and its employees to study their environment, through participation in professional associations and conferences (Wilden and Gudergan, 2015: 188). A seven-point Likert scales anchored by “1 = rarely” to “7=very often “; and the emphasis of these scales was on the frequency of use of certain activities.

Some of the specific questions asked are as follows:

In answering the following questions, please focus on the international service venture and indicate how often have you carried out the following activities in the last four years?

- *Reconfiguring: Implementation of a new or substantially changed company international service venture marketing strategy.*
- *Sensing: We use established processes to identify international service venture segments, changing foreign customer needs and international service venture customer innovation*

3.9.3.3 International Marketing Capabilities

International marketing capabilities was measured using Vorhies & Morgan (2005) work. The international marketing capabilities construct comprises of seven (7) distinct marketing capabilities, these are: pricing, service development, channel management, marketing communications, selling, marketing planning and marketing implementation.

Vorhies & Morgan (2005) marketing capabilities measurement scale was adapted based on the seven distinct capabilities listed above. Managers were asked to rate the marketing capabilities possessed by their firm to those available to their main direct competitors in the focal service venture market, on a seven-point Likert scale ranging from ‘1 = Much worse than competitors” to “7 = Much better than competitors”. There are twenty-eight (28) questions adapted to international marketing capabilities context under Pricing (4), service development (4), channel management (4), marketing communications (4), selling (5), marketing planning (3) and marketing implementation (4).

Some of the specific questions asked are stated as follows:

Please rate your international service venture market, relative to your major international service venture competitors, in terms of its marketing capabilities in the following areas.

- *Pricing: Using pricing skills and systems we respond quickly to international service venture market changes.*
- *Service development: Ability to develop new services for the international service venture market*
- *Channel management: Attracting and retaining the best foreign distributors*
- *Marketing communications: Brand image management skills and processes*
- *Selling: Giving international service sales personnel the training they need to be effective*
- *Marketing planning: Ability to effectively segment and target international service venture market*
- *Marketing implementation: Executing international service marketing strategies quickly*

3.9.3.4 International Marketing Strategy Fit

The review of literature shows that previous studies on international marketing strategy standardisation and adaptation followed a multi-step approach that encompasses the measurement of the degree of standardisation or adaptation of individual marketing programme elements, the assessment of similarities or differences in the environmental and market conditions between the "home/local" and a specific foreign market, and the employment of appropriate analytical techniques to develop a measure of "fit" between the strategy and the contingency variables like "deviation score analysis" and "residual analysis" (Katsikeas et al., 2006). Based on the understanding that international marketing strategy fit is one of the many constructs in this research work, the researcher stood a great risk if the previous approach described above was adopted, as this would have resulted in a very lengthy questionnaire under the "international marketing strategy fit" alone, which would have had negative effect on the response rate. Due to reasons above, the researcher adopted a different approach by developing a direct measure of "fit" , thus asking respondents to indicate the extent to which specific marketing program elements listed on the respective questions "match" or "fit" the environmental conditions (like economic, cultural, legal), regulatory (laws and regulations protecting intellectual and tangible properties of the firm) and market conditions (like customer needs and preferences) that succeed in the focal service venture market. The researcher was amazed going through the findings of the pre-study personal interviews, largely because the managers showed a good knowledge and familiarization with the "strategy fit" concept, in that they were able to provide valid assessment of their firm's strategy fit level attained in a given service venture market. The researcher thus conceptualised international marketing strategy fit as a construct, which comprises of three dimension and these are mainly; service strategy fit, pricing strategy fit, and promotion strategy fit. The researcher drew relevant measurement items from Katsikeas, Samiee & Theodosiou (2006: 886) measure of constructs, and made required modification to the context of the study, being international service venture. A seven-point Likert scale was used to measure these items, ranging from '1 = No fit at all" to "7 = Perfect fit". There are twenty-two (22) questions adapted after extensive review of the literature (e.g. Hill & Still, 1984; Johnson & Arunthanes, 1995) and refined using pre-tests. The questions cover service strategy fit dimension (5), pricing strategy fit (5), and promotion strategy fit (6).

Some of the specific questions asked are stated as follows:

Please indicate the extent to which the following elements of your international service venture marketing program "match" or "fit" the environmental (e.g., international customer needs preferences that prevail in their international service venture, economic environment, legal environment, cultural environment) and market (e.g., customer needs and preferences) conditions that prevail in the international service venture.

- *Service strategy fit: Services design and style*
- *Pricing strategy fit: Selling price to trade customers*
- *Promotion Strategy: Advertising media strategy*

3.9.3.5 International Service Advantage

The construct of international service advantage was operationalised following a systematic review of the empirical studies on the service advantage in international markets.

Kaleka (2011: 49) stated that “Service advantage was operationalized as a formative construct identified through measurement relationships. As earlier stated, Kaleka (2011) study focused on product export, as there has been none of such research that look into the international service firms. The International service advantage construct was operationalised using Kaleka (2011) five-item measurement scale. Kaleka (2011) emphasised the position a firm has achieved in a focal market as a result of its service in such market, is its service advantage. Respondents were asked to rate specific aspects of their service offering in comparison to their main direct competitors in the focal international venture market on a seven-point Likert scale anchored by “1 = Much worse” and “7 = Much better”. The assessment covers service accessibility, technical support, aftersales services, delivery speed and reliability.

Some of the specific questions asked are as follows:

Considering the international service venture, please indicate if your company’s perceived level of service offering have become much worse than competitors or much better than competitors over the past year

- *Service accessibility*
- *Technical support and after-sales service*
- *Delivery speed and reliability*
- *Overall end customer rating of service quality*
- *Overall end customer satisfaction with product, service offering*

3.9.4 Forms of Response (Step 4)

Once the constructs, scale and measurement instruments for operationalisation have been determined, the next stage is to decide on the specific type of response. To properly achieve this, formal process of measurement for scale development was conducted and a self-report type of approach was adopted such that key informants were able to freely express their opinions and views to the questions asked or issues raised. This method has high-rank rating as one of the most suitable in management research, and repeatedly adopted (Churchill, 1995). Almost all the questions in the survey instrument were closed which connotes direct responses were required on already predetermined scale, with few open-ended questions mainly restricted to information that are easily accessible to the key informant.

Measurement type adopted for this research was Likert type scales, and equally appearing intervals scales (Churchill, 1995). The decision to adopt Likert scale construction Likert type scoring was based on three main reasons framed around Likert type scoring (Likert, 1932). Firstly, Likert type scales successfully measured the constructs under operationalisation. Secondly, the ease at which one can construct and administer the Likert type scales, and thirdly, it has been found that respondents found it really easy to respond because response categories allows for adequate communication of the intensity of attitude (Churchill, 1995). The ease of computing total score is simply by summation of the scores on each statement.

The selection of the scales is based on the fact that scales with more than three points offer a suitable and valid measure of the object under investigation. It has been generally agreed that the reliability and validity of a number of different scales depends upon the increasing number of rating points included in the scale. According to research, rating scales should be restricted between 5 to 7 points because fewer than five points is seen to limit the power of the scale to discriminate, while once more than seven points is not desirable because of the marginal increase in the information gathered. Increasing the number of rating points might likely increase the cost of administration, informant fatigue and non-respondent bias. Considering the facts above, the seven-point scale was selected for this research and Table 4.1 below shows the types of scales adopted in order to measure the variables in this work.

Construct/Variable	Measurement Scale	Scale Construction
International Entrepreneurial Proclivity	Likert Type Scale	Seven-point scale: “Strongly Disagree” (1) – “Strongly Agree” (7)
International Dynamic Capabilities	Likert Type Scale	Seven-point scale: “Rarely” (1) – “Very Often” (7)
International Marketing Capabilities	Likert Type Scale	Seven-point scale: “Much Worse than Competitors” (1) – “Much better than Competitors” (7)
International Marketing Strategy Fit	Likert Type Scale	Seven-point scale: “Not Fit At all” (1) – “Perfectly Fit” (7)
International Service Advantage	Likert Type Scale	Seven-point scale: “Much Worse” (1) – “Much Better” (7)

Table 1: Questionnaire Development: Measurement and Scaling

3.9.5 Question Wording (Step 5)

The researcher gave the required attention to the wording of the questionnaire based on the understanding that appropriate question wordings plays a significant role in the design of an effective questionnaire. The information required for the testing of the research hypothesis was captured, and the questions worded using straightforward words while ambiguous questions, two-parallel questions and generalisations were avoided. Easterby-Smith et al., (2008) warned that research instruments that lacks these characteristics tend to end with low response rate, or even generate incorrect answers to the research questions.

3.9.6 Question Sequence (Step 6)

Once the questionnaire wording was determined, the questions were put into the questionnaire. For most of the constructs, standard measurements scales were adopted and the questions followed the general rules starting from the general questions on the firm's international service venture (with a clear description of what is meant by international service venture), followed by interesting questions on international entrepreneurial proclivity, and gradually advanced to more sensitive that touches on the firm's marketing strategy fit, its service advantage to its competitors and the respondent personal characteristics like experience and personal information at the end of the questionnaire (Jonker & Pennink, 2010).

3.9.7 Look & Feel of the Questionnaire Characteristics (Step 7)

The researcher understands the relevance of the look and feel of the questionnaire, and how this affect the quality of data gathered. To this end, the researcher ensured that the graphic artwork on the front page of the questionnaire is relevant to the subject, attractive, with the title of the study on the top of the page comely with full use of the fonts and characters that matches the message. The questionnaire was designed and uploaded online with a unique URL to access it.

3.9.8 Re-examination and Revision of the Questionnaire (Step 8)

The researcher conducted a full revision and review of the questionnaire after the stages above have been completed. This was to ensure the appropriateness of the questionnaire for pre-testing. In essence, a complete review and re-evaluation of the preliminary questionnaire was done.

3.9.9 Questionnaire Pretesting (Step 9)

Churchill (1995) stated that the "process of pre-testing a questionnaire requires administering the questionnaire to a small number of respondents with the aim of correcting any mistakes or misconceptions before the final draft is prepared and sent out". Based on the understanding that the pre-test serves as the fundamental insurance that a researcher can secure to ascertain the success of the questionnaire and the research project, the researcher conducted the pre-test phase in two stages, as it pertains to content validity and face validity aspect of this work.

Content validity is generally defined as the extent to which the items included in the scales satisfactorily replicate the cogent theoretical domains in question (Creswell, 2003). In the step three of this questionnaire development process, it was stated that the constructs were based on standard instruments and operationalised based on extensive literature review, and this was how the variables for testing were developed. Pallant (2013: 5) argued that "there are many thousands of validated scales that can be used in research, and finding the right one for a research purpose is sometimes difficult" and thereby recommended a thorough review of literature in the topic area as the first place to start. Where required, the researcher modified measurement items in order to reflect the international services context. Furthermore, all measures were refined in personal interviews with 15 managers. Presentations, reviews and correspondence took place between the researcher and a number of academic researchers with significant experience in the international marketing and strategy fields.

As stated above, the questionnaire was extensively pre-tested in personal interviews with several international operations director/export managers, vis-à-vis underlying fact that the scales employed in the questionnaire are validated scales already used in previous empirical studies. Hence, the pre-test aim was to primarily ensure that the terms and wordings were easily understood by the key informants and the completion period would never be a problem. A rigorous approach was adopted throughout the process, such that the scales are fit per relevance and also acceptable to the informants, and part of which the researcher engaged five academic researchers with significant experience in the international marketing and strategy fields to serve as expert judges and assess the face validity of the resulting scales (Pallant, 2013).

Afterwards, a pilot study was conducted using the refined questionnaire. Twenty-five firms out of the 633 firms previously confirmed to satisfy the eligibility criteria were randomly selected and link to the pilot questionnaires sent to them, requesting their participation and support in completing the survey instrument. Eighteen (18) were completed and found usable, and eligible for the data analysis purposes. Most of those that did not respond was largely due to time-constraint, or some on international trips, while a few was the approval process in their organisation to participate in external research studies took such a long time, as this was relatively new to them.

The insight from the pilot guided the approach adopted in the final survey whereby the researcher ensured the key informants with the right level of seniority and interest were invited to participate in the survey. The questionnaire was only made accessible after the respondent have been assessed and ascertained qualified as a key informant. Careful review of the submitted questionnaire in the pilot also showed the absence of any strong bias, and a high response rate was expected. It was then decided to proceed to the full data generation phase of the research study.

3.10 Methodology of the Survey

This thesis survey methodology has been divided into three sections; sampling method; administration of the survey; and survey response.

3.10.1 Sampling Method

3.10.1.1 Population

The set criteria below were applied in defining the population at the time the survey was conducted. Firstly, the focus of the study was on Nigerian service providers involved in international operations. Secondly, the target population was that of service providers that have been in the international operations for at least five years, and which derived at least 10% of their revenue from foreign markets. This is because experienced international service ventures will be more concerned about international entrepreneurial proclivity and related competitive advantage. Thirdly, firms had to be independent, endogenous and privately owned based in Nigeria.

3.10.1.2 Sampling Frame

Based on the target population of Nigerian service providers engaging in international operations for at least five years, and 10% revenue from foreign markets, the researcher attempted to develop a sampling frame that fit for this survey. Different databases and catalogues were checked to identify and select a suitable sampling frame for this study, such as *Nigeria Business Directory* and *Nigeria Galleria.* The *Nigeria Business Directory* was found to be the most appropriate and the sampling frame for this research work was developed.

3.10.1.3 Sampling Process

The focus of this research was on service providers that engage in international operations. Through systematic random sampling approach, 1000 firms were selected for inclusion in this study. Telephone call was made to each company in order to identify a qualified key informant from upper management who was personally involved and therefore knowledgeable about the firm's international business activities. Telephone calls also enabled the researcher to verify the eligibility of each firm for inclusion in the study, obtain accurate contact details, and ask for managers' participation in the survey. On the basis of this preliminary screening process 367 firms were eliminated from the sample, either because they did not satisfy the eligibility criteria or because they refused to participate. The remaining 633 firms were subsequently contacted by e-mail, which was addressed to the designated key informant.

3.10.1.4 Sampling Unit Informants

As explained in earlier section, a single key-informant approach was adopted, and this took into consideration the responding firms representation was a cross-section of service industries. The key informants in this study were upper level managers who hold the following positions: marketing manager, international operations director/export manager, general manager, or chief executive officer. To assess the quality of responses obtained from these executives, a key informant quality test was performed, following the guidelines provided by Huber and Power's (1985). In particular, the last section of the questionnaire included four statements that assessed respondents': (1) knowledge regarding the international business activities of the firm; (2) involvement in the international business activities of the firm; (3) responsibility for the international business activities of the firm; and (4) confidence in answering the questions of the survey instrument. Responses on these statements were obtained on a seven-point scale anchored by “Low” and “High”. None of the questionnaires included scores on any of these four items that was below 4.0, or average scores of the four items that was below 5.0. Therefore, potential bias attributable to the key-informant is negligible.

3.10.2 Administration of the Survey

Attaining the most positive image in all areas of a study have been declared as the major enabler to maximum response rate. Previous chapter discussed the content development in details, as this covered the questionnaire content, question wording and operationalisation of the constructs. A second researcher controlled variable is the questionnaire construction, which constitute a major element of the physical characteristics of the questionnaire and this was earlier discussed in this chapter. The researcher elucidated on how the survey was implemented based on the fundamental principle of total design method.

3.10.2.1 Administrative Plan

The implementation of this survey took appreciable time and that of a lengthy process, and as such required attention, coordination, intense effort and administrative responsibilities. Each of the 1,000 firms selected for inclusion in this study based on the sample from the *Nigeria Business Directory* were called over the telephone, so as to achieve three major objectives. Firstly, the telephone call helped to identify a qualified key informant from the upper management that is personally involved and have a good knowledge of the international business activities. Secondly, this helped to verify eligibility of the firm to participate in the study, and also seek for the managers’ participation in the survey.

Thirdly, the call help jumpstarts the research with preliminary screening which led to 367 firms removed from the sample, largely because they do not satisfy the eligibility criteria, and few others refusal to participate in the study.

A week after the call-down, the remaining 633 firms were subsequently contacted via e-mail (which portrayed the researcher as being a mediator between respondents and the existing problem) to the designated key informant. The electronic message explained the purpose and objectives of the study and reassured respondents that all information provided would remain strictly confidential and that data would be analyzed at the overall level for all participating companies. Finally, a Uniform Resource Link (URL) was included that directed respondents to the website that hosted the questionnaire.

Three weeks after the initial e-mail, a reminder was sent and this resulted in 258 completed and usable questionnaires from the 633 firms contacted out of the 1000 Nigerian international service providers sampled.

3.10.2.2 Survey Response

The 258 completed and usable questionnaires yielded an effective response rate of 37.5%. The response rate calculation was based on the Council of American Survey Research Organisations (Fowler, 2009) study. A comparison of the first and the last 50 respondents on the firm demographic characteristics (e.g., firm size and international experience) and all study constructs revealed no significant differences between the two groups at the 5% level (Armstrong & Overton, 1977). Thus, non-response bias does not appear to be an issue of concern in this study. Responding firms represent a cross-section of service industries, such as financial services, real estate, telecommunication, transport and logistics, information and computer technology, and engineering. On average, these firms have 195 employees, engage in international activities for 13 years, and conduct business in 9 foreign markets.

Table 2: Survey Response Rate Statistics	
Total number of sampling units	1000
Total number of respondents [a]	375
Total number of eligible respondents	258
Total number of ineligible respondents	117
Percentage of eligible firms = 258/375	68.8
Total number of non-respondents = 1000 – 375 =	625
Expected percentage of eligible firms in non-respondents = 625 X (258/375) =	430
Response rate = (258 X 100) / (258 + 430) = 25800/688	37.5%

[a] 633 firms were subsequently contacted by email, addressed to designated key informant, of which 258 completed and usable questionnaires. This give 375 total number of respondents.
[b] 375 total respondents less 258 total usable questionnaires equal 117 ineligible respondents.

There is limited reference for the response rate comparison in the service based sector, but general assessment shows this is acceptable compared with other empirical studies, especially in the product export that investigate similar issues in the international marketing area (Leonidou, & Katsikeas, 1996).

As previously mentioned, the key informants in this study were upper level managers who hold the following positions: marketing manager, international operations director/export manager, general manager, or chief executive officer. To assess the quality of responses obtained from these executives, key informant quality test was performed, following the guidelines provided by Huber and Power's (1985). In particular, the last page of the questionnaire included four statements that assessed respondents': (1) knowledge regarding the international business activities of the firm; (2) involvement in the international business activities of the firm; (3) responsibility for the international business activities of the firm; and (4) confidence in answering the questions of the survey instrument. Responses on these statements were obtained on a seven-point scale anchored by "Low" and "High". None of the questionnaires included scores on any of these four items that was below 4.0, or average scores of the four items that was below 5.0. Therefore, potential bias attributable to the key-informant is negligible.

The following tables shows some characteristics of the international service ventures selected by the respondents and certain demographics of the participating companies.

For how many years has this international service venture been running for (approximately)?

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	3	6	2.3	3.0	3.0
	4	16	6.2	8.0	11.1
	5	27	10.5	13.6	24.6
	6	14	5.4	7.0	31.7
	7	9	3.5	4.5	36.2
	8	17	6.6	8.5	44.7
	9	5	1.9	2.5	47.2
	10	28	10.9	14.1	61.3
	11	1	.4	.5	61.8
	12	10	3.9	5.0	66.8
	14	2	.8	1.0	67.8
	15	15	5.8	7.5	75.4
	16	3	1.2	1.5	76.9
	18	1	.4	.5	77.4
	19	1	.4	.5	77.9
	20	6	2.3	3.0	80.9
	21	2	.8	1.0	81.9
	23	3	1.2	1.5	83.4
	25	3	1.2	1.5	84.9
	26	3	1.2	1.5	86.4
	27	3	1.2	1.5	87.9
	30	3	1.2	1.5	89.4
	34	3	1.2	1.5	91.0
	35	9	3.5	4.5	95.5
	40	4	1.6	2.0	97.5
	50	1	.4	.5	98.0
	59	1	.4	.5	98.5
	60	3	1.2	1.5	100.0
	Total	199	77.1	100.0	
Missing	System	59	22.9		
Total		258	100.0		

Table 3: Distribution of International Service Ventures by Number of International Markets

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	<= 5	49	19.0	24.6	24.6
	6 - 10	73	28.3	36.7	61.3
	11 - 20	39	15.1	19.6	80.9
	21 - 50	34	13.2	17.1	98.0
	51+	4	1.6	2.0	100.0
	Total	199	77.1	100.0	
Missing	System	59	22.9		
Total		258	100.0		

Table 4: Distribution of International Service Ventures by International Ventures Experience

In which of the following categories would you mainly place this international service venture service offering?

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Industrial/Business-to-Business	118	45.7	45.7	45.7
	Consumer	140	54.3	54.3	100.0
	Total	258	100.0	100.0	

Table 5: Distribution of International Service Ventures by Service Offering

Examination of the above table shows that the majority of the international service venture service offering is in the business-to-business services area. This follows the law of demand and supply, and there must be a need to fulfil in the international market. The finding above seems shocking as companies are generally known to first find ways of establishing alliances with other foreign partners or enterprise that requires their service, prior to expanding to the consumer space in such market. The trend is however changing, as we see a huge influence of globalisation and technology through e-commerce accelerating consumer service offering in the international market as ease of service delivery and gap due to location get closed through collaborative technologies.

Please indicate your gender……………………………………………

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Male	193	74.8	74.8	74.8
	Female	65	25.2	25.2	100.0
	Total	258	100.0	100.0	

Table 6: Gender of Key Informants involved in International Service Ventures

The output above from SPSS analysis shows that 193 males (74.8 percent) and 65 females (25.2 percent), which gave a total sample of 258 respondents; which is in-line with the information earlier provided in this chapter.

Respondent' Classifications - Lagos, Port Harcourt, Abuja

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Lagos	108	41.9	41.9	41.9
	Port Harcourt	75	29.1	29.1	70.9
	Abuja	75	29.1	29.1	100.0
	Total	258	100.0	100.0	

Table 7: Distribution of the Key Information Across the Country Hubs (Lagos, PH & Abuja)

3.11 Statistical Approaches

Not long after the research data collection was completed, the researcher prepared the completed questionnaires for data coding and storage. Each of the variables was coded, and this involved assigning a number to each response category. The resulting data matrix was entered into the Microsoft Windows 10 computer operating system using IBM SPSS statistical package for Microsoft (version 21). This package employed to analyse the research data.

Literature shows that there are three major methods that has been generally accepted for analysing data; and these are Univariate methods, Bivariate analytics and Multivariate. A number of factors influences the decision on which method to adopt, and these ranges from the number of variables that researcher want to investigate, and the extent to which the variables differs in terms of their level of measurement (Pallant, 2013).

It suffices to state that in most research, it is most likely that researcher will use a variety of different types of statistics, depending on the research question/hypothesis and the nature of the data at hand. Univariate methods are most relevant to a single measure of a sample of objects, or when there are several measures of sample of objects where each variable is treated as a single entity in isolation. Common and acceptable univariate analysis tools are the measures of central tendency like the mean, mode, median; dispersion like standard deviation and frequencies (absolute and relative) one. There are other related tests like the chi-square test for relatedness or independence to explore categorical variables relationship (Pallant, 2013: 108).

Bivariate analytical technique involves analysis of two variables with the intent of determining the relationship between them and as such different from univariate methods where only one variable is analysed. Bivariate analytical technique is used a lot in testing hypotheses of association and the most popular bivariate techniques are correlation analysis (Pearson or Spearman), Mann-Whitney U-test among others.

Multivariate techniques find its application in more complex cases and social sciences where there are multiple relations between multiple variables to be examined simultaneously. The use is largely in researches that involves more than one dependent variable and more than one independent variable. The two main considerations involved in multivariate data analysis use are the specification of the dependent variable (where one or more variable are determined by/related to a number or set of independent variables) and the second issue borders on the identification of the independent parameters that contributes to the determination of the dependent variable. Some of the most common multivariate techniques are multiple regression analysis, factor analysis, path analysis and multivariate analysis of variance (MANOVA), and covariance, and multiple discriminant analysis (Pallant, 2013).

The decision on which of the analytical technique(s) to use is associated with three main factors, and these are, the level of measurements used in the survey questionnaire to capture participant response; in-depth knowledge of the research design as this determines the dependency of measures, measures per object, number of groups being analysed; and assumptions that guide the use of a given analytical method must be considered, based on the understanding that there are varied level of restrictions on assumptions from one technique to the others.

Having gone through the criteria stated above, a number of statistical methods were adopted for the data analysis in this study. The table below shows a summary of the statistical procedures adopted for the data analysis, and the statistical techniques used in this research study.

• Descriptives (Chapter Four) • Principal components analysis (Chapter Four) • Construction of scale indices from extracted factors previously tested for reliability and validity (Chapter Four) • Correlation analysis (Chapter Four) • Multiple regression analysis (Chapter Four) • Regression models evaluation in terms of multicollinearity (Chapter Four) • Path analysis (Chapter Four)

Table 8: Summary of Statistical Approaches Performed for Data Analysis

3.11.1 Descriptives

Initial analysis of the survey data was through the use of descriptives. This is because it was a faster way of obtaining a good range of common descriptive statistics that relates to the central tendency and dispersion. The next chapter provides details of the descriptive statistics covering the analysis of the data collected for this study, explored the use of percentage frequency tables, measures of central tendency and dispersion. This provides initial glimpse of the data from the research.

3.11.2 Factor Analysis

Factor analysis is a statistical tool and interdependence technique used to reduce a large number of observed variables to a small number of concepts that are not directly observed (Partington, 2002; Thiétart et al., 2001). The fundamental objective of factor analysis as an interdependence technique for interdependence relationship investigation is to group together variables that are highly correlated. In context, factor analysis is thus implemented in the following conditions:

- Where there is need to identify underlying dimensions or factors that explain the correlations among a set of variables.
- When there is need to identify a new smaller set of uncorrelated variables to replace the original set of correlated variables in subsequent analysis (as in multivariate using regression or discriminant analysis).
- When there is need to identify a smaller set of salient variables from a larger set for use in subsequent analysis.

While there are number of factor analysis method like generalised least squares and unweighted least squares, principal component analysis of factor modelling remains one of the most adopted in the field of social science (Bryman & Cramer, 1994). For this research data analysis, principal component analysis was executed on the measures of: international entrepreneurial proclivity, international dynamic capabilities, international marketing capabilities, international marketing strategy fit and international service advantage. Hair et al. (1998) claimed that principal component analysis (PCA) technique is well established in the literature as a multivariate statistical method.

According to Hair et al. (1998) "the most frequent applications of the principal component analysis fall into one of three categories: first is exploratory uses; basically, for pattern detections and data reduction, second is for confirmatory uses; this is for testing hypotheses about structuring of variables as it pertains to the expected number of significant factors and factor loadings; and, the third category is use as a measuring device, this is the construction of indices to be used as new variables in later/future analysis".

Principal component analysis usage in this study was to address the first and third suggested use above. This implies, exploratory use in detecting patterns of variables with the view of discovering new concepts and a possible reduction of data. The second purpose of using principal component analysis was to construct indices used as new variables in the action research part of this study.

According to Pallant (201: 189) 'both PCA and factor analysis (FA) often produce similar results, but while principal components analysis, the original variables get transformed into a smaller set of linear combinations, with all of the variance in the variables being used. Factors are estimated in factor analysis using a mathematical model whereby only the shared variance is analysed". However, Pallant (2013: 189) admits a preference for principal component analysis and gave a number of reasons that "it is psychometrically sound, simpler mathematically, and it avoids some of the potential problems with factor indeterminacy associated with factor analysis". Principal component analysis was used in this study and certain items were dropped from the final principal components analyses model because of their lack of variation as detailed in the next chapter under data analysis.

3.11.3 Construction of Additive Scales

Additive scales were constructed from the extracted factors so as establish the basis for subsequent statistical analysis (Pallant, 2013). The additive scales were constructed from the factor solution, and they are also described as mean summated scores or composite scales.

Additive scales were developed within this study as detailed in 4.9 Construction of Additive Scales from the Extracted Factors by calculating composite factor mean of the variables based on a loading greater than 0.50, which is the recommendation form of scale construction (Bagozzi & Yi, 2012). Gerbing & Anderson (1988:188) observed that "item-to-total analysis is often preferred over alternative analyses such as factor analysis for scale construction" but the general position is that "there is little essential difference between the methods".

3.11.4 Scale Reliability and Validation

Pallant (2013) defined reliability of the scale as an indication of how free it is from random error, or better presented as the degree to which a variable of set of variables is consistent with what it is intended to measure. The commonly accepted scale reliability indicators are the test-rest and internal consistency. Internal consistency is the degree to which items that make up the scale are all measuring the same underlying attributes, in essence, the extent to which the items "hang together" (Pallant, 2013: 6). In the context of this research, The Cronbach alpha coefficient was used to assess the reliability from internal consistency of scale perspective (Pallant, 2013). Nunnally (1975) recommendation of a minimum of 0.7 Cronbach alpha value threshold was followed. The researcher also took into consideration Pallant (2013) guidance to use inter-item correlation in situations where short scales of less than ten items results in low Cronbach values of like 0.5.

In addition to Cronbach's alpha, two other steps were undertaken to perform scale validation, and these are; first is item-to-total correlation analyses performed in order to assess the internal validity of each scale and identify poorly performing items, and this resulted in the elimination of only three items as shown in next chapter. Second is the correlation matrix that was developed and used to compare the correlations of each construct to it Cronbach alpha. Gaski (1986: 47) stated that "considerably higher alpha values may provide some indication of discriminant validity among the study constructs". The next section focus on the main issues involved in the correlation analysis used in this research.

3.11.5 Correlation Analysis

Management research measurement is defined as the "process that enables a researcher to establish a relationship between abstract concepts and empirical indicators" (Partington, 2002). Correlation analysis focuses on the measurement of the closeness of the relationship between two variables. It is used when exploring the strength of relationship between two continuous variables (Pallant, 2013:107; Churchill, 1995). It gives an indication of the direction; positive or negative and the strength of the relationship. Pearson correlation coefficient (r), is designed for interval level continuous variable and only take values from -1 to +1; indicating either a positive correlation (the two variables increases) or negative correlation (as one variable increases, the other decreases). The size of the absolute value gives indication of the strength of the relationship. A correlation of 0 implies no relationship between two variables while correlation of 1 indicates the value of one variable can be determined by knowing that of the other variable. Pearson correlation coefficients were calculated for examining the relationships amongst the variables within each of the constructs under investigation, these are: international entrepreneurial proclivity, international dynamic capabilities, international marketing capabilities, international marketing strategy fit and international service advantage. The main objective of correlation analysis at this phase was to investigate the strength and direction of association of the relationships within each construct, and at the same time check for discriminant validity. The next statistical method undertaken in terms of analysis was multiple regression explained below.

3.11.6 Multiple Regression Analysis

Multiple regression analysis is a more sophisticated extension of correlation and a statistical approach that can be used to examine the relationship between a single dependent variable and a number of independent variables (Pallant, 2013). Multiple regression is a family of techniques that allows more sophisticated exploration of the interrelationship among a set of variables. Multiple regression has been proven to address the following types of research questions:

- How well a set of variables is able to predict a particular outcome

- Which variable in a set of variables is the best predictor of an outcome
- Whether a particular predictor variable is still able to predict an outcome when the effects of another variable are controlled for

Pallant (2013) identified three major types of multiple regression; first is standard or simultaneous; second is hierarchical or sequential; and third is stepwise. Standard multiple regression is the most commonly used of the three and has all the independent (predictor) variables entered into the equation simultaneously and it is able to explain how much variance in a dependent variable, and would also show how much unique variance in the dependent variable of each of the independent variables analysed. For the hierarchical multiple regression, the independent variables are entered into the equation in the order specified by the researcher which is based on theoretical ground. On the other hand, for the stepwise multiple regression, once the researcher provides the list of independent variables, the program select which variable will enter and in which order they go into the equation (Pallant, 2013).

There are two main objectives of using multiple regression analysis in this study. First and foremost, the researcher has to investigate the nature and significance of a series of relationships between independent and dependent variables as presented in the research hypotheses. Secondly, the researcher need to conclude on whether a set of statistically significant independent variables, when taken together significantly contribute to the explanation of a particular dependent variable. An issue of importance in multiple regression analysis assumptions is that of multicollinearity, which is a measure of the relationship among the independent variables. Multicollinearity exists when the independent variables are highly correlated, r = 0.9 and above. Pallant (2013: 157) warned that "multiple regression doesn't like multicollinearity or singularity where one independent variable is actually a combination of other independent variables". Another important issue is that of outliers, and as such requires proper checking for extreme scores as part of initial data screening process. The last but not the least issue relating to multiple regression analysis assumptions is that of generalisability on the sample size. This occurs when there is a small sample size, the result does not generalise to other samples. This issue takes us back to the subject of data size or cases to be considered adequate. Pallant (2013:156) explained that "social science research requires about 15 participants per predictor are needed for a reliable equation".

3.11.7 Why Multiple Regression Analysis over Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) for Hypothesis Testing

Proper selection of statistical methodology is critical in a research study and cannot be overemphasised because each "statistical technique has certain attributes that ascertain its applicability to a given problem" (Marsh & Hocevar, 1986). Understanding of the research problem and posing the right questions have been seen as top priority prior to selection of language like Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) or regression analysis for analyses of the social science research questions.

SEM often referred to as hybrid model of combining confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) and path analysis has been identified as a more sophisticated technique which when applied correctly yields substantial advantages and thus seen as extension of first-generation procedures (Chin, 1988; Yale et al., 2015). Nevertheless, the decision to use principla component analysis, scree plot, correlation, multiple regression analysis, and path analysis is predicated on the requirements of this research model, context and relevance bearing in mind this is a mixed methods action research with a practice-based focus.

Multiple regression analysis was adopted to determine the nature and significance of the relationships between the variables (independent and dependent) as referenced in the research hypotheses. It has been argued that the purpose of a regression analysis is "prediction just as that of correlation is to assess the relationship between dependent and independent variables". Musil, Jones & Warner (1998: 272) stated that "an advantage of regression is that multiple predictor variables may be specified to predict one outcome".

This study also used the path analysis analytic technique to ensure measurement reliability is maintained since multiple regression suffers from an assumption of perfect reliability of instruments which is seldom attained. The researcher extended regression analysis by using path analysis to assess the indirect causal paths and also surfaced constructs dimensions.

3.11.8 First and Second Order Factors

A first-order construct is defined by its observed variables and these are the items the construct measure. The construct/indicators relationship is seen as that where the construct drives the indicators. Li et al. (2008: 819) stated that "second-order factors are generally viewed as latent variables of higher abstraction that can explain covariations observed among a construct's various dimensions implying a causal flow from general construct to first-level factors".

Second-order constructs are known to have unobserved-constructs. The primary and first-order factors of this study comprise of entrepreneurial proclivity of which proactiveness, risk-taking and innovativeness of the business ventures and their relationship to the dynamic capabilities of the service ventures comprising of the sensing capabilities and reconfiguring capabilities in the context of the business competitive advantage. However, there are other relevant constructs that are part of the model like international marketing capabilities and international marketing strategy fit that are second-order constructs. The international marketing capabilities comprises seven first-order dimensions (pricing, service development, channel management, marketing communications, selling, marketing planning and marketing implementation) while the international marketing strategy fit second-order construct comprises of three first-order dimensions (service strategy, fit, pricing strategy fit, and promotion strategy fit). This approach helped significantly in reducing the ninety-six questionnaire items to a considerable manageable and critically relevant items applied in the action research section of this research work in Table 58Table 58: Survey Contribution Matrix to Workplace-based Action Research.

Principal component analysis of all constructs examined in this study was performed as covered in 4.7 Common Method Bias, Principal Components Analyses, Scale Construction, Reliability & Validation: with eight factors extracted and the results clearly showed that common method does not pose problem in this study as it was unlikely to explain the pattern of relationships observed among the constructs (Jarvis, MacKenzie, & Podsakoff, 2003).

A multivariate statistical approach to data analysis was considered appropriate to investigate the relationships and standard multiple regression was found to be the most suitable and ideal statistical technique to predict a single dependent continuous variable from a group of independent variables. The study extended beyond two variables and as such leveraged standard multiple regression analysis to explain how much variance and unique variance in the dependent variable (sensing and reconfiguring) of each of the independent variables analysed (proactiveness, risk-taking, and innovativeness). This has enabled the researcher to investigate and narrate the nature and significance of the series of relationship between international entrepreneurial proclivity, its dimensions and international service venture competitive advantage.

In addition to correlation matrix of the independent variables for multicollinearity test, the researcher proceeded to conduct a more rigorous diagnosis proven to give greater reliability to assess multicollinearity through VIF scores and tolerance values. Multiple regression dislike multicollinearity because they do not contribute to good regression model, and hence this was assessed among the independent variables (Pallant, 2013). Standardised coefficients was used in the regression result to compare the impact of the constructs and t-statistics and related level of significance was also explored in the interpretation of the results in 4.10.4.2 Assessment of Multicollinearity

The goodness-of-fit was also tested with coefficient of multiple determination (R^2) and adjusted R^2 value. The explanatory power of the regression approach was also tested through the F-test comparing the ratio of explained versus unexplained variance in the model (Gerbing & Anderson, 1988). Path analysis was adopted to test the indirect and direct effects of study variables on international service ventures dynamic capabilities. As shown in 4.11 Path Analysis, the indirect effects of international service ventures (proactiveness, risk-taking, innovativeness), dynamic capabilities (sensing, reconfiguring) and second-order factors (international marketing capabilities and international marketing strategy fit) were clearly mapped and depicted in Table 51: Standardised Path Coefficients and t-values for the Study Model.

3.12 Concluding Remarks

This chapter started with the research design and clearly espoused on the mixed methods action research methodological framework adopted (Figure 4), and the rationale for this approach of combining methods to address this research work was expounded. This was followed by the conceptualisation of the factors relating international entrepreneurial proclivity and international service venture competitive advantage. The conceptual model illustrated in Figure 5 shows the suggested relationship among specific variables and how entrepreneurial proclivity influences competitive advantage in international service venture, and also highlighted the dimensions of organisational culture. After thorough review of the relevant literature, together with the exploratory interviews with international sales managers and executives of service organisations internationalising their offering, the set of hypothesised relationships was advanced as follows:

H1a: Proactiveness in international venturing is related positively to frequent engagement in sensing processes

H1b: Proactiveness in international venturing is related positively to frequent engagement in reconfiguring process

H2a: Risk-taking in international venturing is related positively to frequent engagement in sensing processes

H2b: Risk-taking in international venturing is related positively to frequent engagement in reconfiguring process

H3a: Innovation in international venturing is related positively to frequent engagement in sensing processes

H3b: Innovation in international venturing is related positively to frequent engagement in reconfiguring process

H4: Frequent engagement in sensing processes is related positively to frequent involvement in reconfiguring processes

H5: Frequent sensing relates positively to international marketing capabilities

H6: Frequent reconfiguring relates positively to international marketing capabilities

H7: International marketing capabilities influence positively international marketing strategy fit

H8: International marketing strategy fit influences positively international service advantage

Furthermore, the chapter provided a detailed documentation of the diverse challenges pertaining to the mixed methods approach adopted in this research study, which includes: research design, mixed methods research, mixed methods action research, action research, mixed methods methodological framework from action research and its application in this study, research model, research hypotheses, data generation sources, method of communication, operationalisation and measurement of the constructs included in the conceptual model, methodology of the survey, and statistical approaches used to analyse the data generated from the survey.

Chapter Four covers the rationale of the statistical methodology adopted to confirm the hypotheses. the descriptives, principal component analysis, scale construction, validation, regression analysis and path analysis.

CHAPTER 4

Data Analysis

4.0 Data Analysis

4.1 Introduction

The aim of this chapter is to elucidate on the descriptives started in the previous chapter, and also provide explanation of the most important descriptive outcomes that came out of the survey data. This chapter discusses the more complicated statistical approaches so as to interpret the data and the nature of associations within each construct that was investigated. Bearing in mind the large number variables examined within the realm of a given construct, the need to investigate the nature of the relationships underlying many of the constructs became necessary. The chapter also examines the association between a number of variables, largely: international entrepreneurial proclivity, international dynamic capabilities, international marketing capabilities, international marketing strategy fit, and international service advantage. Multiple linear regression as presented in Chapter four was found to be the most suitable and appropriate statistical technique when the need to determine the functional relationship between a single dependent variable and a number of independent or explanatory variables.

The chapter covers principal components analysis, scale construction and validation. Summary of the hypothesis results was also provided.

The chapter begins with the descriptive research findings on a construct by construct basis, and in the following order: international entrepreneurial proclivity; international dynamic capabilities; international marketing capabilities; international marketing strategy fit; and international service advantage. This followed by the principal component analysis, scale construction and validation. The chapter ends with the summary of the hypothesis results.

4.2 Measures of International Entrepreneurial Proclivity: Descriptive Findings

The descriptive findings regarding the concept of international entrepreneurial proclivity measures can be found in Table 9 below. The respondents were asked to focus on their organisation and indicate the extent of their agreement or disagreement with specific statements within the construct that comprises of three dimensions, these are; proactiveness (first 5 questions), risk-taking (next 4 questions) and innovativeness (last 5 questions).

Starting with proactiveness, the first of the three dimensions of this construct. On average, "Our top management regularly monitors the trends in the international service venture" top the list (mean=5.80) which shows that most of the international service venture prioritises the need for constant monitoring of the trends and this is closely followed by top management actively seeking contact with clients in international market (mean = 5.77). It is interesting to see that "our top managers have usually spent some time abroad to visit" had the lowest rating (mean=5.56) despite the prior observations. This is not strange as most of these businesses leverages technology, considering they are service based organisations.

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Our top managers have regularly attended local/international service venture trade fairs.	258	1	7	5.64	1.507
Our top managers have usually spent some time abroad to visit.	258	1	7	5.56	1.465
Our top management actively seeks contact with suppliers or clients in international service ventures.	258	1	7	5.77	1.300
Our top management regularly monitors the trends in the international service ventures	258	1	7	5.80	1.241
Our top management actively explores business opportunities abroad	258	1	7	5.62	1.453
Our top management focuses more on opportunities than risks abroad.	258	1	7	5.46	1.406
When confronted with decisions about international service venture operations, our top management is always tolerant to potential risks.	258	1	7	5.42	1.391
Our top managers have shared vision towards the risks of international service ventures.	258	1	7	5.40	1.406
Our top management values risk-taking opportunities abroad.	258	1	7	5.25	1.461
Our top management always encourages new service ideas for international service ventures.	258	1	7	5.70	1.311
Our top management is very receptive to innovative ways of exploiting international service ventures' opportunities.	258	1	7	5.55	1.346
Our top management believes the opportunities in international service ventures are greater than that of the domestic market.	258	1	7	5.32	1.439
Our top management continuously searches for new international service ventures opportunities.	258	1	7	5.46	1.349
Our top management is willing to consider new suppliers/clients abroad.	258	1	7	5.69	1.362
Valid N (listwise)	258				

Table 9: Measure of International Entrepreneurial Proclivity

The total international entrepreneurial scale score is shown below.

	N	Range	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Total International Entrepreneurial Proclivity	258	58	40	98	78.55	10.748
Valid N (listwise)	258					

Table 10: Measure of Total International Entrepreneurial Proclivity

Proactiveness dimension	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
Our top managers have regularly attended local/international service venture trade fairs.	258	5.64	1.507
Our top managers have usually spent some time abroad to visit.	258	5.56	1.465
Our top management actively seeks contact with suppliers or clients in international service ventures.	258	5.77	1.300
Our top management regularly monitors the trends in the international service ventures	258	5.80	1.241
Our top management actively explores business opportunities abroad	258	5.62	1.453
Valid N (listwise)	258		

Table 11: Measure of International Entrepreneurial Proclivity (Proactiveness)

The total proactiveness of international service ventures descriptive is provided below

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation	Skewness		Kurtosis	
	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Std. Error	Statistic	Std. Error
Total Proactiveness	258	5	35	28.49	5.447	-1.935	.152	5.035	.302
Valid N (listwise)	258								

Table 12: Measure of Total Proactiveness

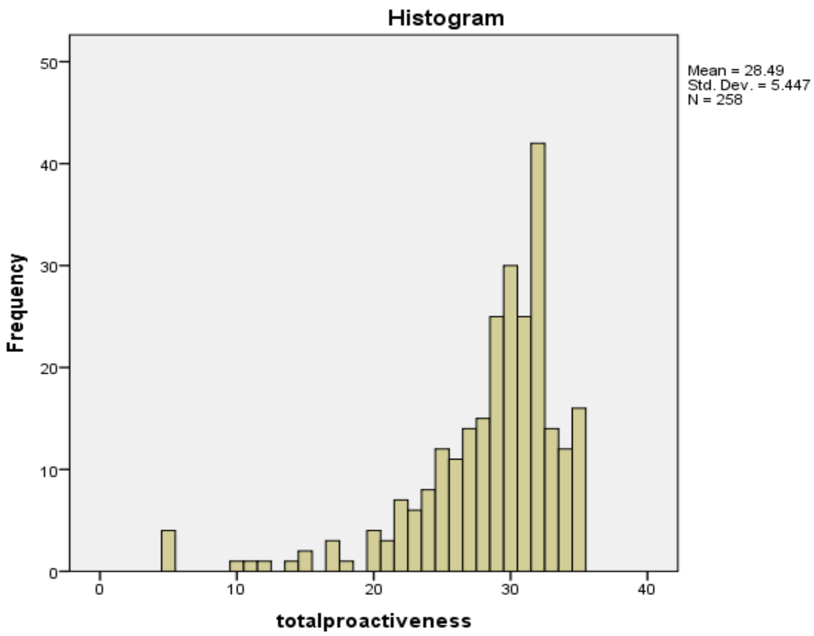

Figure 7: Total Proactiveness of International Service Ventures

Risk-taking	N	Mean		Std. Deviation
	Statistic	Statistic	Std. Error	Statistic
Our top management focuses more on opportunities than risks abroad.	258	5.46	.088	1.406
When confronted with decisions about international service venture operations, our top management is always tolerant to potential risks.	258	5.42	.087	1.391
Our top managers have shared vision towards the risks of international service ventures.	258	5.40	.088	1.406
Our top management values risk-taking opportunities abroad.	258	5.25	.091	1.461
Valid N (listwise)	258			

Table 13: Measure of International Entrepreneurial Proclivity (Risk-taking)

The variable with the highest mean value was that top management focuses more on opportunities than risk abroad (mean=5.46). This shows most of these firms have a higher risk-appetite which may also be linked to their entrepreneurial orientation, and the second on the list measuring top management tolerance to potential risks in international service venture. The lowest mean value was that our top management values risk-taking opportunities abroad (mean- 5.25). This is an eye-opener as it could be an indicator to why most of the service ventures have not scaled beyond their current status, as shared vision is highly desirable to further harness organisational dynamic capabilities.

Innovativeness	N	Mean		Std. Deviation
	Statistic	Statistic	Std. Error	Statistic
Our top management always encourages new service ideas for international service ventures.	258	5.70	.082	1.311
Our top management is very receptive to innovative ways of exploiting international service ventures' opportunities.	258	5.55	.084	1.346
Our top management believes the opportunities in international service ventures are greater than that of the domestic market.	258	5.32	.090	1.439
Our top management continuously searches for new international service ventures opportunities.	258	5.46	.084	1.349
Our top management is willing to consider new suppliers/clients abroad.	258	5.69	.085	1.362
Valid N (listwise)	258			

Table 14: Measure of International Entrepreneurial Proclivity (Innovativeness)

All the five variables exhibit high mean scores, with the top management encouraging new service ideas for international service ventures leading (mean =5.70), closely followed by top management willingness to consider new suppliers/clients abroad (mean= 5.69). Variable with the lowest score was the top management believes that opportunities in international service ventures are greater than that of domestic market (mean = 5.32). This observation clearly shows that even the businesses with service international ventures still sees the domestic/home market as providing more opportunities than the international market.

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation	Skewness		Kurtosis	
	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Std. Error	Statistic	Std. Error
International Entrepreneurial Proclivity	258	40	98	78.55	10.748	-1.249	.152	1.948	.302
Valid N (listwise)	258								

Table 15: Measure of International Entrepreneurial Proclivity Total Score with Skewness and Kurtosis

The negative skewness value shows clustering of scores at the right-hand side of the graph. Pallant (2013) however argued that with reasonably large samples, skewness will not make a substantive difference in the analysis, and same applies to the Kurtosis (peaked distribution) with a large sample of 200 cases and above.

International Entrepreneurial Proclivity	N	Mean		Std. Deviation
	Statistic	Statistic	Std. Error	Statistic
Our top management always encourages new service ideas for international service ventures.	258	5.70	.082	1.311
Our top management is very receptive to innovative ways of exploiting international service ventures' opportunities.	258	5.55	.084	1.346
Our top management believes the opportunities in international service ventures are greater than that of the domestic market.	258	5.32	.090	1.439

Our top management continuously searches for new international service ventures opportunities.	258	5.46	.084	1.349
Our top management is willing to consider new suppliers/clients abroad.	258	5.69	.085	1.362
Our top managers have regularly attended local/international service venture trade fairs.	258	5.64	.094	1.507
Our top managers have usually spent some time abroad to visit.	258	5.56	.091	1.465
Our top management actively seeks contact with suppliers or clients in international service ventures.	258	5.77	.081	1.300
Our top management regularly monitors the trends in the international service ventures	258	5.80	.077	1.241
Our top management actively explores business opportunities abroad	258	5.62	.090	1.453
Our top management focuses more on opportunities than risks abroad.	258	5.46	.088	1.406
When confronted with decisions about international service venture operations, our top management is always tolerant to potential risks.	258	5.42	.087	1.391
Our top managers have shared vision towards the risks of international service ventures.	258	5.40	.088	1.406
Our top management values risk-taking opportunities abroad.	258	5.25	.091	1.461
Valid N (listwise)	258			

Table 16: Measure of International Entrepreneurial Proclivity with Mean and Standard Deviation

Finally, all up descriptive view of the international entrepreneurial proclivity measure shows that that the variable “our top management regularly monitors the trends in international service ventures” top the list (mean = 5.80), followed by “our top management actively seeks contact with suppliers or clients in international service ventures” (mean = 5.77) and “our top management always encourages new service ideas for international service ventures” (mean = 5.70) respectively. The first two came from the proactiveness dimensions, while the third is from Innovativeness. The variable with the lowest mean is “Our top management values risk-taking opportunities” abroad (mean = 5.25) under risk-taking dimension.

4.3 Measures of Dynamic Capabilities: Descriptive Findings

Respondents were asked to indicate how often they had carried out a set of activities in the last four years focusing on their international service venture across twelve variables under two dimensions of reconfiguring (seven variables) and sensing (five variables) respectively. Responses were captured on a seven-point scale format, ranging from “rarely” (1) to “very often” (7). An overview of the frequency distributions and mean scores indicate that they all demonstrated mean value above five. Table 16 and Table 17 shows the distribution of responses for these variables:

International Dynamic Capabilities (Reconfiguring)	N	Mean		Std. Deviation
	Statistic	Statistic	Std. Error	Statistic
Implementation of a new or substantially changed company international service venture marketing strategy.	258	5.12	.089	1.422
Implementation of new kinds of international service venture marketing practices	258	5.27	.093	1.498
New or substantially changed international service venture marketing practices or strategies	258	5.31	.092	1.486
New or substantially changed technological equipment, manufacturing or service delivery processes	258	5.36	.089	1.424
Substantial renewal of business processes	258	5.30	.086	1.375
Initiation of new procedures or systems	258	5.41	.087	1.390
New or substantially changed ways of achieving our targets and objectives in the foreign markets	258	5.40	.083	1.334
Valid N (listwise)	258			

Table 17: Measure of International Dynamic Capabilities (Reconfiguring)

Initiation of new procedures and systems had the highest mean value (mean =5.41). This shows most of these ventures are dynamic and constantly initiating new procedures which could be related to their proactiveness and innovativeness. This was followed by "new or substantially changed ways of achieving our targets and objectives in the foreign market" (mean = 5.40) which is in consonance with the first variable. The lowest variable was the "implementation of a new or substantially changed international service venture marketing strategy" (mean = 5.12). This suggests that majority of the service ventures has not substantially changed their marketing strategy within the four-year period.

International Dynamic Capabilities (Sensing)	N	Mean		Std. Deviation
	Statistic	Statistic	Std. Error	Statistic
People involved in international activities participate in professional association activities	258	5.34	.084	1.344
Employees involved in international activities attend scientific or professional conferences	258	5.44	.085	1.366
We connect with our active network of contacts with the scientific and research community	258	5.37	.087	1.400
We use established processes to identify international service venture segments, changing foreign customer needs and international service venture customer innovation	258	5.17	.090	1.438
We observe the best practices in our sector	258	5.83	.081	1.300
Valid N (listwise)	258			

Table 18: Measure of International Dynamic Capabilities (Sensing)

For sensing dimension of dynamic capabilities; “we observe the best practices in our sector” had the highest mean score (mean = 5.83) followed by “employee involved in international activities attend scientific or professional conferences” (mean = 5.44). Keeping in touch with recommended practice especially in a sector like international service venture is crucial, and as such coming top as indicator of competitiveness in the foreign market, though as an item observed under sensing. The lowest variable still had a mean score above five, which is a strong point but low relative to others, “we use established processes to identify international target market segments, changing customer needs and customer innovation” (mean = 5.17).

International Dynamic Capabilities	N	Mean		Std. Deviation
	Statistic	Statistic	Std. Error	Statistic
People involved in international activities participate in professional association activities	258	5.34	.084	1.344
Employees involved in international activities attend scientific or professional conferences	258	5.44	.085	1.366
We connect with our active network of contacts with the scientific and research community	258	5.37	.087	1.400
We use established processes to identify international service venture segments, changing foreign customer needs and international service venture customer innovation	258	5.17	.090	1.438
We observe the best practices in our sector	258	5.83	.081	1.300
Implementation of a new or substantially changed company international service venture marketing strategy.	258	5.12	.089	1.422
Implementation of new kinds of international service venture marketing practices	258	5.27	.093	1.498

New or substantially changed international service venture marketing practices or strategies	258	5.31	.092	1.486
New or substantially changed technological equipment, manufacturing or service delivery processes	258	5.36	.089	1.424
Substantial renewal of business processes	258	5.30	.086	1.375
Initiation of new procedures or systems	258	5.41	.087	1.390
New or substantially changed ways of achieving our targets and objectives in the foreign markets	258	5.40	.083	1.334
Valid N (listwise)	258			

Table 19: Measure of International Dynamic Capabilities (All-Up)

All up descriptive view of dynamic capabilities above shows that that the variable "we observe the best practices in our sector" had the highest mean score (mean = 5.83), followed by "employees involved in international activities attend scientific or professional conferences" (mean = 5.44) and "initiation of new procedures and systems" (mean = 5.41) respectively. The top two variables belong to the sensing dimensions, while the third is from reconfiguring. The variable with the lowest mean is "implementation of a new or substantially changed company international service venture marketing strategy" (mean = 5.12) under reconfiguring dimension.

4.4 Measures of International Marketing Capabilities: Descriptive Findings

Table 20 illustrates the distribution of responses for the measures of international marketing capabilities. Respondents were asked to rate their international service venture market relative to their major international service venture competitors.

International Marketing Capabilities	N	Mean		Std. Deviation
	Statistic	Statistic	Std. Error	Statistic
Using pricing skills and systems we respond quickly to international service venture market changes	258	5.61	.074	1.196
Knowledge of international service competitors' pricing tactics	258	5.64	.072	1.153
Doing an effective job of pricing services in the international service venture market	258	5.547	.0729	1.1702
Monitoring international service venture competitors' prices and price changes	258	5.69	.074	1.186
Ability to develop new services for the international service venture market	258	5.62	.070	1.125
Developing new services to exploit R&D investment	258	5.54	.081	1.300
Successfully launching new services in the international service venture market	258	5.53	.071	1.140
Ensuring that service development efforts are responsive to foreign customer needs	258	5.53	.079	1.276
Strength of relationships with foreign distributors	258	5.67	.074	1.192
Attracting and retaining the best foreign distributors	258	5.53	.070	1.116
Adding value to your foreign distributors' businesses	258	5.56	.071	1.133
Providing high levels of service support to foreign distributors	258	5.42	.074	1.185
Developing and executing advertising programs	258	5.37	.081	1.300
Advertising management and creative skills	258	5.48	.074	1.194
Public relations skills	258	5.51	.077	1.233
Brand image management skills and processes	258	5.55	.077	1.235
Giving international service sales personnel the training they need to be effective	258	5.65	.073	1.175

Table 20: Measure of International Marketing Capabilities (All-Up)

Sales management planning and control systems	258	5.54	.068	1.095
Selling skills of international service sales personnel	258	5.64	.075	1.199
Sales management skills	258	5.51	.075	1.201
Providing effective sales support to the international service sales personnel	258	5.59	.075	1.207
Ability to effectively segment and target international service venture market	258	5.60	.079	1.266
Developing creative international service venture marketing strategies	258	5.59	.074	1.181
Thoroughness of marketing planning processes	258	5.59	.078	1.258
Allocating marketing resources effectively	258	5.63	.077	1.242
Organizing to deliver international service marketing programs effectively	258	5.66	.071	1.137
Translating international service marketing strategies into action	258	5.65	.071	1.138
Executing international service marketing strategies quickly	258	5.68	.075	1.203
Valid N (listwise)	258			

Table 20: Measure of International Marketing Capabilities (All-Up Cont.…)

After a detailed inspection of the international marketing capabilities descriptive variable, the top three variables that demonstrated high mean values are: firstly, “monitoring international service venture competitors’ prices and price changes” (mean = 5.69) has the highest mean, and directly under the “pricing” dimension of the construct. Secondly, Strength of relationships with foreign distributors (mean = 5.67) under the “channel management” dimension. Thirdly, “organizing to deliver international service marketing programs effectively” (mean = 5.66) under “marketing implementation” sub-category of the international marketing capabilities constructs. The evidence cited above shows that vast proportion of international service ventures that participated in the study actively monitors their competitors’ prices, and this can be considered in the light of competitive advantage, and this carefully followed by the strength of relationship with foreign distributors-partners from channel management perspective, and last but not the list is the strategy to deliver effect international marketing program.

The lowest descriptive within international marketing capabilities measure is the "developing and executing advertising programs" (mean = 5.37) under the marketing communications dimension. This presents itself as area of improvement based on the feedback from the respondents.

4.5 Measures of International Marketing Strategy Fit: Descriptive Findings

Table 21 illustrates the distribution of responses for the measures of international marketing strategy fit. Respondents were asked to rate their international service venture market relative to their major international service venture competitors.
After a detailed inspection of the international marketing strategy fit descriptive variable, we can conclude that the majority of respondents perceived that their international service venture marketing program "matches" or "fit" the international environment; market (customer needs and preferences) and the economic, legal and cultural environment. Brand name (service fit dimension) and order processing systems (distribution dimension) have the highest descriptive mean score (mean = 5.50) for both variables. This was closely followed by the "service design and style" which is also under the service fit dimension of the construct. The descriptives shows a strong service fit and distribution fit across board.

The lowest descriptive within international marketing strategy fit measure is the "sales terms" (mean = 5.00) under the pricing fit dimension. This speaks volume as oftentimes, sales terms are usually considered topmost priority, but the international operations and business owners response clearly shows this is the least when crafting international service ventures marketing strategy fit to the foreign environment.

International Marketing Strategy Fit	N	Mean		Std. Deviation
	Statistic	Statistic	Std. Error	Statistic
Services design and style	258	5.47	.110	1.769
Brand name	258	5.50	.102	1.634
Labelling	258	5.15	.111	1.777
Warranties	258	5.05	.112	1.799
Pre- and after-sales service	258	5.08	.110	1.771
Selling price to trade customers	258	5.04	.107	1.725
Selling price to end-users	258	5.12	.108	1.727
Profit margins to trade customers	258	5.17	.108	1.739
Profit margins to end-users	258	5.14	.105	1.694
Sales terms	258	5.00	.110	1.768
Advertising message	258	5.20	.110	1.759
Advertising creative presentation	258	5.10	.109	1.756
Advertising media strategy	258	5.09	.109	1.751
Publicity and public relations activities	258	5.13	.106	1.708
Sales promotion tools	258	5.22	.103	1.655
Personal selling techniques	258	5.12	.106	1.702
Length of distribution channels	258	5.12	.109	1.747
Type of middlemen used	258	5.07	.110	1.761
Distribution coverage	258	5.18	.104	1.669
Control over distribution channels	258	5.29	.103	1.654
Inventory controls	258	5.33	.098	1.572
Order processing systems	258	5.50	.092	1.474
Valid N (listwise)	258			

Table 21: Measure of International Marketing Strategy Fit (All-Up)

4.6 Measures of International Service Advantage: Descriptive Findings

Table 22 illustrates the distribution of responses for the measures of international service advantage. Respondents were asked to rate their international service venture perceived level of service offering if it has become worse than competitors or much better than competitors over the past year. Responses were captured on a seven-point scale format, ranging from “much worse” (1) to “much better” (7). An overview of the frequency distributions and mean scores indicate that they all demonstrated mean value above five. Table 22 shows the distribution of responses for these variables:

International Service Advantage	N	Mean		Std. Deviation
	Statistic	Statistic	Std. Error	Statistic
Service accessibility	258	5.43	.068	1.093
Technical support and after-sales service	258	5.42	.068	1.086
Delivery speed and reliability	258	5.63	.068	1.095
Overall end customer rating of service quality	258	5.57	.058	.924
Overall end customer satisfaction with service offering	258	5.79	.062	.996
Valid N (listwise)	258			

Table 22: Measure of International Service Advantage

A detailed inspection of the measure shows the highest mean scores being “overall end customer satisfaction with service offering” (mean = 5.79), followed by “delivery speed and reliability” (mean = 5.63) and then; “overall end customer rating of service quality” (mean = 5.57). The result suggests that the respondents considers “overall end customer satisfaction with their service offering" as the utmost and the least in hierarchy is the "technical support and after-sales services".

4.7 Common Method Bias, Principal Components Analyses, Scale Construction, Reliability & Validation:

Since data was collected from a single respondent in each of the participating firm, there existed the potential for the occurrence of common method bias (Lu et al., 2010). To address this potential problem, the researcher carried out Harman single-factor test (Podsakoff & Organ, 1986). First and foremost, the researcher conducted principal component analysis of all constructs examined in this research. Due to the large number of variables examined within the domain of each constructs, it became necessary to investigate the nature of the relationships underlying many of the constructs. Principal component analysis was conducted so as to extract the composite dimensions included within the domain of the constructs in question. Pallant (2013: 191) stated that principal components analysis (a form of factor analysis that is commonly used by researchers interested in scale development and evaluation) is the most commonly used approach among the numerous approaches that can be used to extract (identify) the number of underlying factors or dimensions. Pallant (2013) advised that researchers should adopt exploratory approach, experiment with different number of factors and use techniques like Kaiser criterion; screen test; or parallel analysis until a satisfactory solution is found. In order for the extracted factors to form the basis for subsequent statistical analysis, scales or composite measures were developed from the identified factors. These measures were then tested for reliability and validity; correlation matrix was developed afterwards using the new scales so as to examine the nature of correlations among the measures. This approach helped to detect discriminant validity problems pertaining to the scales. This section aims to present the outcomes of statistical approaches previously discussed in Chapter Three.

4.7.1 Principal Components Analysis Approach

Principal components analysis is the most commonly used and most appropriate statistical instrument with respect to data reduction. It tries to "produce a smaller number of linear combinations of the original variables in a way that captures (or account for) most of the variability in the pattern of correlations" (Pallant, 2013: 189). Principal components analysis transforms the original variables into smaller set of linear combinations, with all of the variance in the variables used, and the factors ordered with regard to the amount of variance they define, where the last factor accounts for least variance, and this is known as scree, where the eigenvalues of the factors are plotted to find a point at which the shape of the curve changes direction and becomes horizontal; so as to identify the factors that contribute the most to the explanation of the variance in a data set. The outcome is a situation that decision have to be made on how many factors to extract from the analysis, and which factors to be retained. Pallant (2013) recommended retention of all factors above the elbow shape where the curve changes direction.

There are thee (3) major steps in conducting principal components analysis; the first is the assessment of suitability of the data for factor analysis. This comprises of the sample size and the strength of the relationship among the variables. How large a sample is; has been a subject of debate among authors and researchers, while 300 cases are considered comforting for factor analysis, majority conceded to 150 cases as sufficient if solutions have several high loading marker variables (above .80). There is another school of thought on ratio of participants to items as of significance more than the overall sample size (Pallant, 2013). Nunnally (1975) recommended 10 cases for each item to be analysed while others suggested 5 cases. The strength of the intercorrelations among the items must be inspected with evidence of correlation matrix coefficient greater than 0.3. This factorability of the data was assessed through Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) measure of sampling adequacy with index ranging from 0 to 1, with 0.6 suggested as minimum good factor analysis value and Bartlett's test of sphericity value is significant (i.e. Sig. value of .05 or smaller $p < .05$) for factor analysis to be considered appropriate.

The second step is factor extraction (determination of the smallest number of factors that can be used to best represent the interrelationships among the set of variables). The approach adopted here was the Kaiser's normalisation criterion or eigenvalue rule where only factors with eigenvalues of 1.0 or greater than one are retained for further investigation (Pallant, 2013). The factor solutions were further assessed as regards the extent to which they meet conceptual interpretation before accepting the principal components analysis result.

The third step is the factor rotation and interpretation. The Varimax orthogonal (uncorrelated) rotation approach was adopted over the oblique (correlated) factor solution. Varimax was used to extract factor solutions that were characterised by greater clarity and reporting. Pallant (2013) stated the Varimax is the most commonly used orthogonal approach; which attempts to minimise the number of variables that have high loadings on each factor. Once rotation is completed, the outcome expected is a "simple structure" where each of the variables loading strongly on only one component; and each of the components represented by a number of strong loading variables (Pallant, 2013).

The results of a series of principal components analyses undertaken for this research shows that eight factors were extracted from the eight principal constructs employed (comprises of five first-order factors and three second-order factors). Table 23 shows the numbers of factors and variables attributable to each construct.

Construct	Number of Factors	Number of Variables
Proactiveness	1	5
Risk-taking	1	4
Innovativeness	1	4
Sensing	1	5
Reconfiguring	1	7
International Marketing Capabilities	1	24
International Marketing Strategy Fit	1	22
International Service Advantage	1	5
Total	8	76

Table 23: Factors and Variables Attributable to Each Construct

4.7.2 Common Method Bias

Harman one-factor test was carried out to test the presence of common method effect. All the 81 variables collected prior to extraction process (principal component analysis) computation were entered into an exploratory factor analysis, using unrotated principal component analysis, and subsequently using principal component analysis to determine the number of factors that are necessary to account for the variance in the variables.

The result of the unrotated principal component analysis was 15 components with eigenvalues greater than 1.0, accounting for 75.5% of the total variance. However, only one factor emerged with eigenvalue (25.897) with 31.95% of variance explained. Table 24 and Figure 8 corroborated this finding.

The Harman one-factor test result shows there is no common method bias since one factor must explain at minimum 50% of the total variance, to confirm common bias error. This indicate that common method does not pose problem to this study and is unlikely to explain the pattern of relationships observed among our constructs (Jarvis, MacKenzie, & Podsakoff, 2003).

Common Method Bias (Harman's single factor test)	Factor Loading *
Developing creative international service venture marketing strategies	.753
Sales management planning and control systems	.735
Advertising message	.732
Labelling	.730
Providing effective sales support to the international service sales personnel	.726
Sales management skills	.714
Giving international service sales personnel the training they need to be effective	.710
Thoroughness of marketing planning processes	.710
Allocating marketing resources effectively	.707
Advertising media strategy	.703
Advertising creative presentation	.702
Ability to develop new services for the international service venture market	.700
Organizing to deliver international service marketing programs effectively	.699
Public relations skills	.695
Distribution coverage	.695
Using pricing skills and systems we respond quickly to international service venture market changes	.690

Profit margins to trade customers	.689
Brand name	.685
Brand image management skills and processes	.684
Selling skills of international service sales personnel	.674

*Principal components analysis with a single factor extracted
Table 24: Harman One-Factor Common Method Bias Assessment through unrotated Principal Component Analysis

Translating international service marketing strategies into action	.672
Executing international service marketing strategies quickly	.671
Adding value to your foreign distributors' businesses	.664
Personal selling techniques	.660
Strength of relationships with foreign distributors	.660
Services design and style	.658
Knowledge of international service competitors' pricing tactics	.658
Ability to effectively segment and target international service venture market	.657
Pre- and after-sales service	.655
Profit margins to end-users	.655
Doing an effective job of pricing services in the international service venture market	.655
Selling price to trade customers	.653
Advertising management and creative skills	.651
Attracting and retaining the best foreign distributors	.649
Monitoring international service venture competitors' prices and price changes	.645
Providing high levels of service support to foreign distributors	.639
Sales terms	.638
Control over distribution channels	.637
Publicity and public relations activities	.636
Order processing systems	.635
Length of distribution channels	.632
Inventory controls	.629
Successfully launching new services in the international service venture market	.612
Developing and executing advertising programs	.608
Type of middlemen used	.605
Selling price to end-users	.595
Warranties	.591

Ensuring that service development efforts are responsive to foreign customer needs	.582
Sales promotion tools	.570
Developing new services to exploit R&D investment	.562
New or substantially changed international service venture marketing practices or strategies	.474
Our top managers have regularly attended local/international service venture trade fairs.	.454

*Principal components analysis with a single factor extracted

Table 24: Harman One-Factor Common Method Bias Assessment Contd.

Initiation of new procedures or systems	.442
Our top management is willing to consider new suppliers/clients abroad.	.441
Employees involved in international activities attend scientific or professional conferences	.424
Overall end customer satisfaction with service offering	.410
New or substantially changed technological equipment, manufacturing or service delivery processes	.408
We observe the best practices in our sector	.405
Implementation of new kinds of international service venture marketing practices	.405
Our top management regularly monitors the trends in the international service ventures	.399
Our top management actively seeks contact with suppliers or clients in international service ventures.	.389
Overall end customer rating of service quality	.386
New or substantially changed ways of achieving our targets and objectives in the foreign markets	.386
We use established processes to identify international service venture segments, changing foreign customer needs and international service venture customer innovation	.382
Technical support and after-sales service	.374
Implementation of a new or substantially changed company international service venture marketing strategy.	.372
Our top managers have usually spent some time abroad to visit.	.370
Substantial renewal of business processes	.366
Service accessibility	.342
We connect with our active network of contacts with the scientific and research community	.341
Our top management is very receptive to innovative ways of exploiting international service ventures' opportunities.	.313
When confronted with decisions about international service venture operations, our top management is always tolerant to potential risks.	.296
Delivery speed and reliability	.290
People involved in international activities participate in professional association activities	.283
Our top management always encourages new service ideas for international service ventures.	.266
Our top management actively explores business opportunities abroad	.191
Our top management values risk-taking opportunities abroad.	.185
Our top management continuously searches for new international service ventures opportunities.	.169
Our top management focuses more on opportunities than risks abroad.	.159

Our top managers have shared vision towards the risks of international service ventures.	.132
Our top management believes the opportunities in international service ventures are greater than that of the domestic market.	.121
Eigenvalue	25.897
% of the variance explained	31.95

*Principal components analysis with a single factor extracted

Table 24: Harman One-Factor Common Method Bias Assessment Contd.

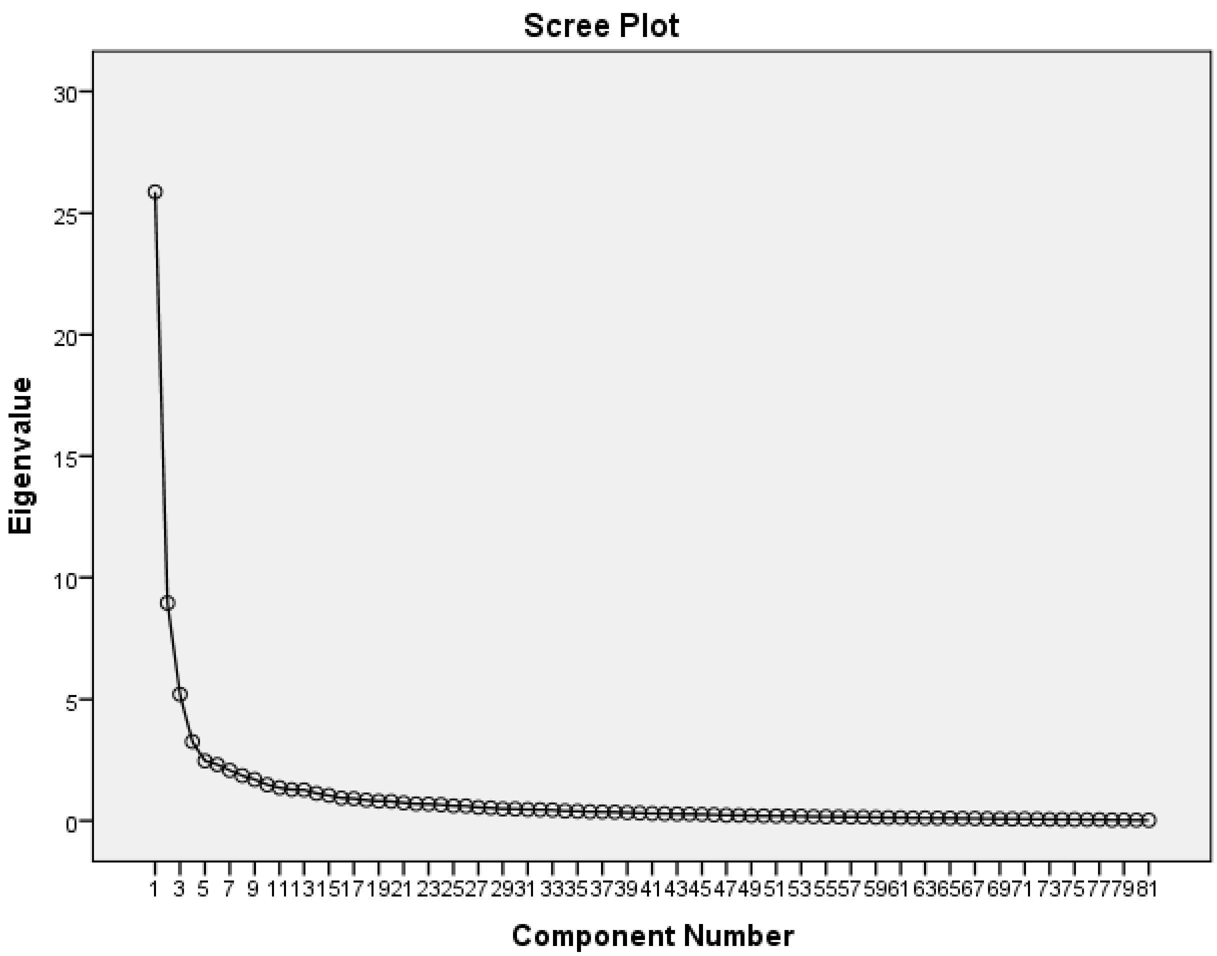

Figure 8: Screeplot for Harman One-Factor Common Bias Test of All Study Variables

4.7.3 Principal Components Analysis of Proactiveness of International Service Ventures

A total of five items were used in order to measure the proactiveness of the international service ventures. The results of a principal component analysis procedure (Table 25) shows that all items loaded onto a single factor which explained 54% of the total variance. On the basis that a single factor was extracted, no rotation of the data matrix was possible. The Component Matrix shows the unrotated loading of each of the items on the one component extracted. As shown in Table 25 below, based on Kaiser criterion (only the first component recorded eigenvalues above 1 (2.700). The KMO measure of sampling adequacy recorded .787, which is above .6 and the Bartlett's test of Sphericity value is significant (p= .000) where Sig. value is expected to be .05 or smaller. The Correlation Matrix table also shows most of the items correlation coefficients are above .3 (.355 to .629). These checks were conducted and reported which shows the suitability for factor analysis before proceeding to the component extraction and Screeplot. Figure 9 shows the elbow only has one component above it, and this was the only component extracted.

The solution was characterised by strong individual loadings on the factor ranging from 0.664 to 0.830, which revealed evidence of a very robust structure. The mean score of this factor scale was 5.87 (S.D. = 1.07) which suggests that, "*most of the international service ventures top management proactively pursue contacts with suppliers and customers in the international/foreign market*". The abbreviation ISVP was assigned to this *international service venture proactiveness factor.*

This factor solution thus satisfied the statistical and conceptual criteria for selection. The internal service ventures proactiveness factor was then submitted in subsequent tests for scale reliability and validation.

International Service Venture Proactiveness Items	Factor Loading * International Service Ventures Proactiveness (ISVP)	Communality
Our top managers have regularly attended local/international service venture trade fairs	.698	.487
Our top managers have usually spent some time abroad to visit	.664	.441
Our top management actively seeks contact with suppliers or clients in international service markets	.830	.689
Our top management regularly monitors the trends in the international service markets	.783	.613
Our top management actively explores business opportunities abroad	.686	.471
Eigenvalue	2.700	
% of the variance explained	54.01	

*Principal components analysis with a single factor extracted

Table 25: Principal Component Analysis of Proactiveness of International Service Ventures Measures

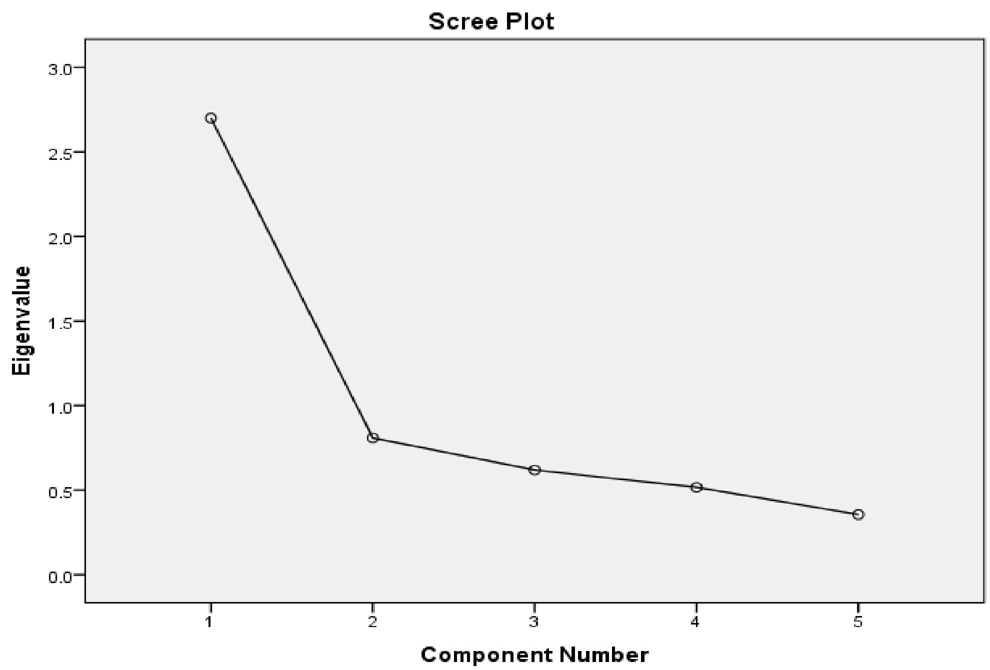

Figure 9: Screeplot for Proactiveness of International Service Ventures

4.7.4 Principal Components Analysis of Risk-taking of International Service Ventures

A total of four items were used in order to measure the risk-taking appetite of the international service ventures. The results of a principal component analysis procedure (Table 26) shows that the items loaded onto a single factor which explained 48.23 % of the total variance. The KMO measure of sampling adequacy recorded .671 and the Bartlett's test of Sphericity value was .000, significant (p= .000) thus verified the suitability of the data for factor analysis.

On the basis that a single factor was extracted, no rotation of the data matrix was possible. The Component Matrix shows the unrotated loading of each of the items on the one component extracted. The Correlation Matrix table also shows most of the items correlation coefficients are above .3. These checks were conducted and reported which shows the suitability for factor analysis before proceeding to the component extraction and Screeplot. In order to determine how many components (factors) to “extract”, Kaiser’s criterion was adopted and one components were found to have met the criterion (eigenvalue of 1 or more). Only the first components recorded eigenvalues above 1 (1.929) and also explain 48.23% per cent of the variance. Figure 10 Screeplot corroborated this extraction and retention of component 1, being the only components above the elbow shape and also explains much more of the variance.

The solution was characterised by strong individual loadings on the factor ranging from 0.659 to 0.712, which revealed evidence of a very robust structure. The mean score of the first factor scale was 5.69 (S.D. = 0.953) which suggests that, most of the *international service ventures top management pays more attention to opportunities than risks in the foreign market*. The abbreviation ISVRT was assigned to this *international service risk-taking proactiveness factors.*

This factor solution thus satisfied the statistical and conceptual criteria for selection. The internal service ventures risk-taking factor was then submitted in subsequent tests for scale reliability and validation.

International Service Venture Risk-taking Items	Factor Loading * International Service Ventures Risk-taking (ISVRT)	Communality
Our top management focuses more on opportunities than risks abroad.	.659	.434
When confronted with decisions about international service venture operations, our top management is always tolerant to potential risks.	.699	.489
Our top managers have shared vision towards the risks of international service ventures.	.712	.507
Our top management values risk-taking opportunities abroad.	.706	.499
Eigenvalue	1.929	
% of the variance explained	48.23%	

*Principal components analysis with one factor extracted

Table 26: Principal Component Analysis of Risk-taking of International Service Ventures Measures

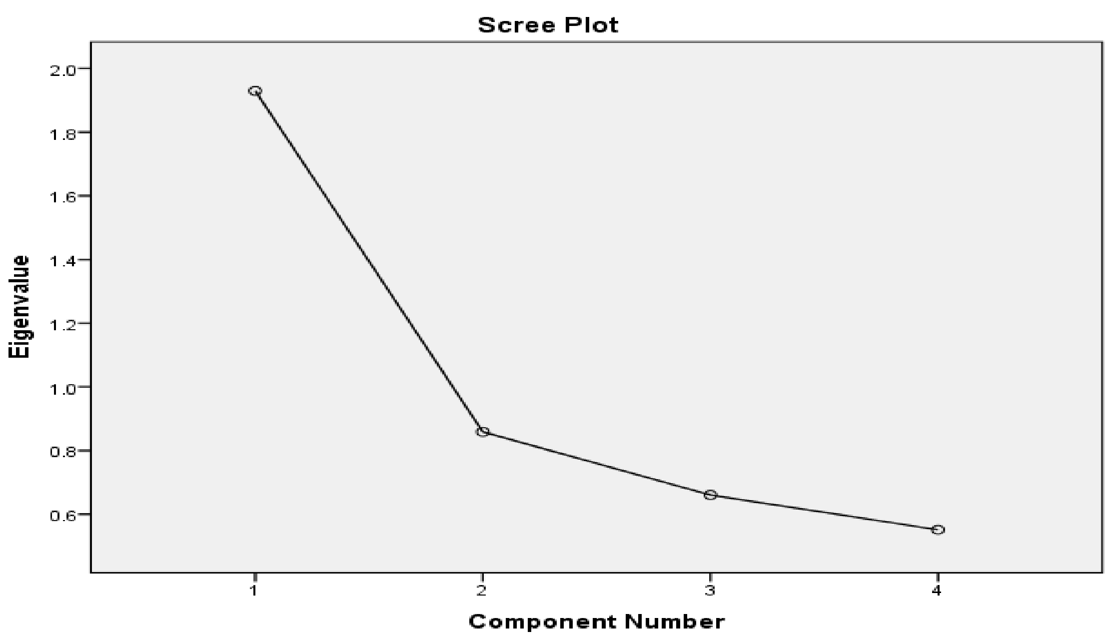

Figure 10: Screeplot for Risk-taking of International Service Ventures

4.7.5 Principal Components Analysis of Innovativeness of International Service Ventures

A total of five items were used in order to measure the innovativeness of the international service ventures. The results of a principal component analysis procedure (Table 27) shows that all items loaded onto a single factor which explained 49.7% of the total variance. On the basis that a single factor was extracted, no rotation of the data matrix was possible. The Component Matrix shows the unrotated loading of each of the items on the one component extracted. As shown in Table 28 below, based on Kaiser criterion (only the first component recorded eigenvalues above 1 (2.487). The KMO measure of sampling adequacy recorded .759, which is above .6 and the Bartlett's test of Sphericity value is significant (p= .000) where Sig. value is expected to be .05 or smaller. The Correlation Matrix table also shows most of the items correlation coefficients are above .3 (starting from .366) except for one item that was dropped as it correlation coefficient was below .3 (.173 to .392). This was the last item variable *"our top management is willing to consider new suppliers/clients abroad"* was dropped for scale purification. Furthermore, Table 27 also shows the communality for the item dropped was .236 which was below the acceptable standard. Pallant (2013:206) stated that communalities "gives information about how much of the variance in each item is explained where low values (less than .3) could indicate that the item does not fit well with the other items in its component). This is the case for component 5 "*our top management is willing to consider new suppliers/clients abroad*" having lowest communality value (.236) and lowest loading (.486). These checks were conducted and reported which shows the suitability for factor analysis before proceeding to the component extraction and Screeplot.

After scale purification, principal component analysis revealed (Table 28) the presence of a single factor loading with eigenvalue (2.331) explaining 58.3% of the total variance. On the basis that a single factor was extracted, no rotation of the data matrix was possible. The Component Matrix shows the unrotated loading of each of the items on the one component extracted in Table 28 below. An inspection of the Screeplot revealed a clear break after the first component in (Figure 11) and (Figure 12) respectively. Hence the decision to retain one component for further investigation (Cattell, 1965).

The solution was characterised by strong individual loadings on the factor ranging from 0.743 to 0.799, which revealed evidence of a very robust structure. The mean score of this factor scale was 5.59 (S.D. = 1.24) which suggests that, *most of the international service ventures top management are very receptive to innovative ways of exploiting international service ventures opportunities*. The abbreviation ISVI was assigned to this *international service venture innovativeness factor.*

This factor solution thus satisfied the statistical and conceptual criteria for selection. The international service ventures innovativeness factor was then submitted in subsequent tests for scale reliability and validation.

International Service Venture Innovativeness Items	Factor Loading * International Service Ventures Innovativeness (ISVI)	Communality
Our top management always encourages new service ideas for international service ventures.	.724	.524
Our top management is very receptive to innovative ways of exploiting international service ventures' opportunities.	.794	.630
Our top management believes the opportunities in international service ventures are greater than that of the domestic market.	.740	.548
Our top management continuously searches for new international service ventures opportunities.	.741	.549
Our top management is willing to consider new suppliers/clients abroad.	.486	.236
Eigenvalue	2.487	
% of the variance explained	49.73	

*Principal components analysis with a single factor extracted

Table 27: Principal Component Analysis of Innovativeness of International Service Ventures

Measures before the last item was dropped

International Service Venture Innovativeness Items	Factor Loading * International Service Ventures Innovativeness (ISVI)	Communality	Component Score Coefficient Matrix
Our top management always encourages new service ideas for international service ventures.	.753	.566	.323
Our top management is very receptive to innovative ways of exploiting international service ventures' opportunities.	.799	.638	.343
Our top management believes the opportunities in international service ventures are greater than that of the domestic market.	.758	.574	.325
Our top management continuously searches for new international service ventures opportunities.	.743	.552	.319
Our top management is willing to consider new suppliers/clients abroad.			
Eigenvalue	2.331		
% of the variance explained	58.3		

*Principal components analysis with a single factor extracted

Table 28: Principal Component Analysis of Innovativeness of International Service Ventures

Measures after the last item was dropped

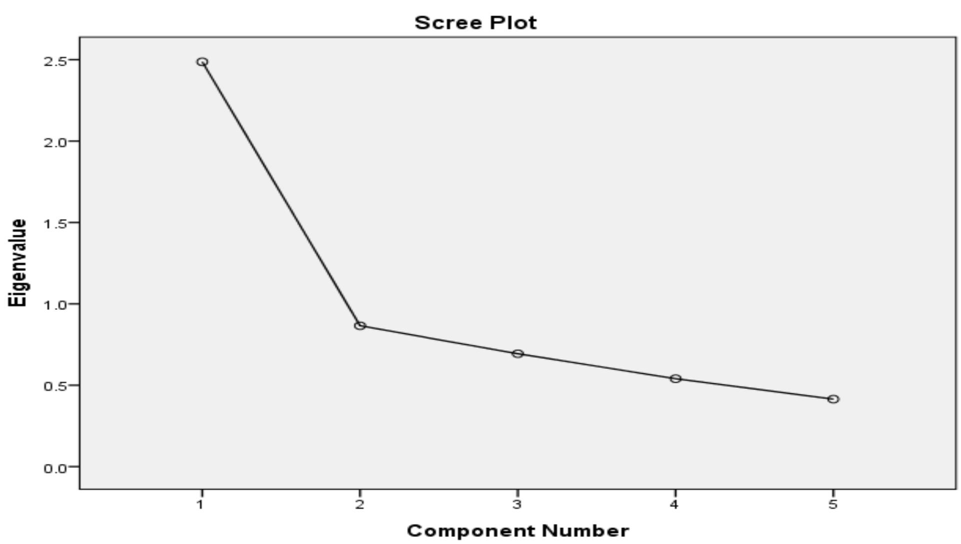

Figure 11: Screeplot for Innovativeness of International Service Ventures before purification

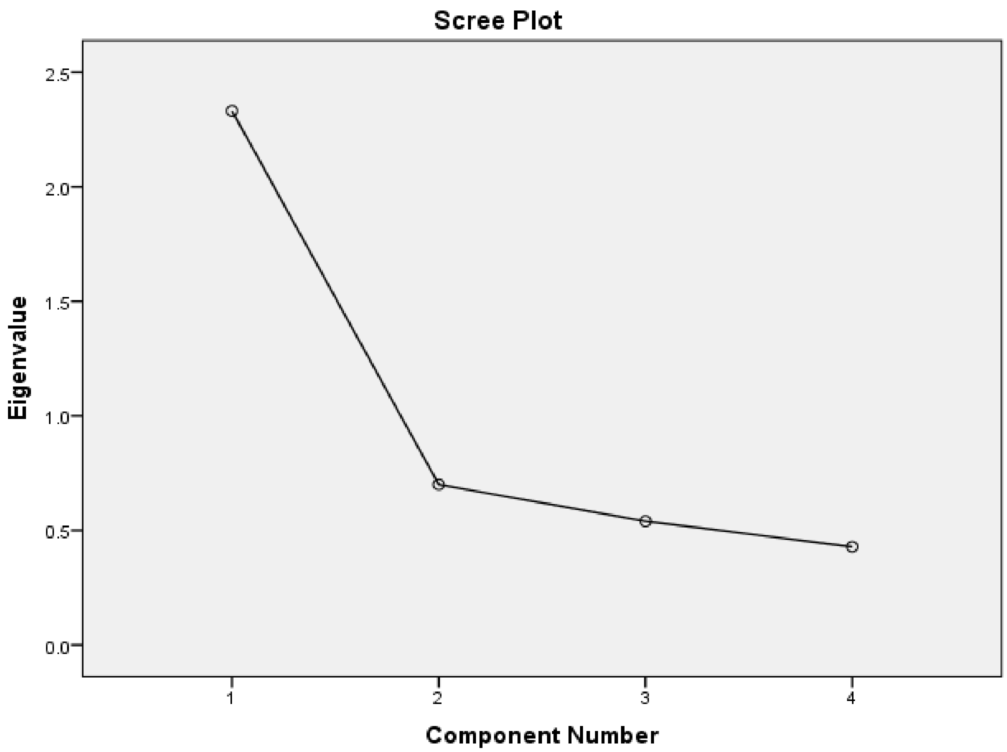

Figure 12: Screeplot for Innovativeness of International Service Ventures after purification

4.7.6 Principal Components Analysis of Sensing of International Service Ventures

A total of five items were used in order to measure how international service ventures sense the international market. The results of a principal component analysis procedure (

Table 29) shows that all items loaded onto a single factor which explained 52.9% of the total variance. On the basis that a single factor was extracted, no rotation of the data matrix was possible. The Component Matrix shows the unrotated loading of each of the items on the one component extracted. As shown in

Table 29 below, based on Kaiser criterion (only the first component recorded eigenvalues above 1 (2.644). The KMO measure of sampling adequacy recorded .799, which is above .6

and the Bartlett's test of Sphericity value is significant ($p= .000$) where Sig. value is expected to be .05 or smaller. The Correlation Matrix table also shows most of the items correlation coefficients are above .3 (starting from .329). These checks were conducted and reported which shows the suitability for factor analysis before proceeding to the component extraction and Screeplot. An inspection of the Screeplot revealed a clear break after the first component (Figure 13). Hence the decision to retain one component for further investigation (Cattell, 1965).

The solution was characterised by strong individual loadings on the factor ranging from 0.590 to 0.784, and score coefficient matrix from 0.223 to .280 which revealed evidence of a very robust structure. The mean score of this factor scale was 5.54 (S.D. = 1.23) which suggests that, *most of the international service ventures exposes their employees involved in international activities to attend scientific and professional conferences*. The abbreviation ISVS was assigned to this *international service venture sensing factor.*

This factor solution thus satisfied the statistical and conceptual criteria for selection. The international service ventures sensing factor was then submitted in subsequent tests for scale reliability and validation.

International Service Venture Sensing Items	Factor Loading * International Service Ventures Sensing (ISVS)	Communality	Component Score Coefficient Matrix
People involved in international activities participate in professional association activities	.740	.548	.280
Employees involved in international activities attend scientific or professional conferences	.784	.614	.296
We connect with our active network of contacts with the scientific and research community	.747	.558	.283
We use established processes to identify international service venture segments, changing foreign customer needs and international service venture customer innovation	.758	.575	.287
We observe the best practices in our sector	.590	.348	.223
Eigenvalue	2.644		
% of the variance explained	52.89		

*Principal components analysis with a single factor extracted

Table 29: Principal Component Analysis of Sensing of International Service Ventures Measures

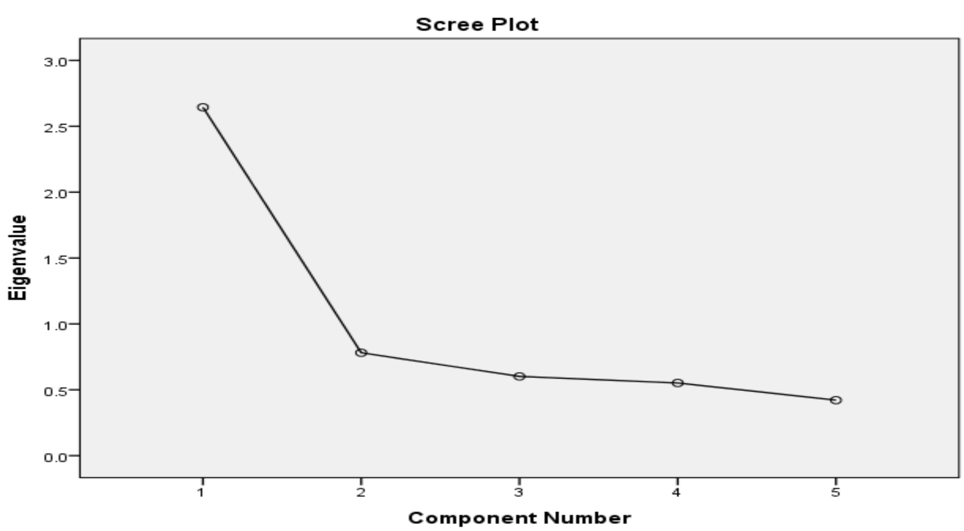

Figure 13: Screeplot for Sensing of International Service Ventures

4.7.7 Principal Components Analysis of Reconfiguring of International Service Ventures

A total of seven items were used in order to measure how international service ventures reconfigure itself in international market. The results of a principal component analysis procedure (Table 30) shows that all items loaded onto a single factor which explained 59.71% of the total variance. On the basis that a single factor was extracted, no rotation of the data matrix was possible. The Component Matrix shows the unrotated loading of each of the items on the one component extracted. As shown in Table 30 below, based on Kaiser criterion (only the first component recorded eigenvalues above 1 (4.179). The KMO measure of sampling adequacy recorded .862, which is far above .6 and the Bartlett's test of Sphericity value is significant (p= .000) where Sig. value is expected to be .05 or smaller. The Correlation Matrix table also shows most of the items correlation coefficients are above .3 (starting from .404). These checks were conducted and reported which shows the suitability for factor analysis before proceeding to the component extraction and Screeplot. An inspection of the Screeplot revealed a clear break after the first component (Figure 14). Hence the decision to retain one component for further investigation (Cattell, 1965).

The solution was characterised by strong individual loadings on the factor ranging from 0.716 to 0.810, and score coefficient matrix from .171 to .189 which revealed evidence of a very robust structure. The mean score of this factor scale was 5.37 (S.D. = 1.26) which suggests that, *most of the international service ventures places significant importance to substantial renewal of their business processes*. The abbreviation ISVR was assigned to this *international service venture reconfiguring factor.*

This factor solution thus satisfied the statistical and conceptual criteria for selection. The international service ventures dynamic capabilities reconfiguring factor was then submitted in subsequent tests for scale reliability and validation.

International Service Venture Reconfiguring Items	Factor Loading * International Service Ventures Reconfiguring (ISVR)	Communalities	Component Score Coefficient Matrix
Implementation of a new or substantially changed company international service venture marketing strategy.	.765	.585	.183
Implementation of new kinds of international service venture marketing practices	.784	.615	.188
New or substantially changed international service venture marketing practices or strategies	.789	.623	.189
New or substantially changed technological equipment, manufacturing or service delivery processes	.716	.512	.171
Substantial renewal of business processes	.810	.655	.194
Initiation of new procedures or systems	.780	.608	.187
New or substantially changed ways of achieving our targets and objectives in the foreign markets	.761	.580	.182
Eigenvalue	4.179		
% of the variance explained	59.71		

*Principal components analysis with a single factor extracted

Table 30: Principal Component Analysis of Reconfiguring of International Service Ventures Measures

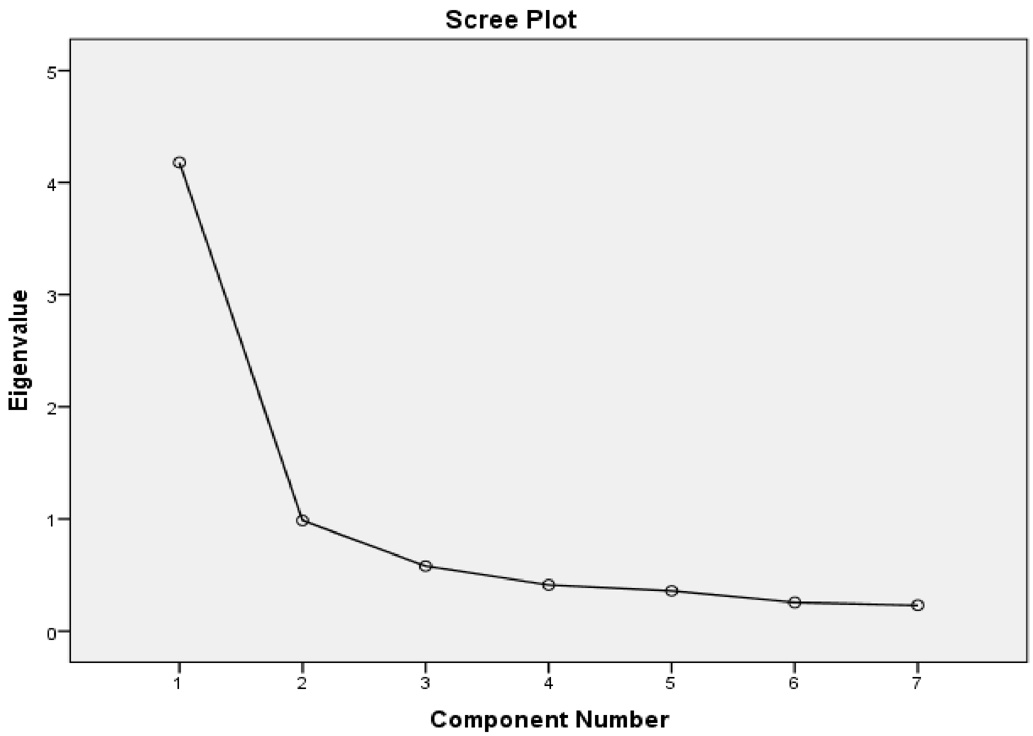

Figure 14: Screeplot for Reconfiguring of International Service Ventures

4.7.8 Principal Components Analysis of International Marketing Capabilities

4.7.8.1 Factor Structure

A total of 24 items representing six international marketing capabilities (marketing implementation (4 items), selling (5 items), service development (4 items), marketing communications (3 items) and pricing capabilities (4 items)) were subjected to principal component analysis (PCA) using SPSS version 21. Prior to performing the principal component analysis (PCA), the suitability of the data for factor analysis was assessed by inspecting the correlation matrix which revealed the presence of all the coefficients above .3. The KMO value was .944, exceeding the recommended value of .6 (Pallant, 2013) and

Bartlett's Test of Sphericity reached statistical significance thereby supporting the factorability of the correlation matrix.

The principal component analysis revealed the presence of four components with eigenvalues exceeding 1, explaining 57.3%, 5.8%, 5.2% and 4.8% of variance respectively, cumulative 72.8% variance explained. A closer look at the screeplot revealed a clear break after the first component. Using Catell (1966) scree test (Figure 15), it was decided to retain the one component for further investigation which was further supported by the Parallel Analysis results (Table 31), which showed the only components with eigenvalues exceeding the corresponding criterion values for a randomly generated data matrix of the same size (28 variables x 258 respondents) as shown in Table 32. On the basis that a single factor was extracted, no rotation of the data matrix was possible. The Component Matrix shows the unrotated loading of each of the items on the one component extracted. As shown in Table 33 below.

This one component accounted for 57.3% of the total variance. The solution featured strong loadings on the factor ranging from 0.63 to 0.83. Furthermore, the loadings of all international marketing capabilities items onto a single factor is conceptually acceptable and consistent with other studies in the international marketing context (Morgan, Katsikeas, & Vorhies, 2012). Based upon these empirical studies, the solution was accepted and the factor designated with the label *international service ventures international marketing capabilities;* with the abbreviated expression of ISVIMC ascribed to it.

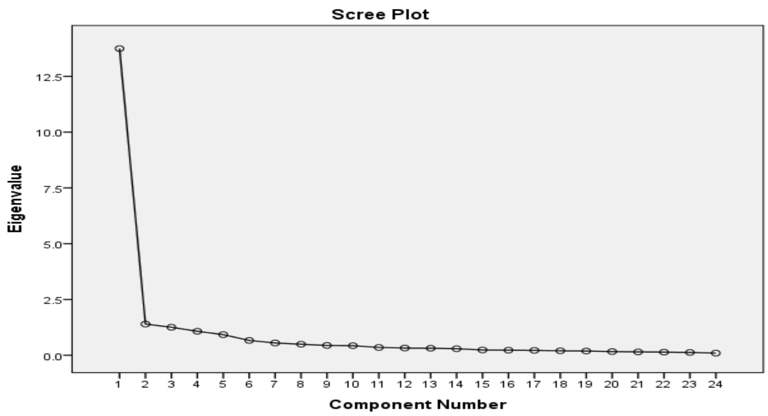

Figure 15: Screeplot for International Marketing Capabilities of International Service Ventures

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Number of variables: 24
Number of subjects: 258
Number of replications: 100

Eigenvalue #	Random Eigenvalue	Standard Dev
1	1.6068	.0536
2	1.5041	.0437
3	1.4311	.0386
4	1.3685	.0297
5	1.3135	.0285
6	1.2541	.0288
7	1.2055	.0244
8	1.1588	.0237
9	1.1191	.0196
10	1.0730	.0194
11	1.0300	.0210
12	0.9890	.0201
13	0.9501	.0206
14	0.9136	.0208
15	0.8750	.0209
16	0.8398	.0203
17	0.8067	.0206
18	0.7679	.0214
19	0.7318	.0203
20	0.6957	.0229
21	0.6568	.0237
22	0.6163	.0231
23	0.5734	.0253
24	0.5193	.0354

Monte Carlo PCA for Parallel Analysis

Table 31: MonteCarlo PCA for parallel analysis for International Marketing Capabilities

Component number	Actual Eigenvalue from International Marketing Capabilities PCA	Criterion value from parallel analysis	Decision
1	13.742	1.6068	Accept
2	1.397	1.5041	Reject
3	1.254	1.4311	Reject
4	1.075	1.3685	Reject

Table 32: Comparison of International Marketing Capabilities eigenvalues from PCA and criterion values from parallel analysis

International Marketing Capabilities Items	Factor Loading * International Service Ventures International Marketing Capabilities (ISVIMC)	Communality
Sales management planning and control systems (Selling Q2)	**.826**	**.682**
Developing creative international service venture marketing strategies (Marketing Planning, Q2)	**.817**	**.668**
Thoroughness of marketing planning processes (Marketing Planning, Q3)	**.809**	**.654**
Ability to develop new services for the international service venture market (Service Development Q1)	**.808**	**.653**
Providing effective sales support to the international service sales personnel (Selling, Q5)	**.806**	**.650**
Organizing to deliver international service marketing programs effectively (Marketing Implementation, Q2)	**.805**	**.648**
Allocating marketing resources effectively (Marketing Implementation, Q1)	**.790**	**.624**
Translating international service marketing strategies into action (Marketing Implementation, Q3)	**.784**	**.614**
Sales management skills (Selling, Q4)	**.783**	**.614**
Giving international service sales personnel the training they need to be effective (Selling, Q1)	**.782**	**.612**
Executing international service marketing strategies quickly (Marketing Implementation, Q4)	**.778**	**.605**
Public relations skills (Marketing Communications, Q3)	**.759**	**.575**
Brand image management skills and processes (Marketing Communications, Q4)	**.754**	**.568**
Selling skills of international service sales personnel (Selling, Q3)	**.753**	**.567**
Monitoring international service venture competitors' prices and price changes (Pricing, Q4)	**.751**	**.564**
Doing an effective job of pricing services in the international service venture market (Pricing, Q4)	**.743**	**.553**
Advertising management and creative skills (Marketing Communications, Q2)	**.741**	**.549**
Using pricing skills and systems we respond quickly to international service venture market changes (Selling, Q1)	**.732**	**.537**

Table 33: Principal Component Analysis of International Marketing Capabilities Measures*

International Marketing Capabilities Items	Factor Loadings	Communalities
	International Service Ventures International Marketing Capabilities (ISVIMC)	
Ability to effectively segment and target international service venture market (Marketing Planning, Q1)	**.730**	.533
Knowledge of international service competitors' pricing tactics (Selling, Q2)	**.714**	.510
Developing and executing advertising programs (Marketing Communications, Q1)	**.681**	.464
Successfully launching new services in the international service venture market (Service Development Q3)	**.679**	.461
Developing new services to exploit R&D investment (Service Development Q2)	**.660**	.435
Ensuring that service development efforts are responsive to foreign customer needs (Service Development Q4)	**.633**	.401
Eigenvalue	13.74	
% of the variance explained (57.3)	57.3	

*Principal components analysis, 1 components extracted

Table 33: Principal Component Analysis of International Marketing Capabilities Measures* (Cont….)

4.7.9 Principal Components Analysis of International Marketing Strategy Fit

4.7.9.1 Factor Structure

The principal component analysis of the international service ventures international marketing strategy fit items is demonstrated in Table 36 . The table formatted in a similar fashion to those earlier reported shows the amount of variance explained by the principal components analysis model, solution, variable communalities, factor loadings and the eigenvalue attributable to each of the extracted factors.

A total of 22 items representing four international marketing strategy fit capabilities (service strategy fit (5 items), pricing strategy fit (5 items), promotion strategy fit (6 items) and distribution strategy fit (6 items)) were subjected to principal component analysis (PCA) using SPSS version 21. Prior to performing the principal component analysis (PCA), the suitability of the data for factor analysis was assessed by inspecting the correlation matrix which revealed the presence of all the coefficients above .3. The KMO value was .941, exceeding the recommended value of .6 (Kaiser, 1974) and Bartlett's Test of Sphericity reached statistical significance thereby supporting the factorability of the correlation matrix.

The principal component analysis revealed the presence of three components with eigenvalues exceeding 1, explaining 65.99%, 6.26%, and 4.64% of variance respectively, cumulative 76.9% variance explained. A closer look at the screeplot revealed a clear break after the first component and based on Catell (1966) scree test (Figure 16), it was decided to retain the only one component above the elbow for further investigation. This decision was corroborated by the Parallel Analysis results (Table 34), which showed the only components with eigenvalues exceeding the corresponding criterion values for a randomly generated data matrix of the same size (21 variables x 258 respondents) as shown in Table 35. On the basis that a single factor was extracted, no rotation of the data matrix was possible. The Component Matrix shows the unrotated loading of each of the items on the one component extracted shown in Table 36 below.

This one component accounted for 65.99% of the total variance. The solution featured strong loadings on the factor ranging from 0.66 to 0.88. Furthermore, the loadings of all international marketing strategy fit items onto a single factor is conceptually acceptable and consistent with other studies in the international marketing practice (Katsikeas et al., 2006). Based upon these empirical studies, the solution was accepted and the factor designated with the label international service ventures international marketing strategy fit; with the abbreviated expression of ISVIMSF ascribed to it.

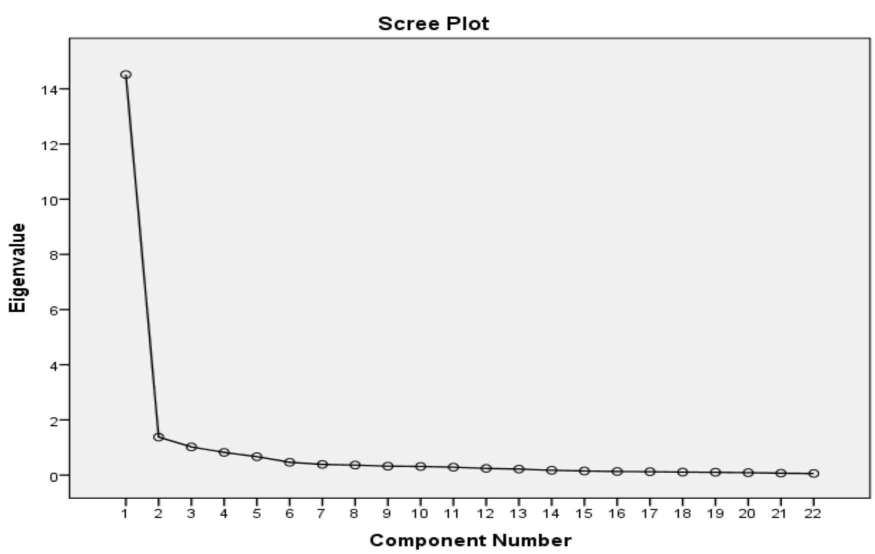

Figure 16: Screeplot for International Marketing Strategy Fit of International Service Ventures

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Number of variables: 22
Number of subjects: 258
Number of replications: 100

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Eigenvalue #	Random Eigenvalue	Standard Dev
1	1.5657	.0552
2	1.4698	.0430
3	1.3939	.0367
4	1.3239	.0318
5	1.2700	.0266
6	1.2177	.0262
7	1.1687	.0235
8	1.1272	.0237
9	1.0844	.0243
10	1.0376	.0247
11	0.9956	.0226
12	0.9607	.0213
13	0.9150	.0230
14	0.8755	.0222
15	0.8370	.0219
16	0.7983	.0202
17	0.7632	.0209
18	0.7228	.0218
19	0.6861	.0236
20	0.6440	.0214
21	0.5983	.0221
22	0.5446	.0283

++
Monte Carlo PCA for Parallel Analysis

Table 34: MonteCarlo PCA for parallel analysis for International Marketing Strategy Fit

Component number	Actual Eigenvalue from International Marketing Capabilities PCA	Criterion value from parallel analysis	Decision
1	14.517	1.5657	Accept
2	1.378	1.4698	Reject
3	1.020	1.3939	Reject

Table 35: Comparison of International Marketing Strategy Fit eigenvalues from PCA and criterion values from parallel analysis

*Principal components analysis, 1 component extracted

International Marketing Strategy Fit Items	Loadings * International Service Ventures International Marketing Strategy Fit (ISVIMSF	Communality
Labelling	**.880**	.774
Advertising creative presentation	**.878**	.771
Advertising media strategy	**.873**	.762
Publicity and public relations activities	**.872**	.760
Length of distribution channels	**.871**	.759
Advertising message	**.869**	.755
Personal selling techniques	**.859**	.738
Distribution coverage	**.850**	.722
Selling price to trade customers	**.841**	.708
Profit margins to trade customers	**.841**	.707
Type of middlemen used	**.829**	.688
Profit margins to end-users	**.821**	.675
Sales terms	**.819**	.671
Control over distribution channels	**.812**	.660
Selling price to end-users	**.801**	.641
Sales promotion tools	**.800**	.641
Pre- and after-sales service	**.757**	.574
Inventory controls	**.743**	.552
Brand name	**.728**	.530
Order processing systems	**.720**	.518
Services design and style	**.686**	.470
Warranties	**.664**	.441
Eigenvalue	**14.52**	
% of the variance explained (65.99)	**65.99%**	

Table 36: Principal Component Analysis of International Marketing Strategy Fit Measures*

4.7.10 Principal Components Analysis of International Service Advantage

A total of five items were used in order to measure the international service ventures international service advantage. The results of a principal component analysis procedure (Table 37) shows that all items loaded onto a single factor which explained 65.71% of the total variance. On the basis that a single factor was extracted, no rotation of the data matrix was possible. The Component Matrix shows the unrotated loading of each of the items on the one component extracted. As shown in Table 37 below, based on Kaiser criterion (only the first component recorded eigenvalues above 1 (3.285). The KMO measure of sampling adequacy recorded .827, which is above .6 and the Bartlett's test of Sphericity value is significant (p= .000) where Sig. value is expected to be .05 or smaller. The Correlation Matrix table also shows most of the items correlation coefficients are above .3 (.482 to .685). These checks were conducted and reported which shows the suitability for factor analysis before proceeding to the component extraction and Screeplot. Figure 17 shows the elbow only has one component above it, and this was the only component extracted.

The solution was characterised by strong individual loadings on the factor ranging from 0.773 to 0.837, which revealed evidence of a very robust structure. The mean score of this factor scale was 5.57 which suggests that, "*most of the international service ventures technical support and after-sales service are considered much better than their competitors over the past year*". Based upon empirical these empirical studies, the solution was accepted and the factor designated with the label *international service ventures international service advantage; with the abbreviation* ISVISA.

This factor solution thus satisfied the statistical and conceptual criteria for selection. The ISVISA factor was then submitted in subsequent tests for scale reliability and validation.

International Service Venture Service Advantage Items	Factor Loading * International Service Ventures International Service Advantage (ISVISA)	Communality
Technical support and after-sales service	**.837**	.701
Service accessibility	**.835**	.697
Delivery speed and reliability	**.824**	.678
Overall end customer satisfaction with service offering	**.783**	.613
Overall end customer rating of service quality	**.773**	.597
Eigenvalue	**3.285**	
% of the variance explained	**65.71**	

*Principal components analysis with a single factor extracted

Table 37: Principal Component Analysis of International Service Advantage of International Service Ventures Measures

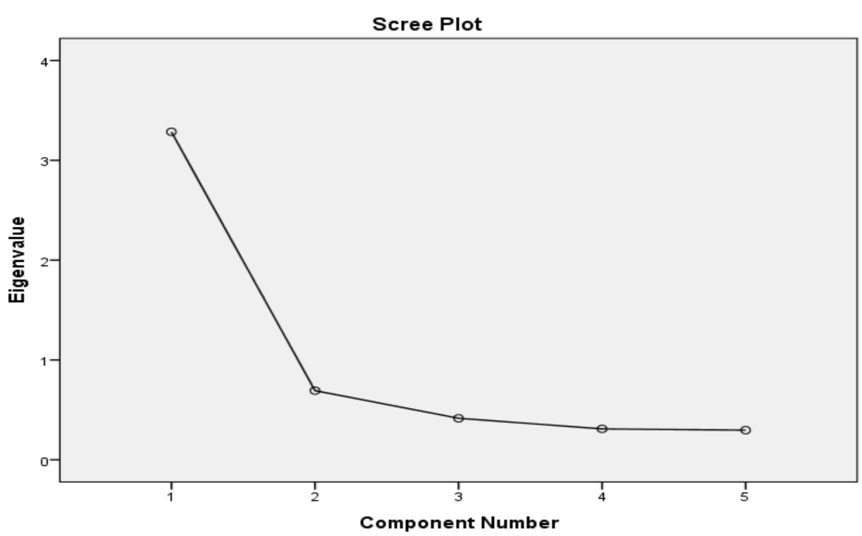

Figure 17: Screeplot for International Service Advantage of International Service Ventures

4.8 Summary of Principal Component Analysis Findings

Rummel (1988) conclusion that number of cases should be greater than the number of variables in analysis was fully taken into consideration in this research work. This applies to the principal component analyses discussed in this section, especially when the objective of principal components analysis is to generalise from the extracted factors and also apply such generalisation to the entire population. Sampling error was reduced and factor structures stabilised by ensuring that the number of cases were substantially greater than the number of variables, and this shows in the volume of responses achieved from this research and the several cases yielded for data analysis purpose which was in excess of two-hundred and fifty organisations, with one key informant per organisation. It was therefore decided that the issue of factor structures being valid did not come to play in this empirical research. The principal component analysis procedure resulted in eight factors illustrated in Table 38.

Construct / Factor Label	Eigenvalue	Percentage of Variance Explained
International Service Ventures Proactiveness ISVP: International Service Venture Proactiveness	2.700	54.01
International Service Ventures Risk-taking ISVRT: Risk Taking	1.929	48.23
International Service Ventures Innovativeness ISVI: International Service Venture Innovativeness	2.331	58.3
International Service Ventures Sensing ISVS: International Service Venture Sensing	2.644	52.89

International Service Ventures Reconfiguring ISVR: International Service Ventures Reconfiguring	4.179	59.71
***Internation*al Service Ventures International Marketing Capabilities** ISVIMC: International Service Ventures International Marketing Capabilities	13.74	57.3
***Internation*al Service Ventures International Marketing Strategy Fit** ISVIMSF: International Service Ventures International Marketing Strategy Fit	14.53	65.99
***Internation*al Service Ventures International Service Advantage** ISVISA: International Service Ventures International Service Advantage	3.285	65.71

Table 38: Summary of Principal Components Analysis Results

4.9 Construction of Additive Scales from the Extracted Factors

4.9.1 Scale Composition

So as to ensure the extracted factors form the basis for subsequent statistical analysis, additive scales were constructed using the items loading onto factors that have coefficient above 0.50. The additive scales were assigned the same labels and notations just as the ones designated to the original factors, and Table 39 and Table 40 provide the foundation for scale reliability and validation, which is subsequently discussed.

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
1. International Marketing Capabilities	**.97**							
2. International Marketing Strategy Fit	.53	**.98**						
3. Reconfiguring	.45	.26	**.89**					
4. Sensing	.43	.30	.64	**.78**				
5. Innovativeness	.34	.13*	.59	.38	**.76**			
6. Proactiveness	.47	.31	.48	.60	.44	**.78**		
7. Risk-taking	.25	.13*	.32	.38	.36	.40	**.64**	
8. International Service Advantage	.36	.30	.19	.12	.18	.27	.18	**.87**

*Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level
Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level
*** Coefficient alphas are in the diagonal

Table 39: Correlations and Coefficient Alphas of Study Variables***

	Number of Scale Items	Item to Total Correlation*																							
		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24
1. Proactiveness	5	.53	.50	.66	.61	.52																			
2. Risk-taking	4	.39	.43	.44	.43																				
3. Innovativeness	4	.54	.60	.55	.54																				
4. Sensing	5	.56	.62	.57	.59	.41																			
5. Reconfiguring	7	.68	.70	.70	.62	.72	.69	.70																	
6. International Marketing Capabilities	24	.71	.69	.72	.73	.79	.64	.66	.61	.66	.72	.73	.73	.76	.80	.73	.76	.78	.70	.80	.78	.76	.78	.76	.76
7. International Marketing Strategy Fit	22	.66	.71	.87	.64	.74	.82	.78	.82	.80	.80	.85	.86	.86	.85	.78	.84	.85	.81	.83	.79	.72	.70		
8. International Service Advantage	5	.73	.73	.71	.65	.65																			

*Pearson correlation coefficient. All correlations are significant at the 0.001 level.

Table 40: Multi-Item Scale Statistics

4.9.2 Scale Reliability

Cronbach alpha coefficient was used to assess the reliability of the scales (Cronbach, 1951), and in response to the argument supported by Pallant (2013) that reliability of a scale indicates how free it is from random error, of which the internal consistency indicator of reliability was adopted. Pallant (2013: 6) stated that reliability can be assessed by "the degree to which the items that make up the scale are all measuring the same underlying attribute", which is the extent to which the items "hang together". Cronbach alpha has been globally suggested as the most appropriate means of assessing reliability in marketing research (Malhotra, 1999). Nunnaly (1978) and Bagozzi & Yi (1988) threshold level of acceptable reliability Cronbach alpha coefficient of 0.70 or greater, was followed in this study. It was observed that the risk-taking coefficient was 0.64, due to the sensitivity of the number of items in the scale, which was just 4 items. Pallant (2013: 101) wrote that "with short scales with fewer than ten items, it is common to find quite low Cronbach values (e.g. .5)" and so admonished to report the mean-item correlation for the items. Briggs, Cheek & Buss (1980) recommendation of .2 to .4 as optimal range for the inter-item correlation was adopted for risk-taking reliability assessment.

The scales met the reliability requirements as they exhibited Cronbach alpha coefficients ranging from 0.76 to 0.97 (Table 39) and risk-taking mean-item correlation from 0.39 to 0.43 (Table 40). Therefore, it can be concluded that all scales in the study display adequate levels of internal consistency.

4.9.3 Validation of Scale Indices

The correlation matrix in Table 39 shows that there was no case where the correlation between each of these variables and any other in this study as high as its Cronbach alpha score, providing some evidence of discriminant validity (Pallant, 2013). Considering this being a weak approach in assessing construct discrimination, internal validity of the index operationalisation, item-to-total correlations were considered in each scale (Katsikeas & Leonidou, 1996). Table 40 demonstrates the item-total correlations which shows that all coefficients are high, and in the expected direction, and significant at the 0.001 level (Pallant, 2013:140). This further suggest validity since all the items in each case contribute substantially to the concept that additive scale has been designed to measure.

Based on the fact that all scales were found to be both reliable and valid, it was appropriate that composite measures or indices be developed by calculating the composite mean score of each and every of the factor unveiled. The composite measures were then used as new variables in subsequent statistical analysis.

4.10 Multiple Linear Regression Results and Discussion

As explained in the previous section, eight factors were extracted from the principal components analyses. A multivariate statistical approach to data analysis was considered appropriate to investigate the relationships among the study variables. This section examines the associations between a number of variables, these are: International service ventures proactiveness; international service ventures risk-taking; international service ventures innovativeness; international service ventures sensing capabilities; international service ventures reconfiguring capabilities; international service ventures international marketing capabilities; international service ventures international marketing strategy fit; international service ventures service advantage. Starting with correlational techniques to describe the strength and direction of the relationship between two variables per time to the standard multiple regression which has been found to be the most suitable and ideal statistical technique to predict a single dependent continuous variable from a group of independent variables. Chapter Three touched on the theoretical and statistical properties underlying correlation and multiple standard regression which strive to determine the relationship between a single dependent variable and a number of independent variables (Pallant, 2013). Correlation versus causality was taken into consideration, while correlation provides indication of a relationship between two variables, it does not indicate one variables causes the other and hence, possibility of a third variable, or confounding variable comes into the equation with a major influence. Partial correlation does help to statistically control these confounding variables, and hence detox the situation with the aim of providing a clearer indication of the relationship between the two variables of interest. This study however extended beyond two variables, and as such lean on the standard multiple regression analysis so as to explain how much variance in a dependent variable, and would also show how much unique variance in the dependent variable of each of the independent variables analysed. This has enabled the researcher to investigate and narrate the nature and significance of the series of relationship between international entrepreneurial proclivity, its dimensions and international service venture competitive advantage.

4.10.1 Multicollinearity Diagnosis

Pallant (2013: 157) stated that multicollinearity exists when there is high correlation (r=.9 and above) among independent variables. Table 39 shows the correlation matrix of the independent variables included in this research. Despite the absence of any apparent concerns from the assessment of the matrix, the researcher went ahead to perform further diagnosis with greater reliability.

Pallant (2013) recognised variance inflation factor (VIF) scores and Tolerance values of the independent variables as the common techniques to assess multicollinearity. Tolerance seen as indicator of how much of the variability of specified independent is not explained by the other independent variables in the model calculated by the formula 1-R squared for each variable. The VIF score is the inverse of tolerance, an indicator of the impact that the independent variables have on the variance of the regression coefficient attributable to that variable. The common rule of thumb for determining the presence of multicollinearity is tolerance value of less than .10 or a VIF value of above 10. Since, multiple regression does not like multicollinearity as they do not contribute to good regression model, the likelihood of collinearity among the independent variables was assessed by considering the tolerance and VIF scores.

4.10.2 Influences of Proactiveness, Risk-taking and Innovativeness on International Service Ventures Sensing Capabilities

Table 41 shows the specified relationships of entrepreneurial proclivity proactiveness, risk-taking and innovativeness with international service ventures sensing capabilities.

Parameter	Partial Regression Coefficient (B)	Standard error	Standardised regression coefficient (Beta)	t-statistics
Intercept	5.644	2.127	-	2.653
Proactiveness	0.441	0.051	.488	8.581
Risk-Taking	0.253	0.095	.145	2.656
Innovativeness	0.129	0.061	.117	2.092

F-statistic = 54.453
Significance of F = 0.000
R^2= 0.391
Adjusted R2 = 0.384
*p<0.01

Table 41: Regression Results – International Service Ventures Sensing Capabilities (Dependent Variable), Proactiveness, Risk-taking and Innovativeness

The regression equation pertaining to the impact of proactiveness, risk-taking and innovativeness on international service ventures sensing capabilities, in unstandardised form, was estimated and the B indices shown in Table 41. Interpretation of the regression equation was made with caution because the magnitude of the partial regression coefficients (B) indices are unstandardised. Pallant (2013: 166) stated that "to compare different variables, it is important that you look at the standardised coefficients, not the unstandardised one" or Beta weights which means that these values for each of the different variables have been converted to the same scale (took into consideration the standard deviation of the regression coefficients) so as to be able to compare them. The t-statistics and its associated level of significance aided the interpretation of the regression analysis results.

The goodness-of-fit of the regression equation assessment was done on these conditions. Firstly, the coefficient of multiple determination (R^2) was acceptable at 0.391 which shows how much of the variance in the dependent variable (international service ventures sensing capabilities) is explained by the model (including variables of Total proactiveness, Total risk-taking and Total Innovativeness). This implies 39.1 percent of the variance in international service venture sensing processes was explained by this model. Secondly, adjusted R2 value was 0.384, which again ensured adequate levels of goodness-of-fit (Pallant, 2013). According to Pallant (2013), adjusted R^2 corrects any optimistic overestimation of true value of population to provide a better estimate of the true population value, and most applicable in situation with small sample which does not apply to this research work. Finally, the explanatory power of the regression equation was confirmed by the use of a F-test (comparing ratio of explained to unexplained variance in the regression model) with F-statistics at 54.453 found to be highly significant (p=0.000). It was thus claimed that the regression equation presented in Table 41 has significant explanatory power (Pallant, 2013; Neter et al., 1989).

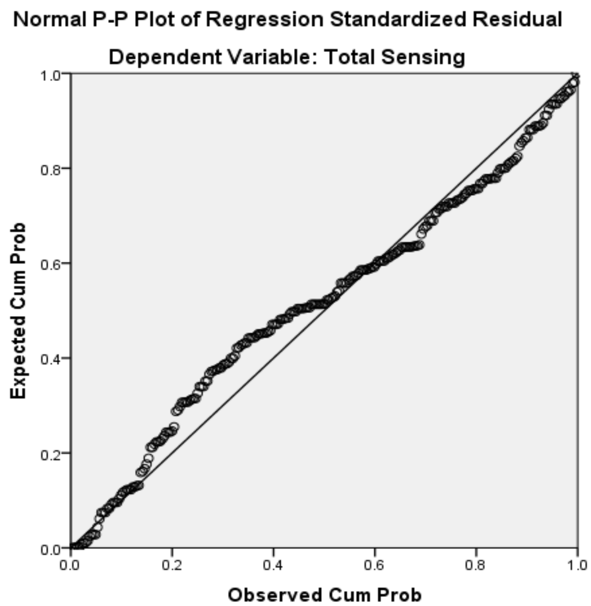

Figure 18: Normal P-P Plot of Regression Standardized Residual Dependent Variable: Total Sensing

4.10.2.1 International Service Ventures Sensing and International Service Ventures Proactiveness

The research hypothesis concerned with the relationship between international service ventures sensing capabilities and international service ventures proactiveness was stated as follows:

H1a: Proactiveness in international venturing is related positively to frequent engagement in sensing processes

The regression result in Table 41 indicate that proactiveness have a strong positive effect on international service venture sensing processes (*beta=0.488, t=8.581*, *p<0.01*) and Sig. value of 0.000 (less than .05). This shows proactiveness makes the strongest unique and significantly unique contribution to explaining the dependent variable (international service ventures sensing processes), when the variance explained by all other variables in the model is controlled for (Pallant, 2013). Therefore, it can be suggested that H1a is confirmed.

4.10.2.2 International Service Ventures Sensing and Risk-taking

The specific hypothesis referring to the relationship between risk-taking and international service ventures sensing processes reads as follows:

H1b: Risk-taking in international venturing is related positively to frequent engagement in sensing processes

A detailed review of Table 41 reveals that risk-taking followed proactiveness with substantive positive effect on international service venture sensing processes (*beta=0.145, t=2.656*, *p<0.01)* and Sig. value of 0.008 (less than .05). This shows risk-taking follow proactiveness in its unique and significant contribution to explaining the dependent variable. Therefore, it can be suggested that H1b is confirmed.

4.10.2.3 International Service Ventures Sensing and Innovativeness

The specific hypothesis referring to the relationship between innovativeness and international service ventures sensing processes reads as follows:

H1c: Innovation in international venturing is related positively to frequent engagement in sensing processes

A detailed review of Table 41 reveals that innovativeness has the lowest positive effect on international service venture sensing processes (*beta=0.117, t=2.092*, *p<0.01)* and Sig. value of 0.037 (though less than .05). This shows innovation has the lowest unique and significant contribution to explaining the dependent variable. Therefore, it can be suggested that H1c is partially confirmed.

4.10.2.4 Detection of Multicollinearity

Multicollinearity diagnostic tests were conducted to examine likelihood of collinearity among the independent variables might have affected the hypothesis tests. Table 42 illustrates the VIF scores and tolerance values for international service ventures proactiveness, risk-taking and innovativeness constructs. Table 42 shows Proactiveness had the highest VIF and lowest tolerance value (VIF=1.349; tolerance=0.741). Since all the independent variables displayed a VIF score below 10 and tolerance value above 0.10, it might be suggested that multicollinearity does not substantially influence these regression results (Myers, 1990).

Independent Variable	VIF Score	Tolerance Value
Proactiveness	1.349	0.741
Risk-Taking	1.248	0.801
Innovativeness	1.307	0.765

Table 42: Detection of Multicollinearity (Sensing): Variance Inflation Factor (VIF) Scores and Tolerance Values of Independent Variables

4.10.2.5 Discussion of H1a, H1b and H1c

Consistent with H1a and H1b, international entrepreneurial proclivity (proactiveness and risk-taking) were found to be positively associated with international service venture sensing capabilities and processes. This is as expected that international service firms aiming at anticipating future demands and opportunities, and willing to adopt risk-taking attitude are more likely to dedicate energy to searching and exploring the foreign market of interest. On the other hand, innovativeness had the least contribution and significance, hence partly supported.

4.10.3 Influences of Proactiveness, Risk-taking and Innovativeness on International Service Ventures Reconfiguring Processes

The hypothesised relationship pertaining to associations of international service ventures reconfiguring processes with proactiveness, risk-taking and innovation constructs are presented in Table 43. The multiple regression equation for these variables was estimated in unstandardised form, and the B indices shown in Table 43. The coefficient of determination (R^2) was considered acceptable, with a value of 0.411. The F-statistic was 59.007, found to be highly significant (p=0.000). Thus, the regression equation depicted in Table 43 has substantial explanatory power (Pallant, 2013). The hypothesised associations of international service venture proactiveness, risk-taking and innovativeness with international service ventures reconfiguring processes are presented below:

Parameter	Partial Regression Coefficient (B)	Standard error	Standardised regression coefficient (Beta)	t-statistics
Intercept	**3.601**	3.113	-	1.157
Proactiveness	0.352	0.075	.262	4.684
Risk-Taking	0.146	0.140	.056	1.046
Innovativeness	0.739	0.090	**.452**	8.212

F-statistic = 59.007
Significance of F = 0.000
R^2= 0.411
Adjusted R^2 = 0.404
*p<0.01

Table 43: Regression Results – International Service Ventures Reconfiguring Capabilities (Dependent Variable), Proactiveness, Risk-taking and Innovativeness

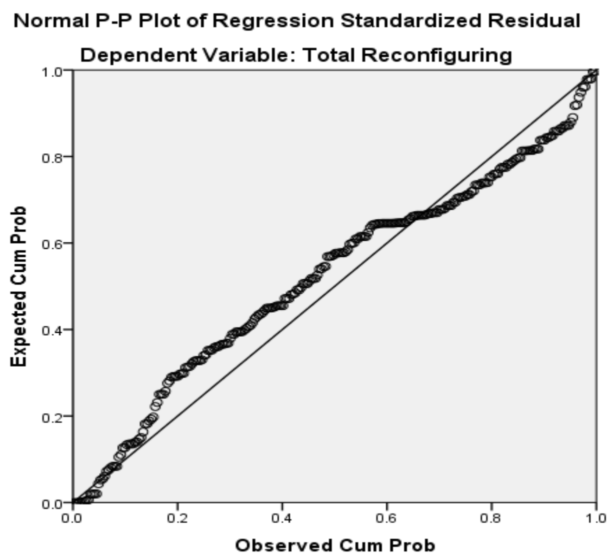

Figure 19: Normal P-P Plot of Regression Standardized Residual Dependent Variable: Total Reconfiguring

4.10.3.1 International Service Ventures Reconfiguring and International Service Ventures Proactiveness

The research hypothesis concerned with the relationship between international service ventures reconfiguring capabilities and international service ventures proactiveness was stated as follows:

H2a: Proactiveness in international venturing is related positively to frequent engagement in reconfiguring processes

The multiple regression result in Table 43Table 41 indicate that proactiveness have a positive relationship on international service venture reconfiguring processes (beta=0.262, t=4.684, p<0.01) and Sig. value of 0.000 (less than .05). This shows proactiveness does have the second-unique contribution but statistically significant on reconfiguring processes. Therefore, it can be suggested that H2a though partly supported does not have significant influence on reconfiguring.

4.10.3.2 International Service Ventures Reconfiguring and International Service Ventures Risk-taking

The research hypothesis concerned with the relationship between international service ventures reconfiguring processes and international service ventures risk-taking was stated as follows:

H2b: Risk-taking in international venturing is related positively to frequent engagement in reconfiguring processes

The regression result in Table 43 indicate that risk-taking had no significant association nor contributory effect on international service venture reconfiguring processes (*beta=0.056, t=1.046*, *p<0.01*) and Sig. value of 0.296 (much higher than minimum expected .05). This shows risk-taking does not make significant unique contribution to the prediction. Pallant (2013: 167) stated "if Sig. value is greater than 0.05, you can conclude that variable is not making a significant unique contribution"

Therefore, it can be suggested that H2b was not supported in the context of this study.

4.10.3.3 International Service Ventures Reconfiguring and Innovativeness

The specific hypothesis referring to the relationship between innovativeness and international service ventures reconfiguring processes reads as follows:

H2c: Innovation in international venturing is related positively to frequent engagement in reconfiguring processes

A detailed review of Table 43 reveals that innovativeness has the strongest unique contribution on international service venture reconfiguring processes (*beta=0.452, t=8.2122*, *p<0.01)* and Sig. value of 0.000 (though less than .05). This shows innovation has the highest unique and significant contribution to explaining the dependent variable. Based upon these results, H2c is confirmed and supported.

4.10.3.4 Assessment of Multicollinearity

Multicollinearity diagnostic tests was conducted to examine likelihood of collinearity among the independent variables. Table 44 illustrates the VIF scores and tolerance values for international service ventures proactiveness, risk-taking and innovativeness constructs. After inspection, Table 44 shows he highest VIF and lowest tolerance value was found to be proactiveness (VIF=1.349; tolerance=0.741). Since all the independent variables displayed a VIF score below 10 and tolerance value above 0.10, it was suggested that multicollinearity does not substantially affect the results.

Independent Variable	VIF Score	Tolerance Value
Proactiveness	1.349	0.741
Risk-Taking	1.248	0.801
Innovativeness	1.307	0.765

Table 44: Detection of Multicollinearity (Reconfiguring): Variance Inflation Factor (VIF) Scores and Tolerance Values of Independent Variables

4.10.3.5 Discussion of H2a, H2b and H2c

Contrary to H2a and H2b, proactiveness had a partial relationship with reconfiguring process while risk-taking have no significant influence on reconfiguring. Innovativeness on the other hand exhibited strong correlation with reconfiguring. Likely explanation for these results may not be farfetched as innovativeness plays a more crucial role by providing supporting structures for firms to adjust their strategies, implement new methods, and seek innovative offerings to best service their international markets among others. The cost associated with reconfiguring could be the reason why firms tend to take less risk and less proactive in changing their existing resources and capabilities configuration.

4.10.4 Influence of Sensing on International Service Ventures Reconfiguring Processes

The hypothesised relationship pertaining to associations of international service ventures reconfiguring processes with sensing construct is presented in Table 45. The multiple regression equation for these variables was estimated in unstandardised form, and the B indices shown in Table 45. The coefficient of determination (R^2) was considered acceptable, with a value of 0.414. The F-statistic was 180.674, found to be highly significant (p=0.000). Thus, the regression equation depicted in Table 45 has substantial explanatory power (Pallant, 2013). The hypothesised associations of international service venture sensing with international service ventures reconfiguring processes are presented below:

4.10.4.1 International Service Ventures Reconfiguring and International Service Ventures Sensing

The research hypothesis concerned with the relationship between international service ventures reconfiguring and international service ventures sensing was stated as follows:

H3: Frequent engagement in sensing processes is related positively to frequent involvement in reconfiguring processes

The multiple regression result in Table 45Table 41 shows that sensing processes alone explains 41.4 percent of the variance in the dependent variable (reconfiguring process). Table 45 indicate that sensing has a positive relationship on international service venture reconfiguring processes (beta=0.643, t=13.442, p<0.01) and Sig. value of 0.000 (less than .05). Based upon these results, H3 is confirmed and supported.

Parameter	Partial Regression Coefficient (B)	Standard error	Standardised regression coefficient (Beta)	t-statistics
Intercept	11.285	1.985	-	5.686
Sensing	0.957	0.071	0.643	13.442

F-statistic = 180.674
Significance of F = 0.000
R^2= 0.414
Adjusted R^2 = 0.411
*p<0.01

Table 45: Regression Results – International Service Ventures Reconfiguring Capabilities (Dependent Variable), Sensing

4.10.4.2 Assessment of Multicollinearity

Multicollinearity diagnostic tests was conducted to examine likelihood of collinearity among the independent variables. Table 46 illustrates the VIF scores and tolerance values for international service ventures proactiveness, risk-taking and innovativeness constructs. After inspection, Table 46 shows he highest VIF and lowest tolerance value was found to be proactiveness (VIF=1.000; tolerance=1.000). Since all the independent variables displayed a VIF score below 10 and tolerance value above 0.10, it was suggested that multicollinearity does not substantially affect the results.

Independent Variable	VIF Score	Tolerance Value
Sensing	1.000	1.000

Table 46: Detection of Multicollinearity (Reconfiguring & Sensing): Variance Inflation Factor (VIF) Scores and Tolerance Values of Independent Variables

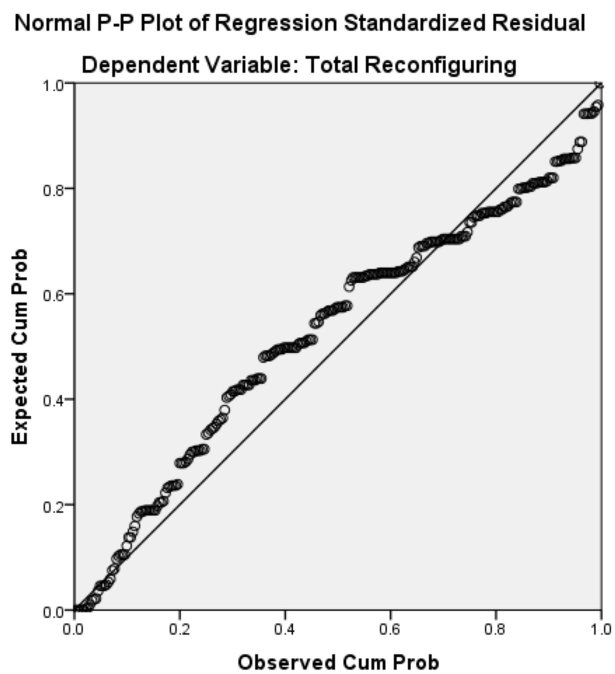

Figure 20: Normal P-P Plot of Regression Standardized Residual Dependent Variable: Total Reconfiguring to Sensing

4.10.4.3 Discussion of Test for H3

As stated in H_3, frequent engagement in sensing processes was found to be positively associated with reconfiguring processes. This research finding is consistent with the dynamics capabilities and marketing practice position that sensing generates learning with respect to different characteristics of the external environment and associated opportunities and challenges (Teece, 2009). Wilden & Gudergan (2015) corroborated this stating that the more frequently entrepreneurial firm is involved in sensing, the more the firm is stimulated to react by exploring and identifying new capability configuration. Thus, this study aligns with previous findings in the field in suggesting that frequent engagement in sensing processes leads to frequent involvement in reconfiguring processes.

Thus, this study aligns with previous findings in the field in suggesting that frequent sensing and reconfiguring processes contributes significantly towards improving the international marketing capabilities.

4.10.5 Influences of Sensing and Reconfiguring on International Marketing Capabilities

The hypothesised relationship pertaining to associations of international marketing capabilities with sensing and reconfiguring constructs are presented in Table 47. The multiple regression equation for these variables was estimated in unstandardised form, and the B indices shown in Table 47. The coefficient of determination (R^2) was considered acceptable, with a value of 0.234. The F-statistic was 38.923, found to be highly significant (p=0.000). Thus, the regression equation depicted in Table 47 has substantial explanatory power (Pallant, 2013). The hypothesised associations of sensing and reconfiguring with international marketing capabilities are presented below:

Parameter	Partial Regression Coefficient (B)	Standard error	Standardised regression coefficient (Beta)	t-statistics
Intercept	88.115	7.962	-	11.067
Sensing	1.144	0.351	0.233	3.255
Reconfiguring	0.989	0.236	0.300	4.185

F-statistic = 38.923
Significance of F = 0.000
R^2= 0.234
Adjusted R^2 = 0.228
*p<0.01

Table 47: Regression Results – International Service Ventures International Marketing Capabilities (Dependent Variable), Sensing and Recovering

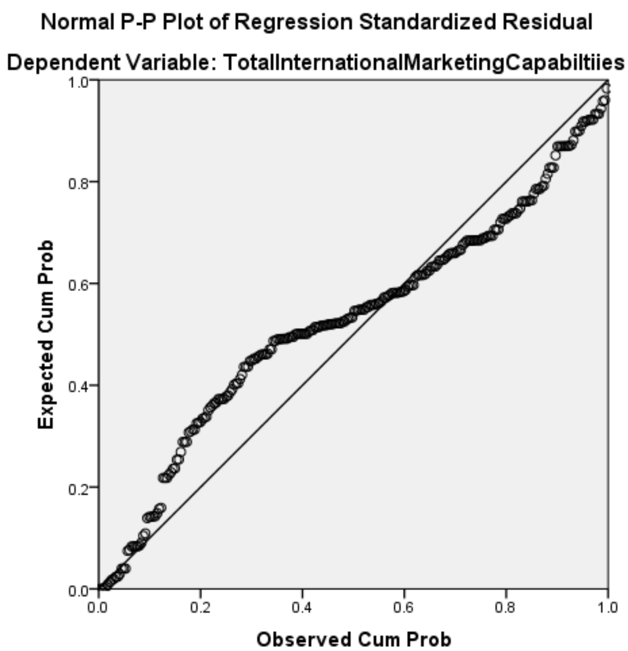

Figure 21: Normal P-P Plot of Regression Standardized Residual Dependent Variable: Total

International Marketing Capabilities to Sensing and Reconfiguring

4.10.5.1 International Marketing Capabilities and International Service Ventures Sensing

The research hypothesis concerned with the relationship between international marketing capabilities and international service ventures sensing was stated as follows:

H4: Frequent sensing relates positively to international marketing capabilities

A detailed review of Table 47 reveals that sensing has a strong unique contribution on international marketing capabilities (*beta=0.233, t=3.255*, *p<0.01)* and Sig. value of 0.001 (less than .05). This shows international service venture sensing capabilities have unique contribution to explaining the dependent variable (international marketing capabilities). Based upon these results, H4 is confirmed and supported.

4.10.5.2 International Marketing Capabilities and International Service Ventures Reconfiguring

The research hypothesis concerned with the relationship between international marketing capabilities and international service ventures reconfiguring was stated as follows:

H5: Frequent reconfiguring relates positively to international marketing capabilities

The regression result in Table 47 shows that reconfiguring has the strongest unique contribution on international marketing capabilities (*beta=0.300, t=4.185*, *p<0.01)* and Sig. value of 0.000 (less than .05). This shows international service venture reconfiguring capabilities have the highest unique and significant contribution to explaining the dependent variable (international marketing capabilities). Based upon these results, H5 is confirmed and supported.

4.10.5.3 Assessment of Multicollinearity

Multicollinearity diagnostic tests was conducted to examine likelihood of collinearity among the independent variables. Table 48 illustrates the VIF scores and tolerance values for sensing and reconfiguring dynamic capabilities constructs. After inspection, Table 48 shows the two independent variables have the same VIF and tolerance value (VIF=1.706; tolerance=0.586). Since all the independent variables displayed a VIF score below 10 and tolerance value above 0.10, it was suggested that multicollinearity does not substantially affect the results.

Independent Variable	VIF Score	Tolerance Value
Sensing	1.706	0.586
Reconfiguring	1.706	0.586

Table 48: Detection of Multicollinearity (Sensing & Reconfiguring): Variance Inflation Factor (VIF) Scores and Tolerance Values of Independent Variables

4.10.5.4 Discussion of H4 and H5

H5, frequent reconfiguring shows the strongest unique contribution and relationship with international marketing capabilities while H4, shows a strong relationship between sensing and international marketing capabilities. Wilden & Gudergan (2015) noted that firms that frequently utilize dynamic capabilities to reconfigure their substantive capabilities do assign priority to the development of their marketing capabilities.

4.10.6 Influences of Marketing Capabilities on International Marketing Strategy Fit

The hypothesised relationship pertaining to associations of international marketing strategy fit with international marketing capabilities constructs is presented in Table 49. The multiple regression equation for these variables was estimated in unstandardised form, and the B indices shown in Table 49. The coefficient of determination (R^2) was considered acceptable, with a value of 0.275. The F-statistic was 97.292, found to be highly significant (p=0.000). Thus, the regression equation depicted in Table 49 has substantial explanatory power (Pallant, 2013). The hypothesised associations of international marketing capabilities with international marketing strategy fit is presented below:

Parameter	Partial Regression Coefficient (B)	Standard error	Standardised regression coefficient (Beta)	t-statistics
Intercept	10.320	10.653	-	0.969
International Marketing Capabilities	0.663	0.067	0.525	9.864

F-statistic = 97.292
Significance of F = 0.000
R^2= 0.275
Adjusted R^2 = 0.273
*p<0.01

Table 49: Regression Results –International Marketing Strategy Fit (Dependent Variable) and International Marketing Capabilities

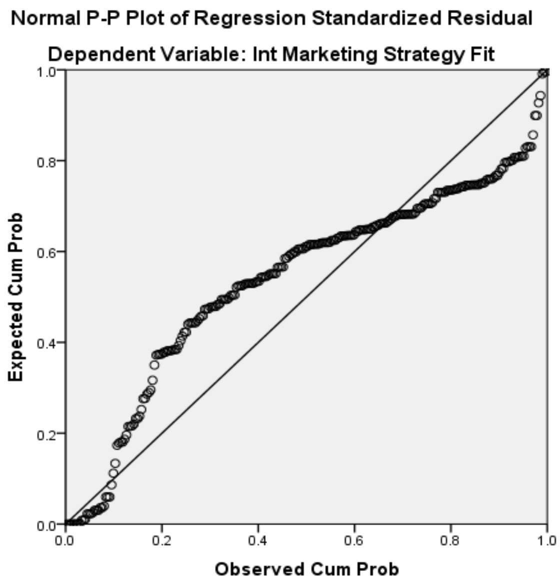

Figure 22: Normal P-P Plot of Regression Standardized Residual Dependent Variable: Total International Marketing Capabilities to International Marketing Strategy Fit

4.10.6.1 International Marketing Strategy Fit and International Marketing Capabilities

The research hypothesis concerned with the relationship between international marketing strategy fit and international marketing capabilities was stated as follows:

H6: International marketing capabilities influence positively international marketing strategy fit

A detailed review of Table 49 reveals that international marketing capabilities has a strong unique contribution on international marketing strategy fit (*beta=0.525, t=9.864*, *p<0.01)* and Sig. value of 0.000 (less than .05). This shows international marketing capabilities have unique contribution to explaining the dependent variable (international marketing strategy fit). Based upon these results, H6 is confirmed and supported.

4.10.6.2 Assessment of Multicollinearity for International Marketing Capability

Since the total international marketing capabilities is the only independent variable being tested, there is no possibility of multicollinearity.

4.10.6.3 Discussion of H6

H6, international marketing capabilities with R^2 explained 27.5 percent of the variance in international marketing strategy fit. This finding has shown that international firms that possesses superior international marketing capabilities when compared to their direct competitors, shows effective international marketing strategies that better match the environment and market conditions they face in unique foreign markets.

4.10.7 Influences of Marketing Strategy Fit on International Service Advantage

The hypothesised relationship pertaining to associations of international marketing strategy fit with international marketing capabilities constructs is presented in Table 49. The multiple regression equation for these variables was estimated in unstandardised form, and the B indices shown in Table 49. The coefficient of determination (R^2) was considered acceptable, with a value of 0.275. The F-statistic was 97.292, found to be highly significant ($p=0.000$). Thus, the regression equation depicted in Table 49 has substantial explanatory power (Pallant, 2013). The hypothesised associations of international marketing capabilities with international marketing strategy fit is presented below:

Parameter	Partial Regression Coefficient (B)	Standard error	Standardised regression coefficient (Beta)	t-statistics
Intercept	23.083	0.973	-	23.729
International Marketing Strategy Fit	0.042	0.008	0.301	5.058

F-statistic = 25.582
Significance of F = 0.000
R^2= 0.091
Adjusted R^2 = 0.087
*p<0.01

Table 50: Regression Results –International Marketing Strategy Fit (Dependent Variable) and International Service Advantage

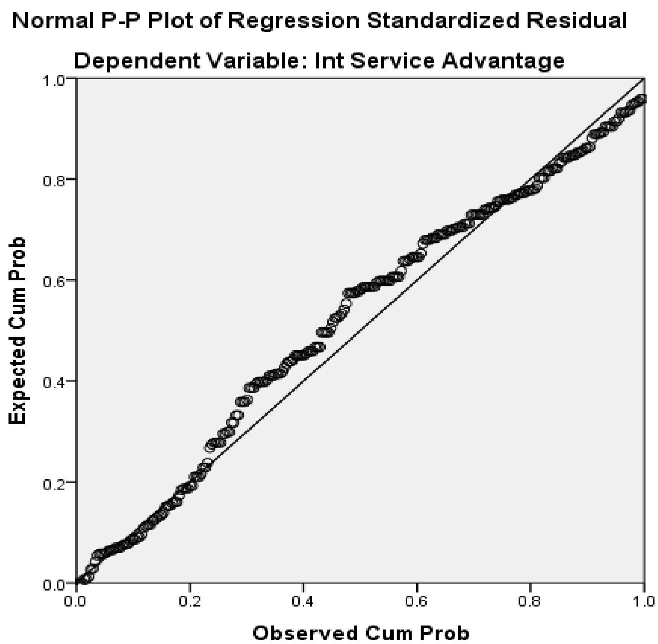

Figure 23: Normal P-P Plot of Regression Standardized Residual Dependent Variable: Total International Marketing Strategy Fit and International Service Advantage

4.10.7.1 International Service Advantage and International Marketing Strategy Fit

The research hypothesis concerned with the relationship between international service advantage and international marketing strategy fit was stated as follows:

H7: International marketing strategy fit influences positively international service advantage

A detailed review of Table 50 reveals that international marketing strategy fit has a strong unique contribution on international service advantage (*beta=0.301, t=5.058*, *p<0.01)* and Sig. value of 0.000 (less than .05). This shows international marketing strategy fit have unique contribution to explaining the dependent variable (international marketing capabilities). Based upon these results, H7 is confirmed and supported.

4.10.7.2 Discussion of H7

Full support was found for H6, positing that there is a positive relationship between international marketing strategy fit and international service advantage. This result is consistent with Kaleka (2011) recognising service advantage as element of overall competitive advantage. Considering the challenges international firms faces in gaining positional advantage in foreign markets, international marketing strategy fit remains the critical leverage for significant competitive advantage to attain desired performance (Katsikeas et al., 2006). Similar to other studies that adopted contingency theory perspective, the finding shows that the higher the extent of marketing strategy fit by an international service venture, the stronger the resulting competitive advantage.

4.11 Path Analysis

As stated, all the hypotheses were tested using multiple linear regression. This section delves into more sophisticated statistical approach based on path analysis, to test for the indirect as well as direct effects of the study variables on dynamic capabilities (sensing and reconfiguring) and international service ventures service advantage. Figure 24 presents a simple path analysis depicting the indirect effects of international service ventures proactiveness, risk-taking, innovativeness, sensing, reconfiguring. International marketing capabilities, international marketing strategy fit on international service advantage. This model is based upon the standardised regression coefficients shown in Table 51.

Independents	Dependents	Beta	Sig.	t-statistics
Proactiveness	Sensing	0.488	0.000	8.581**
Proactiveness	Reconfiguring	0.262	0.000	4.684**
Risk-taking	Sensing	0.145	0.008	2.656**
Risk-taking	Reconfiguring	0.056	0.296	1.046
Innovation	Sensing	0.117	0.037	2.092
Innovation	Reconfiguring	0.452	0.000	8.212**
Sensing	Reconfiguring	0.643	0.000	13.442**
Sensing	International marketing capabilities	0.233	0.001	3.255**
Reconfiguring	International marketing capabilities	0.300	0.000	4.185**
International marketing capabilities	International marketing strategy fit	0.525	0.000	9.864**

International marketing strategy fit	International service advantage	0.301	0.000	5.058**

**p<.01; *p<.05

Table 51: Standardised Path Coefficients and t-values for the Study Model

Collectively, the hypotheses developed for testing provide the basic model in Figure 24. The framework of relationships hypothesised was tested by path analysis, using the decomposition and interpretation of linear relationships among a set of independent variables, by assuming that a weak causal ordering can be postulated.

Based on the regression results for the hypothesised relationships among the survey constructs, two hypothesised associations were excluded from the path model. More specifically, the relationship between risk-taking and reconfiguring, and the association between innovation and sensing were eliminated. This model in the testable form is presented in Figure 24, showing the path coefficients (i.e., the beta coefficients from the individual regression models in Table 51). All coefficients are significant at a reasonable level, which is consistent with the hypothesised relationships developed in Chapter Three.

4.12 Summary of the Hypotheses Tests Results

This chapter covers the descriptives of the measures in details, identified a number of variables with common characteristics among the measures of international entrepreneurial proclivity; international dynamic capabilities; international marketing capabilities; international marketing strategy fit; and, international service advantage. It was found that all the factors satisfied the statistical criteria associated with their scale reliability and validity. The result of correlations and regression analyses where associations among the study variables and their impacts on firms' dynamic capabilities were documented and results presented in the light of pertinent literature.

The hypotheses that have been developed among the study constructs along with their results are presented in

Table 52 below. The findings show that eight hypotheses were strongly supported (strength and significance), one partly supported and two not supported (strength and significance).

Chapter Five represents the cyclic part of this mixed methods action researching covering the planning, acting, evaluation and monitoring phases of the mixed methods action research framework and also presents the learning and reflection of an action researcher (Coghlan, 2011) in practice, and going through cycle of action research through in a focus group bubbling out insights from the rich data analysis already gathered and mixed with observations to improve my practice. Chapter Six will outline the conclusions, implication of the research, limitations and future research opportunities. Finally, Chapter Seven will end with the researcher personal reflection from a first-person, second and third-level of inquiry.

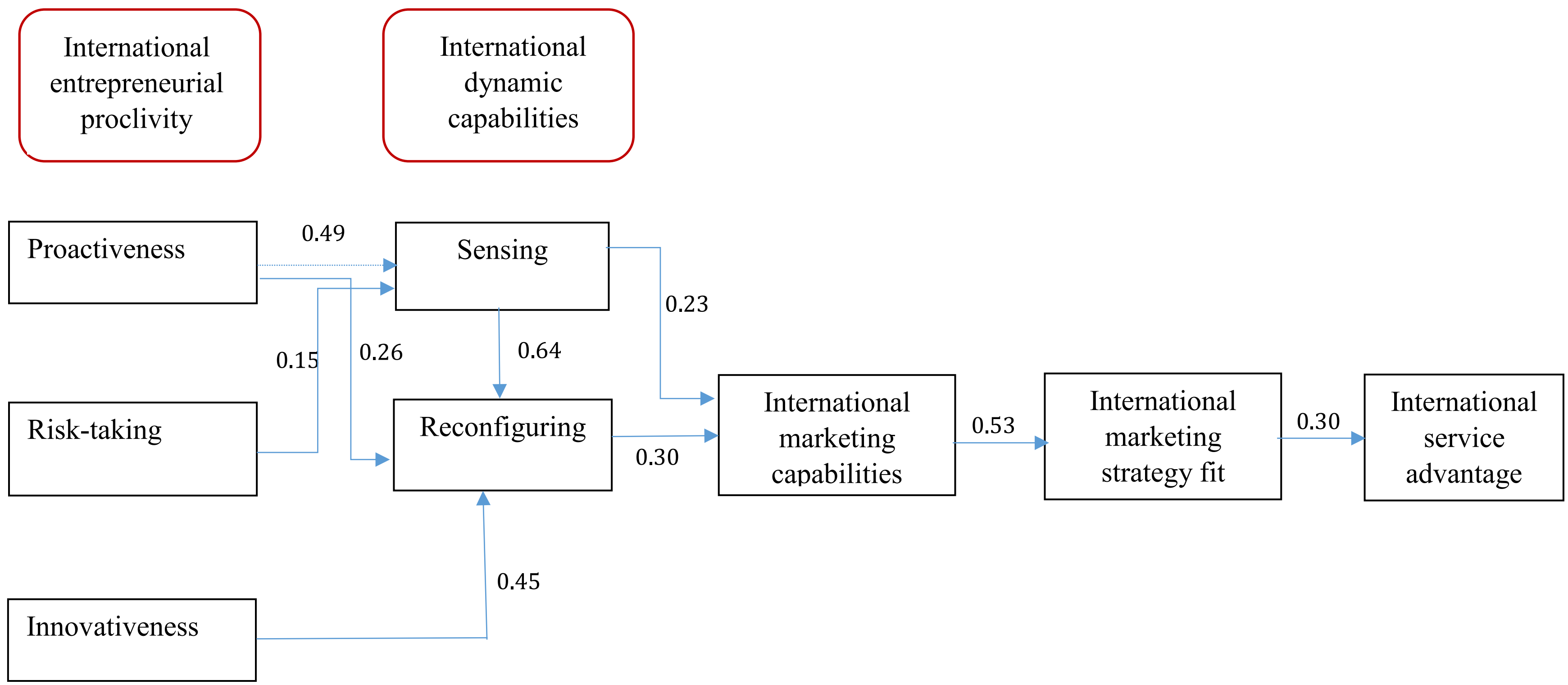

Figure 24: A Simple Path Model

H1a: Proactiveness in international venturing is related positively to frequent engagement in sensing processes	Supported
H1b: Proactiveness in international venturing is related positively to frequent engagement in reconfiguring process	Partly Supported
H2a: Risk-taking in international venturing is related positively to frequent engagement in sensing processes	Supported
H2b: Risk-taking in international venturing is related positively to frequent engagement in reconfiguring process	Not supported
H3a: Innovation in international venturing is related positively to frequent engagement in sensing processes	Not supported
H3b: Innovation in international venturing is related positively to frequent engagement in reconfiguring process	Supported
H4: Frequent engagement in sensing processes is related positively to frequent involvement in reconfiguring processes	Supported
H5: Frequent sensing relates positively to international marketing capabilities	Supported
H6: Frequent reconfiguring relates positively to international marketing capabilities	Supported
H7: International marketing capabilities influence positively international marketing strategy fit	Supported
H8: International marketing strategy fit influences positively international service advantage	Supported

Table 52: Summary of Research Hypotheses

CHAPTER 5

Action Research Project

5.0 Introduction to Action Research Project

This is the beginning of the second phase of this study transitioning into the core action research project which started by synthesising the major findings and insight from the quantitative inquiry conducted in the previous chapters. This mixed methods action research did not follow the traditional approach but borrowed a philosophical lens with opportunity for continuum between positivist and constructivist approaches guided by proven mixed methods framework (Ivankova, 2015). Reason & Bradbury (2008) noted there are wide ranges of methodologies in the action research "family", just as Cassel & Johnson (2006) concluded on five different approaches ranging from experimental, inductive, participatory action research, participatory research, and deconstructive action research practices. There have been different perspectives on the approaches of action research especially on the ontology and epistemology, and how these firmly guides our sensemaking process. This is a classical action research (Coghlan & Brannick, 2010: 44) founded on objectivist ontology and subjectivist epistemology, particular in context-to-theory, epistemic in reflexivity, grounded in mixed methods action research and as the researcher, I was close to the data and hence adopted the first-person style of writing in some of the narratives. This was a collaborative cycles of action research to solve a workplace-based problem and generate new knowledge.

Action research produces new knowledge rooted in enquiries conducted within specific and often practical contexts (Koshy, 2005). We learn through action that leads to personal or professional development. Action research involves spiral of self-reflective spirals that encompasses: constructing shared vision for sensemaking and sensegiving process (Gioia & Chittipeddi, 1992), then planning a change, followed by taking action (acting and observing the process and consequences of the change), then evaluation of action (reflecting on the processes and the consequences) and then re-planning, then acting, observing, reflecting, and the cycle continues as shown in Figure 25. The action research cycle was however subject to real-life experience which is a more fluid, open and responsive process that does not necessary follow a rigid pattern, but stages overlap bearing in mind that learning and construction of reality as continuously evolving and emerging process.

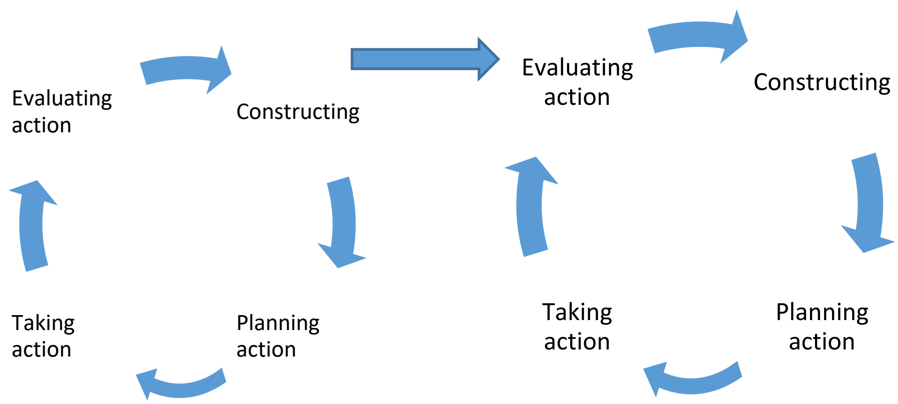

Figure 25: Action Research Cycles

There is no one-size fit all, hence Koshy (2005) advised action researchers to adopt the models that suit their purpose most or adapt to fit their purpose.

5.1 The Core Action Research & Thesis Writing Process

This section elucidates on the action research component where the researcher was concurrently involved in action, research, and participation of organisational members in focus groups (Greenwood & Levin, 2007). Figure 26 shows Zuber-Skerritt & Perry (2002) that two action research projects runs simultaneously, of which the core action research project is a collaborative endeavour with cycles of action and reflection enacted concurrently and the thesis action research project is the writing up of the thesis – inquiry in action into how the core research was designed, implemented and evaluated. Since action is the only purposeful way to create and test new knowledge, the action in this chapter is rooted in the application of emergent insight from the quantitative aspect of the study and the qualitative participatory and collective focus group actions, evaluation and monitoring to resolve a workplace-based problem. Based on the findings in the previous chapter and the depth of insight unveiled, the million-dollar question for the researcher as a scholar practitioner and action researcher was "How do I improve my practice?" (McNiff, Lomax & Whitehead, 1996). What role would the findings and the conceptual model play in solving my workplace-based problem? This is in-line with Koshy (2005: 2) definition of "action research as an enquiry undertaken with rigour and understanding so as to constantly refine practice; the emerging evidence-based outcomes will then contribute to the researching practitioner's continuing professional development". The intent is to solve workplace issue that leads to change-related outcome (Greenwood & Levin, 2009) based on action through collaboration going through AR cycles with epistemic reflexivity (Susman & Evered, 1978) to achieve organisational transformation.

The core research presented in this chapter was a collaborative project where "cycles of action and reflection were enacted in multiple successive and concurrent cycles in the first, and second person practice" (Coghlan & Brannick, 2010: 142) and the corresponding thesis writing and reflection process that took place during the core action research project presented as contribution to theory and practice.

This was a classical insider action-research founded on the positivist quantitative rigour to identify the path through which entrepreneurial proclivity influences the competitive advantage of international service ventures. In delivering quality action research, Reason (2006) choice points was adopted, the thesis research was judged addressing worthwhile practical purposes of the research, with “primacy of practical” that draws from extended epistemology that integrates theory and practice, constantly challenged preconceptions and deepened contact with experience, actively test with redescription and draw on a variety of presentational forms to turn around accounts and stories rendered from fresh perspectives, engaged accepted theory critically and forge new theoretical perspective . At the end, I have critically subjected my choices to personal scrutiny, mutual scrutiny of my colleagues/focus group/coresearchers bearing in mind that quality goes beyond getting it right but stimulating open conversation (Reason, 2006).

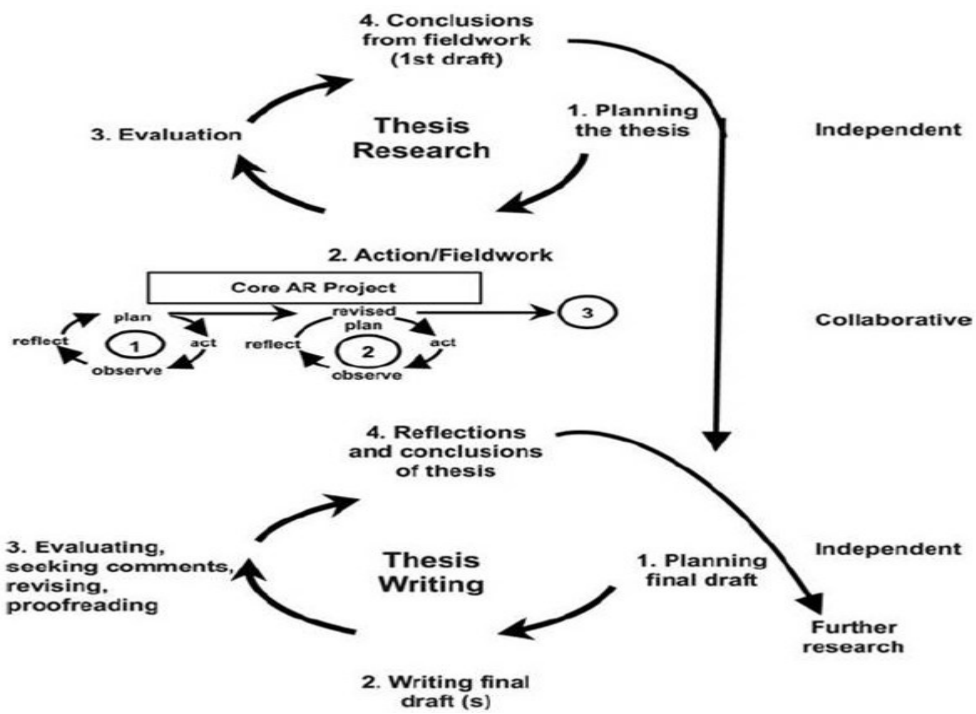

Figure 26 : Coghlan & Brannick (2010:1 42) Action Research Thesis Adapted from Zuber-Skerritt & Fletcher, 2007: 421)

5.1.1 A Recap of the Workplace-based Problem (Thesis Research)

My organisation's international business performance has been declining and her sustainability, growth and relevance threatened. This issue has been associated with plethora of problems like drop in the global oil price, unfavourable policies, shortage of foreign exchange earnings, disruptive technologies, rising competition, management's short-sightedness, immaturity of market, increase in customer awareness and demand for more with less. Figure 27 below shows rich picture of major stakeholders and time-snapshot of initial conceptualisation of the problem, which evolved as the team continued to engage in action and reflection (Monk & Howard, 1998).

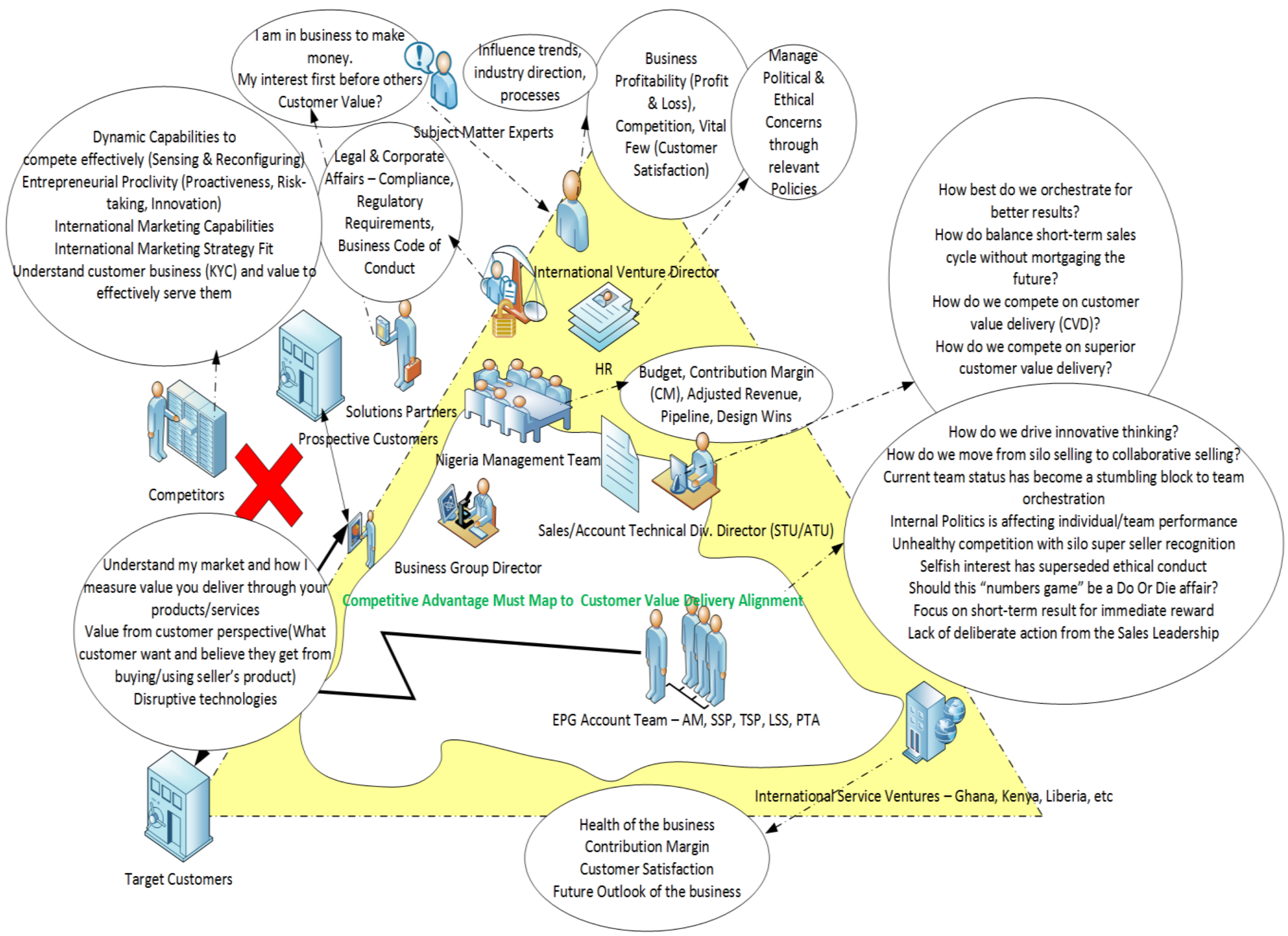

Figure 27: Improving Competitive Advantage of International Service Venture Rich Picture (Adapted from Alarape, 2012)

This study is of significant importance to the researcher, the organisation, the service industry and country at large. As detailed in section 1.2, internationalisation of services has been recognised as the lifeblood of the economy with services accounting for 20% of total world export (World Trade Organisation, 2015), hence crucial to promptly address this issue across all layers. The most substantial growth in the Nigeria GDP came from the services sector (National Bureau of Statistics, 2014).

This workplace-based problem aim of improving the competitive advantage of the international service venture remains a crucial issue for the researcher's organisation, and solving this will take the company off the current messy-situation and be strategically positioned to develop needed capabilities as pioneer and pacesetter in international business venturing. Similarly, researchers and scholars will benefit from the body of practical-knowledge produced by this work. As insider action researcher, the researcher provide leadership towards successful implementation, leveraged technology to provide collaborative platform for team engagement like Skype for Audio-Video conferencing across international operations, and inspire participation throughout the study. Reason (2006: 191) argued that "the essential purpose of action research is to address issues of concern to individuals and communities in the everyday conduct of their lives, and at a wider-level to contribute to the increased well-being- economic, political, and psychological".

Learning about theories of entrepreneurial proclivity and dynamic capabilities is not enough for collective good. What is of importance is to bring to life the understanding and improve practice. McNiff & Whitehead (2001: 3) stated that Action research is a valueladen practice that generates practical theory, and it is "undertaken by people that want to improve their understanding of their practice in order to improve their dealings with others in social situations". As shown in the rich picture, this is a hydra-headed problem and hence tackled through cycles of action and research. The problem that I addressed is How to improve the competitive advantage of my organisation's international service venture. I predicted that improving proactiveness and risk taking in our international venture would improve our sensing capabilities. I hypothesized that this would lead to improved dynamic capabilities and better competitive advantage for the organisation. The overarching question engaged in this action research was, how do I improve the competitive advantage of my organisation's international service venture competitive advantage? I predicted that the possession of superior dynamic capabilities does have a positive effect on the development of a firm's (otherwise static) marketing capability OR I predicted that acquiring superior dynamic capabilities would improve the firm's marketing capability.

Research shows that firms involved in international service venture struggle in their marketing strategies development to achieve proper fit in the context of the international market environment (Katsikeas, Samiee & Theodosiou, 2006). Hence, predicted that improvement in the international marketing capabilities would improve international marketing strategy fit. Literature shows that inquiry into dynamic capabilities at best has been largely theoretical (Easterby-Smith et al., 2008), hence taking this through the course of action research opens another dimension of understanding for practitioners.

5.1.2 Planning to Take Action (Force Field, Logic Field) & Implementing AR Change

5.1.2.1 Forces Shaping Workplace-based Actions - Force Field Analysis

The force analysis tool is based on Kurt Lewin's suggestion for planning when, where to act and achieve a change (Dezieck, 2013). The analysis builds a map of forces in support of, and those against the change and with prioritisation so as to lower the total effort required to achieve a successful organisational change (Odi, 2009).

Forces FOR change	Score	Change Proposal	Forces AGAINST change	Score
Customers want more value for less	4		Disruption to known way of doing things	4
Improved and more efficient service delivery	4		Staff learning curve and need to retrain	4
Lower revenue from local operations	4	**Improve international service venture competitive advantage.**	Staff afraid of losing their job	3
More dependence on international market for business growth	3		Cost	4
Improved sales speed	3		Silo mindset reward to team work (Loss of short-term gain)	4
Improved customer and partner experience	4			
Diversification of offering -create customer-centric services	3			
TOTAL	25		**TOTAL**	19

Table 53: Planning for Change: The Force Field Tool Adapted from Dezieck, 2013

The force field report provided the initial cautiousness required to set forth on a good note for this action research. As an insider, there is always a sense of primary access, preunderstanding as strong advantages (Greenwood & Brannick, 2010)) but these could also breed overconfidence. The force field presented "AS-IS" view of this action-research assessment which served as a useful input into the logic model to set the right expectations and make informed decisions on the way forward (Roth, Shani & Leary, 2007).

5.1.2.2 Anticipated Outcome through Logic Model

This section covers the logic model which diagrammatises the theory of action by capturing inputs, output (activities and participation), and finally expected outcome (short term, mid-term and long-term). Input comprises of all the resources needed to do this action research, output activities gives a description of the action the researcher planned to take (cycles of action and who is needed) and the outcome comprises of each cycle outcomes in the short-term, mid-term measures the extended impact for the near future, and the expected long-term outcome of approach taken.

The Situation: While the current theoretical and practice understanding of international marketing strategies is solely rooted in the manufacturing sector, international service ventures continue to contribute immensely to global trade. Hence, the urgency for international marketing theory and practice based on services internationalisation, especially as business ventures in international service increases, and firms struggle to grow their competitiveness in this important sector. The researcher's workplace (referred to as company A) is one of such ventures, and this IAR is based on this premise.

Company A's international service venture is currently going through sustainability, revenue, growth decline locally and has identified the international venture as a growth level and hence the need to strengthen her international services competitive advantage, identify, develop, and adopt appropriate drivers of competitive advantage in her international service venture.

Overarching question is: How do i improve the competitive advantage of my company's international service venture?

Inputs	Outputs		Outcomes -- Impact		
	Activities	*Participation*	Short term	Mid term	Long Term
• Group Director/Staff Time • Partners • Research base, Literature • Technologies • Equipment • Money (travels)	Cycle 1 (International Entrepreneurial Proclivity and Dynamic Capabilities): • Education - Conduct Cloud Sales, Marketing & trainings • Provide International Entrepreneurial Orientation education during Launch & Learn. • Break the current silos (Cross-group Collaboration): ○ Team restructure to be more responsive (Weekly cross-group account review to assess level of Information sharing by AE, SSP, BGD, SE, TAM)	**Cycle 1:** • ATU ○ SE, AE ○ SSP, ATU ○ SD, M&O Dir ○ BGD	**Cycle 1:** Increase ATU (AEs, SSSP, TSP) & SEs exposure to company cloud solutions and sales. ATU increased ability to communicate cloud sales & marketing tracked by sales contest, lead generation, customer engagement and feedback. Customer willingness to do more business with Company A as a result of unified team engagement - AE, SE & TAM engagement.	Increased ATU (AE, SSP, TSP & SE) ability to communicate cloud sales & marketing effectively tracked by sales contest, lead generation, customer engagement and feedback. Customer willingness to do more business with Company A as a result of One Team Synergy across engagement.	Every employee innately scan, identifies opportunities and pitches the value of cloud solutions, sales and marketing above competition and in a way that addresses customer business needs, and direct impact on the business performance, relevance, growth and sustainability. Customer willingness to do more business with Company A as a result of corporate engagement culture.
	Cycle 2 (Dynamic Capabilities and International Marketing Capabilities): • R & D ○ Establish a non-traditional R & D – Research, Technology. ○ Establish Marketing Innovation Department (separate from existing ops. Marketing dept.) ○ Develop products that creates a wow experience	**Cycle 2:** • SE, AE • SD • BGD	**Cycle 2:** ATU are able to identify and respond to current trends and future development that affect their marketing	ATU are able to identify and respond to current trends and future development that affect their marketing (through Novel marketing initiatives – Digital marketing initiatives and tracking	All Employees are able to Identify and respond to current trends and future development that affect their marketing (Technology Adoption Programme)

	for customers - customer survey, CSAT drive. • Adopt Agile SDLC (Kanban, etc.) • Launch Operation Know Your Customer (KYC) • Collaborate with customers and Partners in joint workshops		ATU is able to understand whether relevant changes in their customers and competitive environment have short-term implications.	of conversion ratio to determine impact using Marketo) – New leads generated and increase in marketing ROI. ATU understand whether relevant changes in their customers and competitive environment have long-term implications.	AEs, SEs understand whether relevant changes in their customers and competitive environment have long-term implications.
	Cycle 3 (International Marketing Capabilities and International Marketing Strategy Fit): • Create a custom fintech solution with strategic partnership to penetrate uncharted opportunity areas (Barracuda + IBS). • Trial project once, if successful incorporate into day-to-day marketing rhythm • Adapt Marketing Segmentation Strategy to culture, season, seasonality (Root cause) • Additional advertisement investment did not convert to sales (Note)	**Cycle 3:** ATU (AE, SSP, TSS, PTS, SE, BGD, ISD)	**Cycle 3:** ATU are able to manage resources more effectively, reduce operational costs, respond to changes and take advantage of new opportunities with short-term implications	ATU are able to manage resources more effectively, reduce operational costs, respond to changes and take advantage of new opportunities with mid-term implications	ATU are able to manage resources more effectively, reduce operational costs, respond to changes and take advantage of new opportunities with long-term implications

Assumptions: Relevant readiness resources for International entrepreneurial proclivity, and dynamic capabilities available

External Factors: Sales Cycle, Budget Cascade, change in corporate strategy, Government Policies relatively stable.

Table 54: Workplace-based Problem Action Research Logic Table Adapted from Lisowski, 2009)

5.2 Research Methodology & Methods of Inquiry (Building on Quantitative Research Conceptual Model & Findings)

5.2.1 Introduction

This section build on the findings from the survey analysis of the international service ventures that participated, and serve as critical input into constructing this IAR initiative with applicable stakeholders, systematic generation and collection of data about ongoing workplace problem guided by set objectives and 3 cycles of change articulated in the Logic Table 54. The process was based on quality choices and rigour of inquiry from an informed perspective of integrated practical knowing through action without necessarily separating theory from practice, but bringing relevant insight from theoretical findings to practice since knowing is experienced in action (Reason, 2006).

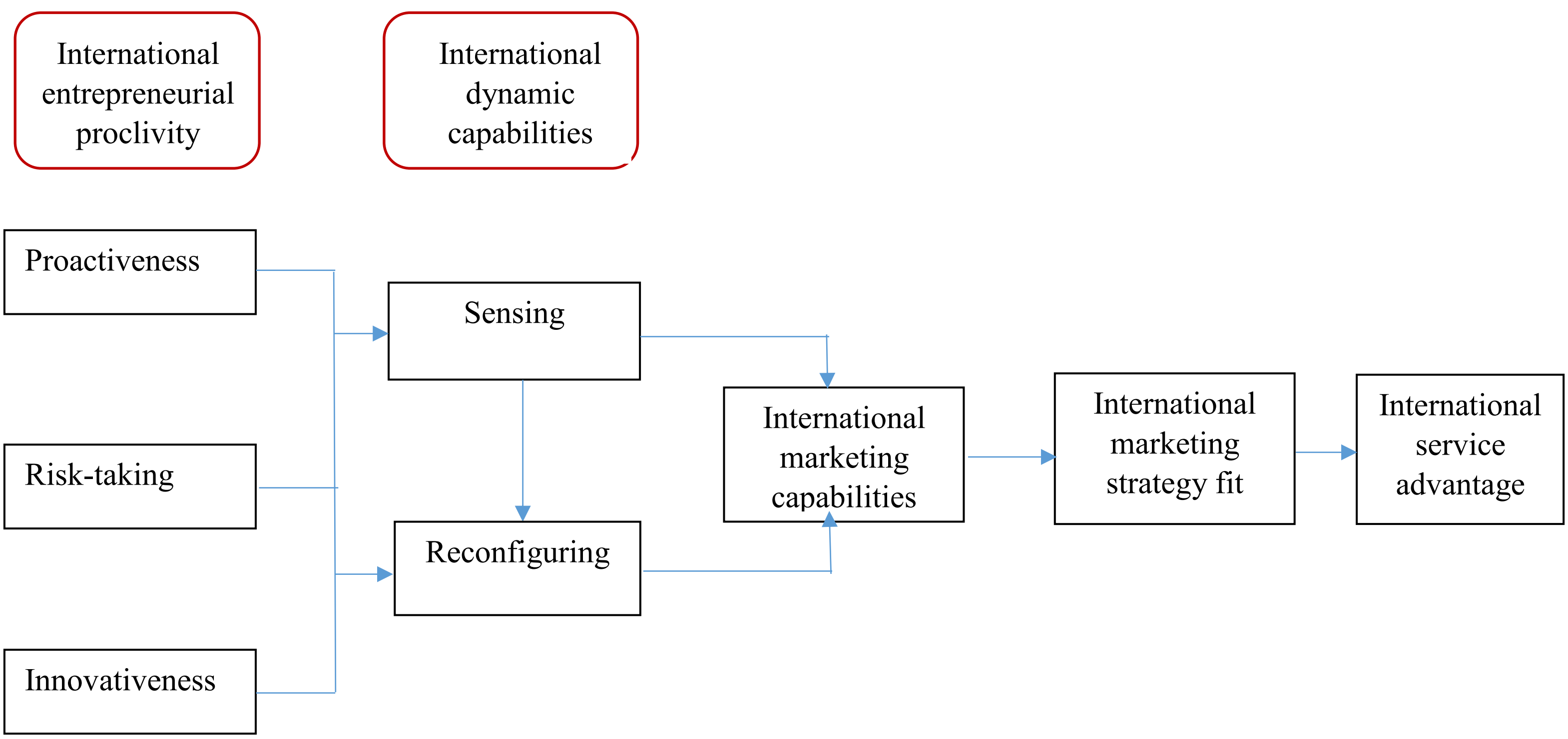

Figure 28: Applying International Service Venture Competitive Advantage Conceptual Model and Framework to Workplace-based Action Research

5.2.2 Core Action Research Project Measures

This section covers the measures applied for the core action research project. As described in section 17, and based on literature findings and conceptualisation in *Research Hypotheses*, this is the first quantitative action research into international service venture competitive advantage, with no historical data, nor any previous research in the country and sparsely none on the subject of interest. Hence, in-depth review into the literature espoused important topics, constructs and instruments through which this research objective and questions could the answered. The detailed analysis of the data and findings was presented in Chapter 4.0 Data Analysis

Through rigour, the research instrument was developed and passed mandatory exploratory factor analysis, common method bias test, scale reliability, validation indices, multicollinearity analysis, path analysis detailed in Chapters 4.0 Data Analysis and 5.0. This was adapted to meet this action research needs drawing from the associations among the variables studied through factor analysis, correlation, regression analysis, and path analysis to implement this core action research project thereby improve my practice, and also contribute to body of knowledge as a doctoral practitioner. We all know that action research is situation specific, not aimed to create universal knowledge, nonetheless Coghlan & Brannick (2010: 148) argued that "action researchers need to articulate how their research project can be extrapolated to a wider context". In essence, answer the question "So What?", and thus integrates the first, second and third person. This research work addressed this aspiration building on a rigorous process from the survey of relevant organisations that fit the profile of the researcher's organisation, and the findings espoused on entrepreneurial proclivity and interlevel dynamics of international service venture competitiveness. The detailed process of additional refinement of the instrument and application to this action research project is provided in the sub-sections.

5.2.2.1 Conceptual Model & Research Instrument Adapted from Quantitative Research (Ch 2 – 5)

Reason & Bradbury (2008: 157) stated that "action researchers might also include network analysis and surveys (or other quantitative anchors) depending on how best to accomplish practical and other outcomes. The researcher leveraged the quantitative-research findings to jumpstart this IAR. This was based on established and validated instruments, constructs and scale-items, thereby bridging rigour-gap often raised against action research projects. The strength of this foundation is that the quantitative findings brought to bear a proven basis/discovery of the current lacuna in the international service venture in Nigeria, of which the researcher's organisation is one. Secondly, the findings have helped with pointed direction to applicable area of focus that can yield organisational transformation/change, and served as quality input into the action research logic model. Similar to Reason & Bradbury (2008) narration, the action researcher together with other stakeholders inductively came to terms with relevant findings from the deductive quantitative aspect of the survey established through literature and research towards the development of the research question and assumptions. Hence, the following hypothesis found to be connected to the workplace problem informed the AR cycle questions, corresponding activities and collaborative actions based on shared inquiry, observed outcome through joint evaluation, and the learning adopted in further planning/improvement.

- International Entrepreneurial Proclivity and Dynamic Capabilities: I predicted that improving international entrepreneurial proclivity would lead to creation of dynamic capabilities that are unique and difficult for competitors to immediately copy. The survey proved that increasing proactiveness and risk-taking have a positive impact on the sensing capabilities of international service venture. It also confirmed that increasing innovation, sensing processes/capabilities improves reconfiguring processes/capabilities of the firm.

- Dynamic Capabilities and International Marketing Capabilities: I predicted that the possession of superior dynamic capabilities does have a positive effect on the development of a firm's (otherwise static) marketing capability. The survey proved that improving/frequent sensing and reconfiguring positively impact international marketing capabilities of the firm.
- International Marketing Capabilities and International Marketing Strategy Fit: I predicted that improving international marketing capabilities would improve international marketing strategy fit. The survey confirmed that international marketing capabilities positively impact the international marketing strategy fit of the firm in the international service venture.

Hence, the research instrument for the subsequent wave of cycles covers the applicable constructs above. There is no one-size fit all, hence Koshy (2005) advised action researchers to adopt the models that suit their purpose most or adapt to fit their purpose

5.2.2.2 Personal Reflective Pause

Coghlan & Brannick (2010) reckoned that reflective pause is a technique that helps in sensemaking of particular events within narratives during discourse, such that it presents the reflection of the researcher as first-person narrative alongside second-person narrative. This first reflection pause captures adaptation process of the research instrument and survey findings to the workplace-based action research.

Applying Quantitative Survey Findings & Research Instrument to AR
After deep review of literature, and subsequent formulation of conceptual model as shown in Figure 28, the researcher observed that it is impractical to adopt the 96 questions from the quantitative survey directly for action-research purpose and possibly take a minimum of three years to complete this project. Hence, the researcher used the quantitative instruments to build a credible and contextually applicable knowledge to guide the workplace-based problem. The research questions were further refined to match germane issues from the rich picture and collectively expressed feedback of major stakeholders and coresearchers. This made it practical to effectively maintain needed closeness and separation at the same time for an effective workplace-based action research. The subsequent action research cycles draw from the new instrument.

5.3 The Core Action Research Project

The section is a connection point for this IAR project as it brings together the previous sections and will also lead to the subsequent sections for sensemaking. Having defined the need for change and degree of choice, this section briefly assesses the present state in the light of the desired future state that was earlier defined in the Logic Table of section 5.1 The Core Action Research & Thesis Writing Process and research instrument in section 5.2 Research Methodology & Methods of Inquiry (Building on Quantitative Research Conceptual Model & Findings).

The study involved the international operations division, comprising the enterprise group, marketing, sales, operations, technology/services, software development and finance functions of the international arm of the business. As an organisational programme, the researcher; also, doubles as a director collaborated with divisional sponsors and champions effectively navigated the organisational dynamics to secure organisational approval for this project, bearing in-mind its criticality to the firm's sustainability. Ethical requirements were met at the doctoral research level, and the workplace from internal participants through their informed consent, confidentiality and reciprocity (Bell & Bryman, 2007) Björkman & Sundgren (2005) emphasised the importance of identifying important stakeholders, working on comfort zones, leveraging internal networks and having a fallback plan. Understanding of the IAR organisational culture and politics aided navigating internal terrains thereby effectively draw from the preunderstanding currency and knowledge co-generation (Hilsen, 2006; Coghlan, 2011).

Post-doctoral thesis proposal approval on the 17th July, 2014, the researcher started the quantitative aspect of the research from the literature, and the development of the conceptual model/framework, which enacted reframing of the research title on the 1st June, 2015. The survey was completed between 1st June 2015 and September 2015; including the researcher's organisation. The researcher workplace-based focus group champions have been part of the quantitative research from June, 2015 but the organisation-wide AR started three months after.

The IAR timeline presented in Figure 29 started 2nd October, 2015 through 15th April, 2016. The survey findings were major revelations to underlying issues and this helped to appropriately reframe the workplace-based problem from "*Identifying the path through which organisational culture influences International venture market performance in*

Services: Do entrepreneurial orientation, dynamic capabilities, and international marketing strategy fit matter?" to "*Identifying the path through which entrepreneurial proclivity influences competitive advantage: Do dynamic capabilities, marketing capabilities and international marketing strategy fit matter?"* and subsequent ethics committee approval on 24th January, 2016. Startup and closeout conferences were incorporated into the programme to set the tone, link the additional group members and increase the likelihood of organisational learning (Pedler, 2008). Three management conferences were conducted, at onset in October, 2015 where the team started the first cycle; the team presented their report to the management 30th November, 2015 which activated the second cycle, and this ended 29th January, 2016 and management report presented 3rd February, 2016. The third cycle was between 4th February, 2016 and 15th April, 2016 concluding six-month cycle but different timelines per cycle.

The divisional champions are the upper-level managers across seven business functions that make up the international service venture business. These are the chief marketing director (CMO), international operations director (IOD), chief financial officer (CFO), Software Development Director (SDD), chief technology officer (CTO), international sales director (ISD), and the researcher, and facilitator; whose role was the business group director for cloud (BGD), and the country general manager (GM) was the sponsor for this programme. The Accounts Technical Unit (ATU) was added in October, and this basically comprises of the Core Sales Account Executives (AE), Solutions Sales Professional (SSP), Technical Sales Professionals (TSP), support roles like Technical Account Managers (TAMS). All these teams are thereafter referred to as ATU, as depicted in the Logic Table, and subsequent cycles of action and reflection.

The project team got management approval for every member to invest two-hours of company weekly over a period of six months to work on this project. Due to the spread of the team, the group opted for every Wednesday between 1pm and 3pm to check-in physically or through Skype video conferencing, and thus maintain the face-to-face expressions and contacts during these debriefs and reflections. The concluding conference on 15th April, 2016 reflected tangible improvement in the company's performance as measured through the action research cycles outcome, the company's transformational leading and lagging indicators, and positive trend on the scorecard during the 2016 Q2 calendar year business performance report. The GM thanked the team for their effort and observed progress in the business. In addition, the maturity and experience of the participants led to accelerated results as each member worked towards a common goal, and the synergy in the team translated to geometrical improvements in outcomes. The culture of inquiry without fear also helped to shape the course of the actions, reflections, and learning as depicted in Figure 30 .

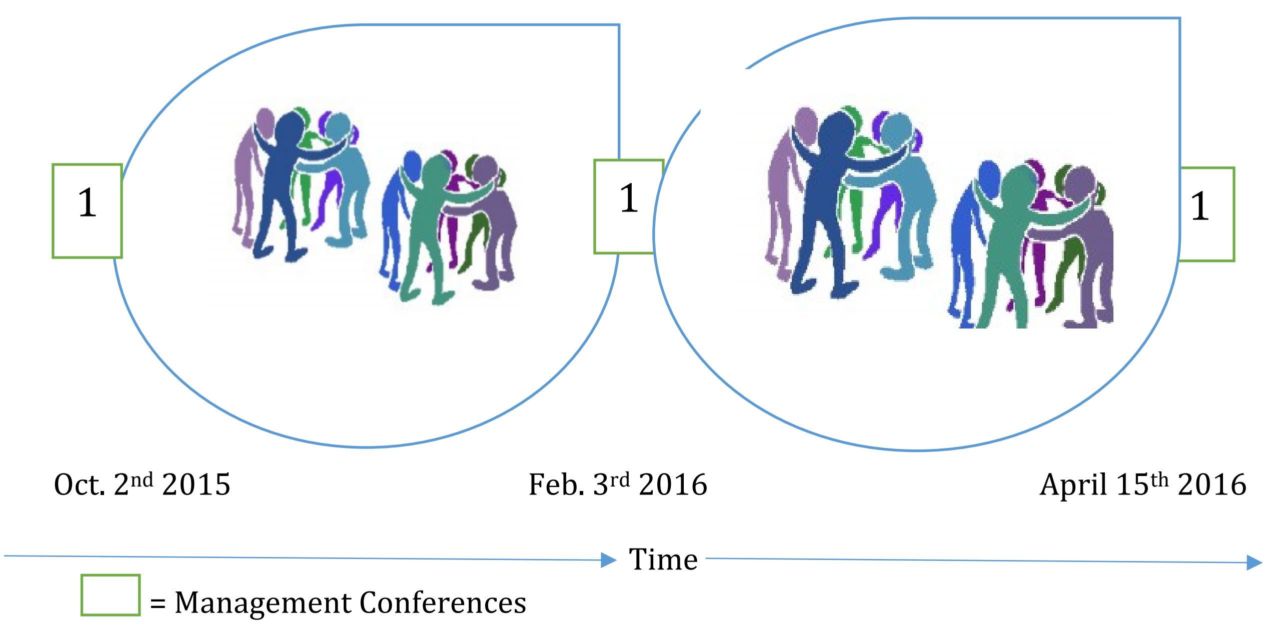

Figure 29: Core Action Research Project Timeline

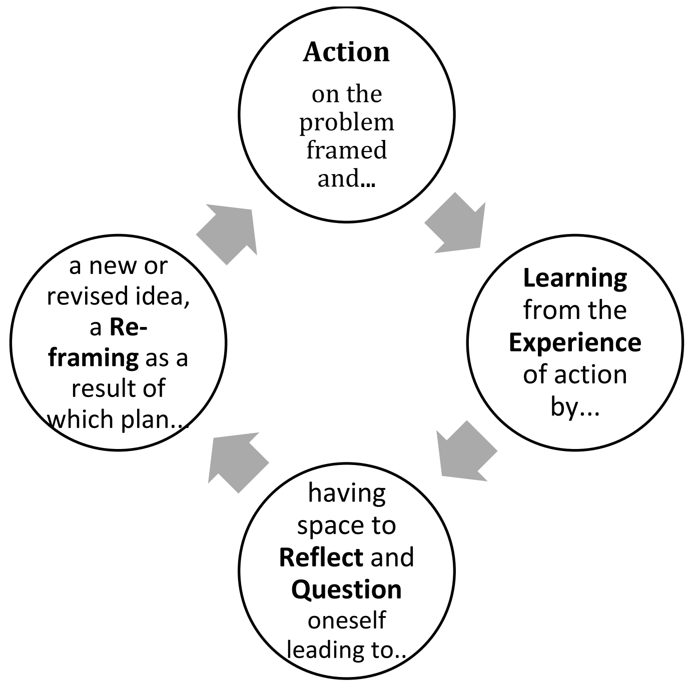

Figure 30: Cycle of Action and Reflection in Action Research (Source: Pedler (2013: 51)

5.3.1 Overall Research Question & Cycle 1 Report

Reason (2006) stated that "practical issues in AR are typically addressed through cycles of action and reflection, in which the outcomes of each cycle are checked against plans and intentions – this is the empirical or evidential dimension of enquiry". The action researcher started out thinking it was a low marketing budget that affected international service venture performance and was planning to invest more through digital campaigns and personalized marketing to engage more customers. However, the researcher found from literature that international service venture's competitive advantage depends on a number of variables, and this influences the eventual competitiveness of such service venture. The researcher started to examine his business group activities and found that they aligned more with the literature insight on how proactiveness, risk-taking and innovativeness of international service ventures affects its dynamic capabilities demonstrated in how such venture senses and reconfigures itself to emerging market realities. Hence, the researcher engaged in a quantitative research survey to understand what other international service ventures are doing, and reading vast on international marketing capabilities, and marketing strategy fit decided not to change the marketing motion but rethink the international service venture competitive advantage/business strategy. The findings from reconfiguring dynamic capabilities in chapter 5 supported this decision where "implementation of a new or substantially changed international service venture marketing strategy" scored lowest which suggest that majority of the service ventures has not substantially changed their marketing strategy within the four-year period. Reason (2006) clearly stated that action research approach is not a one-way thing but largely cyclic be it from Apollonian or Dionysian inquiry, what matters most is to ensure good evidence is produced to support claims made.

The researcher want the ATU and the entire organisation come together to use entrepreneurial proclivity to improve the firm international service venture competitive advantage. <u>The overall action research question is: How do I improve the competitive advantage of my organisation's international service venture?</u>

The action lend itself to a number of approaches including workplace-based focus groups and learning circles. The anticipated result is increase in competitive advantage, business relevance and productivity.

5.3.1.1 Cycle 1 Research Question & Action Taken

This first cycle focus was introduction/implementation of educational readiness training for the ATU in my business international division to re-orientate and prepare the team as challengers and share fighters in this new world of competition. The goal was to better equip and empower the ATU to effectively use modern knowledge, and relevant entrepreneurial skills and awareness to increase exposure and improved capabilities.

Research Question: If I improve my company's international entrepreneurial proclivity, what effect will it have on the dynamic capabilities of my organisation?

My assumption was that an increase in entrepreneurial proclivity would have a positive impact on the dynamic capabilities of the organisation.

As the team dived deeper, this was later reframed in the context **of specific action to be taken, and how the outcome would be measured, and ended up with:**

Research Question: If I introduce entrepreneurial and regular modern solutions (cloud sales and technical) readiness in my business division, will it have a positive influence on sales team synergy/collective output and ability to increase share of the wallet?

My assumption was that the ATU would begin to work as one-team through the practical knowledge acquired, and this would have a positive influence on the working relationship, boost their confidence and increase customer satisfaction.

The action builds on the survey findings and logic model Table 54. The Initial findings from the survey in section 4.2 Measures of International Entrepreneurial Proclivity: Descriptive Findings had shown that "top management regularly monitors the trends in the international service venture" top the proactiveness dimension with mean 5.80 and "top management focuses more on opportunities than risks abroad" with mean 5.46 for the risk-taking dimension of entrepreneurial proclivity. The reconfiguring dimension of dynamic capabilities shows" initiation of new procedures and systems" as most significant (mean =5.41) and the sensing dimension of dynamic capabilities had "we observe the best practices in our sector "as most significant (mean =5.83).

The train-the-trainer for the champions (SWOT team) started in September, 2015 immediately after the initial survey findings interpretation, and the team was promised funding outside the normal budget to encourage thinking out of the box, and ensure speed in execution. Empowered to assess and approve transformational projects nomination from the international venture and capture opportunities hitherto untouched. A custom training was package based on the learning after the 1st cycle with the intent to roll-out across all operations based on the learning from the field.

5.3.1.2 Evidence

The evidence used to evaluate the action/cycle include improvement seen in the quality of sales/technical pitches, increase in sales pipeline, marketing conversion ratios and customer satisfaction feedback on the ATU. As a result, evidence was collected from the increased number of sales leads generated, successful Proof-of-concept and conversions, customer feedback based on quality of service across group, timeliness of ATU and overall satisfaction.

5.3.1.3 Evaluation

This cycle started 2nd October, 2015 and ended 23rd November, 2015 with the ATU participation. However, the divisional champions have been part of the earlier survey between June, 2015 and September, 2015 of which the findings enumerated in Chapter 5 informed the framework executed in these cycles.

There was an improvement in sales leads and conversion to closure between 2nd October, 2015 and 23rd November, 2015 when the cycle ended which showed practical improvement from the action taken at the beginning of the cycle (readiness boot camp, coaching, lead and shadow sales, pitch perfect), and ongoing improvements in these activities. The pipeline grew from 3 to 50 opportunities, and the conversion moved up from 1 closed deal as at 2nd October. 2015 to 25 closed deals by the 23rd November, 2015. There was a corresponding increase in the number of trained ATU members from 8 people to 20 (sales and technical) professionals between this period.

Activities	Action Research Cycle Timeline	Total Number of ATU Members Trained	Sales Leads/Opportunities Generated in CRM	Sales Leads Converted and Closed Per Cycle	Succesful Proof-of-Concept
Survey Data Gathering & Analysis	1st June - 30th Aug., 2015				
Adapting Insight into Workplace AR	1st Sept - 11th Sept, 2015				
Train-the-Trainer for SWOT Team	14th Sept - 25th Sept, 2015	7			
	28th Sept - 2nd Oct., 2015				
Cycle 0	Quantitative Research Insight				
Cycle 1 Start 2nd Oct., 2015	2nd Oct., 2015	8	3	1	1
(International Entrepreneurial Proclivity and Dynamic Capabilities)	5th Oct., - 16th Oct., 2015	10	5	2	2
	19th Oct., - 30th Oct., 2015	12	10	4	4
	2nd Nov., 2015 - 13th Nov., 2015	15	30	15	12
Cycle 1 Ends 23rd Nov., 2015	16th Nov., 2015 - 23rd Nov., 2015	20	50	25	20

Table 55: Cycle 1 Activities – Sales Leads, Conversions and Successful PoC

To address regular trends monitoring, we incorporated market intelligence insight of the international service venture including competitor's penetration into our market as part of the weekly focus-group touchpoint, and it was revealing that competitors have actually taken sizable part of our market when compared to the last report that was evaluated 8 months ago.

5.3.1.4 Reflection

Cycle 1 gave me the privilege to experience both world of quantitative analysis and taking action in practice, to solve practical workplace problems. As the boot-camp coach/trainer for the ATU, I had opportunity to have first-hand connection with different roles from a different perspective, not just in sales/technical calls, but actually engaging in equipping for transformation at a personal, organisational and potential-wise international level. With budget freeze, the SWOT team was worried for the impact on the business, and for me as a researcher. I took the bull by the horn, being part of my leaderful learning (Raelin, 2011) and encouraged the team to be creative in delivering the training with the limited marketing budget we had prior to the freeze. The entire process stirred deeper learning for me especially finding ways to use little things that makes significant impact. The astronomical impact of trained ATU members added on a bi-weekly basis to the overall success of the team was eye-opening for the researcher. Incentives tied to sales performance and technical delivery boasted the sales, marketing and technical team drive, in addition to the readiness and competitive selling coaching.

Cross-sales and upselling was a direct outcome of the sensing capabilities being developed by the team, and this made the pipeline to even grow faster than envisaged, and deals closure more accelerated.

The coaching, pitch perfect certifications of ATU members, and the unity that this new knowledge has created was undeniable. A bank CIO's comment to the researcher at a business review was "What have you been doing with your team, it's like they suddenly resurrected as I see more team-work and interest in our business rather than the usual products they push to us without any significance to our business".

The data shows sales leads conversion from about 30 percent to 80 percent in this cycle, and more Proof-of-concept done (80% PoC conversion). Retrospectively, this kept the lean technical sales team extremely busy, of which we could have built demo and immersion experience platform to cater for these needs, rather than 1-1 customisation for each potential customer.

Despite the commitment to this project, and the stakeholders' full sponsorship and alignment. It was difficult to get funding to kick-start the process as earlier committed, especially when the September 2015 Q3 financial report was below expectation. All extra-budgetary funding was cut off. This brought real-life experience of Williander & Styhre (2006: 245) even though the IAR research proposal was approved by Volvo car senior management, and received strong support for the project, "at least in the form of lip service", as there was no budget reserved for the proposed project. Though the team was creative in managing limited resources, this affected other areas intended to be covered within this phase like actively measure customer satisfaction trends, and the one-team reporting.

The sales team previous argument that the international market is not ready for the cloud technologies to run their business, especially in this part of the world was debunked through a snippet of the market intelligence reporting which shows otherwise. It was obvious that areas where the researcher's organisation was suffering was due to competitor's doing a great job in taking the market share. It became obvious that we have not done a good job across board, from the ATU up the rank in readiness, customer focus, and service differentiation. Going through this process as a team rather than finger-pointing reduced the friction/blame-game, and accelerated healing process as a team. The missing link has been that sincere vulnerable environment and this was enacted in this cycle to drive team synergy.

The finding above gave needed insight and understanding of why the additional marketing investment/new marketing strategy has not translated into any competitive advantage for the organisation. "The implementation of a new or substantially changed international service venture marketing strategy" (mean = 5.12) "happened to be the lowest variable with the lowest mean value. This suggests that majority of the service ventures has not substantially changed their marketing strategy but rather, need to initiate new procedures and solutions related to proactiveness and also develop new and substantially changed/different ways of achieving our targets and objectives in the international market.

Retrospectively, the researcher also felt the need to establish ways of effective communicating corporatewide on decisions/indecisions pertaining to international ventures, so as to drive shared vision of risks across the organisation. The sense of identity will encourage people to speak up and it could be the saving grace for an organisation, when most required.

5.3.2 Cycle 2 Report

This section presents cycle 2 report on improving the dynamic capabilities and international marketing capabilities of the researcher's organisation.

5.3.2.1 Cycle Research Question & Action Taken

Research Question: If I improve my organisation's dynamic capabilities, what effect will it have on the international marketing capabilities?

My assumption was that an increase in dynamic capabilities would have a positive impact on the international marketing capabilities of the organisation.

The research question was simply reframed to reflect actual activities and expected outcome as: If I improve my organisation's marketing intelligence and execute marketing strategies effectively, what effect will it have on the ATU ability to understand implications of changes in customers and competitive environment, and be able to respond to current trends and future development.

My assumption was that increase in market intelligence and marketing strategies effectiveness would have a positive response on the ATU's ability to respond to current trends and future development.

The researcher engaged industry research leaders to determine the entire market-size for the cloud services (Private & Public Cloud) and the major types of Infrastructure-as-a-Service (IaaS), Platform-as-a-Service (PaaS), and Software-as-a-Service (SaaS). This also covered SWOT analysis of the company's offering. This engagement helped to define short-term, mid-term, and long-term marketing, product and software development, and sales focus. It also involved top-customers, partners' participation, and other whitespace the business intended to grow so as to increase market-share, relevance and sustainability.

5.3.2.2 Evidence

The evidence used to evaluate the action are the Sales & Technical Data which reflects Increase in pipeline and closed deals, and decrease in the PoC carried out which led to shorter sales cycle for core services. The team developed reusable Intellectual Property (IP) for technical deployments, sales and marketing collaterals leading to faster time-to-execute by the team.

5.3.2.3 Evaluation

This cycle began on 30th November, 2015 and ended on the 29th January, 2016. There was further improvement in sales leads (triple trained ATU member capabilities) pipeline grew from 66 to 75 and conversion to closure from 40 to 53, an improvement of 50% to 70% of the total generated opportunities compared to 1st cycle. The ATU further developed her sensing and reconfiguring processes with the introduction of reusable IPs thereby reducing the number of PoCs to be delivered by technical sales team for deal acceleration. It was an increasing percentage of 20% to 50% at the end of Cycle 2. This had a corresponding positive impact on the customer experience, less prone to human errors and faster-time-to-market. Hence, the average customer satisfaction was mostly at satisfied level throughout the cycle, until the last 2-weeks of 25th Jan., 2016 to 29th Jan., 2016 closing out at very satisfied customer feedback.

Furthermore, the action research to survey mapping for the international marketing capabilities applied the pricing dimension to build the Sales, Marketing and Services IPs which reduce the time-to-market across the entire business units, hence the company was able to offer competitive pricing, even in the international market, and favourably compete with the locals in the market. The channel management dimension was applied to develop and improve on the foreign-distributors relationship. This turned around the competitiveness, as the firm is now able to compete for opportunities through the foreign partners/distributors. The marketing implementation dimension was exploited in the context of strategy execution, and through which the marketing team selected targeted customers within the enterprise space with focus on the Banking sector (fastest growing but the most pressed in the emerging market for quality service) and Corporate Tele-Managed Accounts (CTM) in a 1:1, and 1- few industry-tailored conferences, breakfast meetings and industry-vertical events. The team built on this initiative in the 3rd cycle to develop tailored customer marketing and solutions.

Finally, the dimension of international marketing capabilities and reconfiguring through the path analysis (value = 0.3) in Chapter 5 was applied in this cycle “exploring new capabilities or substantially changed ways of achieving targets and objectives in the international market through Hackathon Initiatives and investment in wining ideas (incentivise winners), The first winner came through during this 2nd cycle. In addition, technology partnership with top customers in the international service venture was also started, a bank was signed-into the programme, which generated lots of goodwill in the industry as a novel way of collaborating in foreign market development.

Activities	Action Research Cycle Timeline	Total Number of ATU Members Trained	Sales Leads/Opportunities Generated in CRM	Sales Leads Converted and Closed Per Cycle	Total No of Proof-of-Concept Supporting Closed Deals	Reusable Intellectual Propery (Build Guides, Cloud Demo Kits, Sales & Marketing Collaterals	Average Customer Satisfaction Feedback (Ratings - 1=Very Disatisfied, 3 = OK, 4=Satisfied, 5 = Very Satisfied)
Survey Data Gathering & Analysis	1st June - 30th Aug., 2015						
Adapting Insight into Workplace AR	1st Sept - 11th Sept, 2015						
Train-the-Trainer for SWOT Team	14th Sept - 25th Sept, 2015	7					
	28th Sept - 2nd Oct., 2015						
Cycle 0	Quantitative Research Insight						
Cycle 1 Start 2nd Oct., 2015	2nd Oct., 2015	8	3	1	1		
(International Entrepreneurial Proclivity and Dynamic Capabilities)	5th Oct., - 16th Oct., 2015	10	5	2	2		3
	19th Oct., - 30th Oct., 2015	12	10	4	4		3
	2nd Nov., 2015 - 13th Nov., 2015	15	30	15	12		3
Cycle 1 Ends 23rd Nov., 2015	16th Nov., 2015 - 23rd Nov., 2015	20	50	25	20		4
Cycle 1 Management Update	30th November, 2015						
Cycle 2 Start 30th Nov., 2015	30th November, 2015						
	30th Nov., 2015 -11th Dec., 2015	22	66	40	32	8	4
Dynamic Capabilities and International Marketing Capabilities	14th Dec., 2015 - 25th Dec., 2015	22	66	33	26	7	4
	28th Dec., 2015 - 8th Jan., 2016	22	66	30	24	6	4
	11th Jan., 2016 - 22nd Jan., 2016	25	75	50	35	15	4
Cycle 2 End 29th Jan., 2016	25th Jan., 2016 - 29th Jan., 2016	25	75	53	26	26	5
Cycle 2 Management Update	3rd February, 2016						

Table 56: Cycle 1 & 2 Activities – Sales Leads, Conversions, PoC & Customer Satisfaction

5.3.2.4 Reflection

Cycle 2 represented a move to acceleration stage. The drop-in lead conversion between 14th December, 2015 and 8th of January, 2015 associated with the festive period and businesses close-down was compensated for through the uptake of about 70% lead conversion at the end of Cycle 2. This was a critical test and reflection for the researcher, as this bounce-back shows there is organic growth and capabilities development in the ATU. Attaining the first very satisfied customer satisfaction rating shows the team is gradually taking its place in the marketplace. The market research insight revealed a strong disconnect in the ATU approach to the win-back motion of market-share from the competition. The finding shows a surround strategy will bring deeper value-proposition rather than the planned head-to-head, feature-to-feature comparison earlier adopted.

5.3.3 Cycle 3 Report

This cycle covers the international marketing capabilities and international marketing strategy fit of the researcher's organisation, with the aim of building on the gains of previous cycles.

5.3.3.1 Cycle 3 Research Question & Action Taken

Research Question: If I improve my organisation's international marketing capabilities, what effect will it have on the international marketing strategy fit?

My assumption was that an increase in international marketing capabilities would have a positive impact on the international marketing strategy fit of the organisation.

The research question was reframed to reflect actual activities and expected outcome as stated in the Logic Model. If I improve my organisation's international marketing capabilities and execute marketing strategies effectively, what effect will it have on the ATU's ability to manage resources more effectively, reduce operational cost, respond to changes and take advantage of new opportunities in the international service market.

My assumption was that increase in market international marketing capabilities would have a positive influence on the ATU's ability to manage resources more effectively, and take advantage of new opportunities.

This cycle is a major contribution to the practice, as it builds on the insight from the first quantitative inquiry of the study on the factors that enable international service ventures achieve optimal fit between the international marketing strategy and the environment. This establish that international marketing capabilities enable firms to develop effective international marketing strategies that properly fit the environmental and market conditions prevailing in individual foreign markets. The path analysis result in this study had the highest value (0.525) of international marketing strategy fit dependence on international marketing capabilities for the primary constructs in Table 51, and these significant factors incorporated into the activities and at the same time build on cycle 2.

For the service strategy fit, the brand development was tied to the marketing strategy and the "One-team" initiative was tightly linked to consistent delivery on the brand promise from sales through implementation and subsequent post-implementation experience. On the distribution strategy, a robust cloud-based solution with mobile apps for Windows, Apple and Google play store was developed. The reusable IPs from 2nd cycle was further enhanced and extended to cater for the financial services industry, and customised for mobile-banking and internet banking services (IBS).

5.3.3.2 Evidence

The evidence used to evaluate the action are the Sales & Technical Data which reflects Increase in pipeline and closed deals, and decrease in the PoC carried out which led to shorter sales cycle for core services. The team developed bundled offering and custom financial services solution are evidence of continuous improvement in the dynamic-marketing capabilities and strategy fit to the market.

5.3.3.3 Evaluation

This cycle began on 4th February, 2016 and ended on the 15th April, 2016. There was further improvement in sales leads (x4.5 ATU member capabilities) pipeline grew from 87 to 135 and conversion to closure from 61 to 108, an improvement of 70% to 80% of the total generated opportunities compared to 2nd cycle. The ATU further enhanced her dynamic capabilities with the introduction of bundled and industry-tailored offerings, an improvement on the reusable IP attainment in 2nd Cycle, thus further crashed down on the number of PoC delivered and faster deal closure. It was an increasing percentage of 55% to 70% at the end of this 3rd Cycle. This reflected in the customer satisfaction feedback of "very satisfied" consecutively during this cycle, except for the week of 22nd Feb. – 4th Mar., 2016 with a satisfied rating. Further reflection on the customer satisfaction during this 2-week period brought to light internal team forming experience where a sales executive will rather to offer end-to-end licensing and services proposal, rather than just favour his own targets which will be short-term benefit but harm the customer. It would be strange that such experience led to the same customer rating of satisfied rather than very satisfied. Hence, this is a new learning and paradigm shift, as this sales executive went overboard to ensure the customer investment is secured, but this customer has not come to terms with this deviation from the traditional approach of silo-selling.

Furthermore, the action research to survey mapping for the international marketing strategy fit service strategy dimension to build a strong brand name and improve services design and style was demonstrated in the customer satisfaction experience described above. The bundled and custom-tailored industry offering improved the company's competitive advantage to offer higher advance services at a lower price-point and remains a strong testament to this evaluation that build on the 2nd cycle marketing implementation strategy. Microsoft Planner (2016) based on Kanban agile methodology and rapid prototyping principle (Lin, Chen & Chen, 2013) was introduced and helped in consolidating the capability gains in the team as it fostered team project teams, task assignment and categorisation with rich collaborative functionalities, needed visibility including email notifications accessible on desktop, laptops and mobile devices.

The distribution strategy fit dimension was applied through the hackathon contest and the order processing solution that came out of it led to simplified service buying process and additional competitive advantage to reach other potential customers.

Activities	Action Research Cycle Timeline	Total Number of ATU Members Trained	Sales Leads/Opportunities Generated in CRM	Sales Leads Converted and Closed Per Cycle	Total No of Proof-of-Concept Supporting Closed Deals	Reusable Intellectual Propery (Build Guides, Cloud Demo Kits, Sales & Marketing Collaterals	Average Customer Satisfaction Feedback (Ratings - 1=Very Disatisfied, 3 = OK, 4=Satisfied, 5 = Very Satisfied)
Survey Data Gathering & Analysis	1st June - 30th Aug., 2015						
Adapting Insight into Workplace AR	1st Sept - 11th Sept, 2015						
Train-the-Trainer for SWOT Team	14th Sept - 25th Sept, 2015	7					
	28th Sept - 2nd Oct., 2015						
Cycle 0	Quantitative Research Insight						
Cycle 1 Start 2nd Oct., 2015	2nd Oct., 2015	8	3	1	1		
(International Entrepreneurial Proclivity and Dynamic Capabilities)	5th Oct., - 16th Oct., 2015	10	5	2	2		3
	19th Oct., - 30th Oct., 2015	12	10	4	4		3
	2nd Nov., 2015 - 13th Nov., 2015	15	30	15	12		3
Cycle 1 Ends 23rd Nov., 2015	16th Nov., 2015 - 23rd Nov., 2015	20	50	25	20		4
Cycle 1 Management Update	30th November, 2015						
Cycle 2 Start 30th Nov., 2015	30th November, 2015						
	30th Nov., 2015 -11th Dec., 2015	22	66	40	32	8	4
Dynamic Capabilities and International Marketing Capabilities	14th Dec., 2015 - 25th Dec., 2015	22	66	33	26	7	4
	28th Dec., 2015 - 8th Jan., 2016	22	66	30	24	6	4
	11th Jan., 2016 - 22nd Jan., 2016	25	75	50	35	15	4
Cycle 2 End 29th Jan., 2016	25th Jan., 2016 - 29th Jan., 2016	25	75	53	26	26	5
Cycle 2 Management Update	3rd February, 2016						
Cycle 3 Start 4th Feb., 2016							
	4th Feb., 2016 - 19th Feb., 2016	30	87	61	27	33	5
International Marketing Capabilities and International Marketing Strategy Fit	22nd Feb., 2016 - 4th Mar., 2016	30	90	72	29	43	4
	7th Mar., 2016 - 18th Mar., 2016	30	99	79	24	55	5
	21st Mar., 2016 - 1st Apr., 2016	30	120	96	29	67	5
Cycle 3 End 15th April, 2016	4th Apr., 2016 - 15th Apr., 2016	30	135	108	32	76	5
Cycle 3 Final Management Conference	15th April, 2016	37					

Table 57: Cycle 1, 2 & 3 Activities – Sales Leads, Conversions, PoC & Customer Satisfaction

5.3.3.4 Reflection

Readiness for teams and access to modern software do contribute significantly to strategy fitness. The ATU was the first team introduced to Microsoft Planner prior to its public availability (Microsoft Mechanics, 2016), and this simple but powerful experience encourage more team dynamics and thinking out of the box. The Microsoft Planner was used to effectively deliver the first customised fintech solution by the company in collaboration with US-based security company (Barracuda). The last 2 cycles have been truly that of development from storming (telling-phase) to norming (coaching-phase) phases (Hersey, Blanchard & Johnson, 2008), and the one-team spirit is gradually alive in the team. A lightning moment for me was how things it appeared that everyone suddenly stepped up to be their best, and the tremendous impact this has across every division of the business. The ATU finally became the solution powerhouse, as marketing, sales and technical team exchanges and build customer-tailored offers with the end-to-end sales, marketing and services synergy to ensure a very satisfied customer.

The story changed from serious internal marketing and pleading for people to join the programme, to that which we constantly have 3-months backlog of people to be trained. Ripamonti et al. (2016) suggestion that action research needs to go beyond reflection to reflexivity was in action during this study, such that researcher-participants were embedded in the flow of events in constructing social and organisational realities in ways they were previously unaware of (Cunliffe, 2010). The order processing system built on the cloud came out of the hackathon contest, and this shows the company already started reaping the gains of these reconfiguring dynamic capabilities which has improved the collections process as added channel for payment with ease, and less pressure on the account receivables team. I see this solution become critical to the business operations, and with the room to expand it to support feature phones thereby capturing the middle-to-lower level mass population.

It has been a journey getting here, and funding continues to be a serious problem despite all the positive impacts and growth seen in the team, and feedback from customers; opposition from within and without, especially when ATU members' choses to do it right against the usual selfish short-term heroism approach others are used to. At the end, I can say like Apostle Paul, I have fought a good fight and ending this cycle can be seen in the light of Moore (2007) experience of original sin even though forewarned by my supervisor. The researcher committed the sin of questioning validity, quality of the decisions by management, surface taken-for-granted-assumptions, became more critical and saw-the-unseen and afterwards decided to take a bow as a director in the company. Having "eaten from the tree of knowledge" and seeing the opportunities that avails with risk-taking, innovativeness and proactiveness as an entrepreneur versus holding on tightly to my position in the organisation as the business group director with its associated benefits, I decided to take my future in my hands and build my own business with the advantage of my fresh knowledge and understanding.

5.4 Survey Contribution Matrix to Action Research Accelerated Result

The table below espouses on the contribution matrix of the survey to the action research, and this is considered as significant input that jumpstarted the action research cycles, and shortened the time it would have taken to begin to see result in this messy workplace-based problem. The researcher estimated about 6 months to one year before the organisation would have reached the outcome of cycle 1. Other considerations mentioned in the limitations section.

Research Constructs	Dimensions	Most-Significant Factor From Survey	Action Research Activity mapped to Relevant Factor
Entrepreneurial Proclivity			
	Proactiveness	1. Top management regularly monitors the trends in the international service venture (5.80) 2. Top management actively seeking contact with clients in international market	1. Re-introduce Marketing Intelligence & Competitive Landscape monitoring 2. ATU Bootcamp for Modern/Challenger Sales
	Risk Taking	1. Top management focuses more on opportunities than risks abroad in international service venture (5.46) 2. When confronted with decisions about international service venture operations, our top management is always tolerant to potential risks.	1. Creatively invest in International markets through coding initiaties in campuses. 2. ATU to submit weekly reflection of opportunities, risks, gap in customer space as input into R &D
	Innovativeness	1. Our top management always encourages new service ideas for international service ventures. 2. Our top management is willing to consider new suppliers/clients abroad.	1. Launch readiness bootcamp for the ATU 2. Break silos using technology (Yammer, Microsoft Planner) and sales contest, launch and learn 3. Pitch Perfection certification for all roles & Professional certification for technical roles
Dynamic Capabilities			
	Sensing	1. We observe the best practices in our sector (5.83) 2. Employees involved in international activities attend scientific or professional conferences	1. Train workforce to deliver professionally at all times. 2. Leverage ESN platform like Yammer to improve information sharing and employee relationship. 3. Incentivise best collaborators 3. Ingraine compliance and regulatory conformance in standards and
	Reconfiguring	1. initiation of new procedures and systems (5.41) 2. New or substantially changed ways of achieving our targets and objectives in the foreign markets	1. Hackathon initiatives and invest in winning ideas (incentivize winners and Pilot the ideas/prototypes) 2. Put a monthly contest for operational improvement initiatives. 3. Joint Technology projects and research with customers and partners to improve value
International Marketing Capabilities			
	Pricing dimension	1. Monitoring international service venture competitors' prices and price changes (5.69) 2. Knowledge of international service competitors' pricing tactics (5.64)	1. Marketing Intelligence (Engage Leading Researchers like Gartner, Forrester, IDC, etc. on trend and incorporate relevant roadmap into strategic offerings Technological
	Marketing Implementation	1. Executing international service marketing strategies quickly (5.68) 2. Organizing to deliver international service marketing programs effectively (5.66) 3. Translating international service marketing strategies into action (5.65)	1. Fund international service marketing proactively 2. Ensure ATU input into the strategy 3. Incorporate customers and partners into the marketing strategy and execution
	Channel Management	1. Strength of relationships with foreign distributors (5.67)	1. Use ATU KYC and relationship channel to get "must-have" foreign partners/distributors. 2. Develop standardise assessment/qualification process to assess potential distributors tailored to the country requirement (culture, policies, regulations)
International Marketing Strategy Fit			
	Service Strategy Fit	1. Brand name (5.50) 2. Services design and style (5.47)	1. Tie brand development to marketing strategy. 2. Consistently deliver on the brand promise from sales through implementation and support. The "One-team" initiative will contribute to this
	Distribution Strategy Fit	1. Order processing systems (5.50)	1. Simplify service buying process - current model is not in local Ghanian language for example - this will help capture more marketshare through a more robust cloud-based solution and mobile apps that support feature phone like Mpessa in Kenya.

Table 58: Survey Contribution Matrix to Workplace-based Action Research

5.5 Summary of Core Action Research Project

This core action research project was the first of its kind in the organisation, and being the insider action researcher (IAR) and business group director clearly shows my role duality. This was effectively used to make lasting impact across teams as my preunderstanding added the needed blend to keep the team active, focussed, challenged, aspire to succeed, see the possibilities among others. Amidst challenges like budget cut and conflicting priorities, the shared vision and connectedness kept the One-team to be One.

Everyone calls me "Prof", colleagues, seniors, partners, including the GM, as my scholar-practitionership became obvious to all, across every segment of the business. I became advocate for practical organisation change with theoretical scaffolding in every intellectually stimulating context. I am committed to ignite the leader in everyone I see, I meet, I lead and this started with my immediate team, and the impact spread within a short time across the organisation where I served for 9 years.

5.6 Conclusion

This chapter covers the core action research project and thesis project with associated cycle of action and reflections-in-action and reflection-on-action (Pedler, 2008). A quantitative action-research that deeply connected difficult and conflicting viewpoints through the sacrificial rigour of partaking in both epistemological world of objectivity (quantitative positivism) and transitioning to subjectivity (action research) under the same objectivist ontological perspective. From a generalizable theory-neutral language to a particular view that disagrees to a theory-neutral ground for knowledge, the researcher developed as a scholar-practitioner schooled through methodological rigour in reflexivity and distanced from data to contribute to body of knowledge in the area of interest (Zuber-Skerritt & Perry, 2002), and at the same time bridge the divide between both paradigms (Hassard, 1991), not just for relevance but to solve a real-life practice based problem that determines the livelihood and joy of a given people, and through his closeness to the problem, as being part-of-the problem and problem-part-of him (Bourner et al., 2000) engaged in epistemic reflexivity (Coghlan & Brannick, 2010) thereby challenging meta-theoretical assumptions. It could be related to switching between being in control and extreme vulnerability, and growing to be fearless to be of two, one that bridges both. Indeed, it has been a huge contribution to knowledge and practice solving a major workplace problem. Chapter Seven proceeds to outline the conclusions and implication of the research to practice.

CHAPTER 6

Research Conclusions, Implications of Research, Limitations and Future Research

6.0 Research Conclusions, Implications of Research, Limitations and Future Research

6.1 Introduction

World Trade Organisation (2015) reported that commercial services account for 20% of the total world exports, and this is on a geometric growth trend. The reality of the day is that most service focused firms still thrive (run their businesses) on knowledge acquired from and developed within the context of manufacturing sector (Murray, Gao, & Kotabe, 2011). This has sustained the practice for some time but the gap in its applicability has further widened through globalisation and service-based technological advancement in cloud, social networks, mobility and analytics rooted in intangibility, variability, and inseparability. This nature has significantly amplified the urgent need for service oriented research, and is now critical as services becomes the new currency for development. A major issue relevant to international marketing theory and practice that has not received empirical attention in the extant literature is the integration of dynamic capabilities theory with the international marketing strategy in the context of international service ventures. Wilden & Gudergan (2015: 182) stated that "most research examining dynamic capabilities has remained largely theoretical".

This study is the first systematic and mixed-method action research effort that examines the factors that enable firms to achieve the optimal fit between their international marketing strategy and the environment. The combination of mixed methods in action research (MMAR) provided the rare rigour and relevance needed for an inquiry of this nature. Hence, this is an ever-living reference for scholars and practitioners across international service ventures in Nigeria, and emerging markets. The reconnaissance stage of the MMAR framework provided quality and contextual insight that informed the focus group re-framing of the research questions through the cycles of action research and how the researcher proceeded to address the workplace-based problem and the subsequent workplace-based evidence (qualitative feedback from customers and quantitative data showing increase in sales pipeline, marketing conversation ratio, observed team synergy among others).

The contribution of this study has thus been three-fold, first; is the transformation seen in the researcher's workplace through improvement in her international service venture competitiveness, second; is the rich insights from the survey of Nigerian international service ventures (which enriched the action-research from the depth of issues elicited at sub-construct and experiential-level based on commonality at industry-wide level/similar markets) and third; is the national relevance of the findings for legislation and nation-wide policy for relevance and decision making at a more global level to accelerate sustainable growth and the desired socio-economic development. The rest of the chapter dissected the focus is on the implications of the research for the researcher, scholars and practitioners.

6.2 Implications of Research

The results of this research suggest that a firm's international dynamic capabilities and competitive advantage in international service venture is directly influenced by its international entrepreneurial proclivity. Wilden & Gudergan (2015) argued that 'we still lack sufficient understanding of how firms can align dynamic capabilities with technological, competitor and market conditions changes". This research has taken the step forward to address Wilden & Gudergan (2015) concern thus contributing tangibly to the understanding of dynamic capabilities in international service ventures and it is the focal point linking international entrepreneurial proclivity to international marketing strategy and competitive advantage. It also espoused on the direct application of this knowledge in a workplace setting. Dynamic capabilities theory has a timely relevance in entrepreneurship and strategy domain as it presents an overarching connector for organisational evolution, transformation and competitiveness. This study accentuates the crucial role of dynamic capabilities for entrepreneurs and researchers involved in international service venturing as being the centre point and entrepreneurship nervous system. The limited study that can be mentioned in this research area with dynamic capability theory had largely focused on domestic market orientation (Vorhies, Orr, & Bush, 2011; Wilden & Gudergan, 2015). This study is the first of its kind to integrating international dynamic capabilities with international marketing strategy within the international service ventures context.

A common pattern seen from the findings in chapter Four and Five is that international entrepreneurial proclivity stimulates the development and frequent use of dynamics capabilities. The international service venture implications drawn from the empirical findings and workplace action research practice-based improvement are presented below.

6.2.1 International Entrepreneurial Proclivity and Dynamic Capabilities

The hypothesis testing results and path model results clearly suggests that international service ventures ability to sense the international market they play is crucial to their sustainability in such market, and this largely depends on their risk appetite and proactiveness in anticipating the marketplace. The outcome of the mixed method action research findings, mapping in Table 58, and subsequent outcome of the 1st cycles of action and reflection brought deeper practice-based results like sales pipeline growth from 3 to 50 opportunities, and sales lead conversion from 30 percent to 80 percent, as a result of proactively landing focused ATU sales/technical readiness, and competitive selling activities as response to the sensing taking place in the market and the management decision to take the risk imminent in this investment. The reconfiguring dynamic capabilities activities like "initiation of new procedures and systems" through hackathon and "One-team" initiatives were tightly linked to the action-research cycle objective and growing proactiveness and risk-taking entrepreneurial orientation in the organisation.

This research proposition that international entrepreneurial proclivity has a significant positive effect on the advancement of dynamic capabilities receives only partial support. As it was evident and as expected, that proactiveness and risk-taking relate positively to the frequency of engagement in sensing processes. Beyond the findings and application in tackling the researcher workplace-based problem, this study has shown that international firms that are involved in activities that aim at anticipating future problems, opportunities or needs, and are willing to adopt risk-taking behaviour are more likely to dedicate energy in searching and exploring foreign markets. This was the approach taken during the workplace-based focus group engagement and the customer bank chief information officer comments during a business review was " What have you been doing with your team?, it's like they suddenly resurrected as I see more team-work and interest in our business rather than the usual products they push to us without any significance to our business".

Contrariwise, innovativeness has no significant effect on sensing (see analysis in section 6.2.*5*).

The implication is that international business managers must upgrade their knowledge and skills to effectively keep their eyes on balancing their entrepreneurial proclivity and dynamic capabilities as competitive leverage amidst ever-changing business landscape. The result suggests international business managers should engage in more frequent sensing processes. This implication further differentiates this research inquiry as a practice-based study where the research and practice coexist in a cyclic and spiral relationship of which the practice surfaced new knowledge (Lester, 2004). Lester (200: 764) stated that " the practitioner view of the work-based doctorate requires that it acts as a vehicle for real-world developments and for high-level professional capability".

International entrepreneurial proclivity and reconfiguring processes came out with a different result of which proactiveness was (partly supported) and risk-taking was found to have no significant influence but innovativeness on the other hand have a significant influence on reconfiguring. This clearly shows that innovativeness is very crucial to sustainability and adaptability (reconfiguring) of business ventures operating in international markets. This implies attention should be given to continuous improvement of strategies and practices, implementation of new management methods, introduction of new procedures and technological solutions. It is noteworthy to state that, though these are new to the international service ventures, they further confirm conclusion that different dimension of entrepreneurial proclivity should be treated separately when studying internationalisation behaviour (Zhou, 2007).

6.2.2 Dynamic Capabilities and International Marketing Capabilities

The hypothesis testing results as explained in Table 47, path model results Table 51 and action-research cycle 2 Table 56 result clearly suggests that international service ventures ability to sense and reconfigure the international market they play helps in the development of their international marketing capabilities. This must not be misinterpreted as just resource and competency development, but a composition of several variables ranging from physical and non-physical assets, human resources, organisational model, structure and hierarchy, and experience in the market of interest are some of the vital components of international marketing capabilities. The action-research cycle 2 took the quantitative findings to actionable level of most significant dimensions of international marketing capabilities (pricing, marketing implementation, and channel management) which built on cycle 1 gain increasing sales pipeline growth from 66 to 75 opportunities, and sales lead conversion to closure from 50 percent to 70 percent. The workplace-based action research cycle 2 shows how the organisation enhanced her international marketing capabilities through development of Intellectual Properties which reduced operational cost and increased customer value through shorter time-to-market.

The implication and wider application to practice is that international business managers must provide business leadership that fully exploit their resources and human capabilities to understand implication of changes in the customers and competitive environment and be able to respond to current trends and future development.

This implies attention should be given to continuous monitoring of market dynamics including competitor's prices and price changes, faster execution of marketing strategies, and translation of international service marketing strategies into action. These further confirm the conclusion that the possession of superior dynamic capabilities does have a positive effect on the development of a firm's (otherwise static) marketing capabilities, and upgraded marketing capabilities enable a firm to develop a marketing strategy that reflects changing market trends and environmental condition (Wilden & Gudergan, 2015).

6.2.3 International Marketing Capabilities and Marketing Strategy Fit

As seen in Chapter Five, there has been no previous inquiry to the dimensions of international marketing capabilities and strategy fit international service ventures, superior international marketing capabilities through effective marketing strategies that matches the environment, and international market conditions. The result of the hypothesis testing Table 50 based on the quantitative research, path analysis result Table 51 and action-research focus-group cycle 3 Table 57 at different stages of this work provides the foundation for this contribution to knowledge. This highest path analysis value (0.525) of this study was seen in the significant relationship between international marketing capabilities and international marketing strategy fit.

The outcome of the 3rd cycle of action research re-emphasizes the geometrical and experiential impact that improving marketing capabilities infuses into organisational competitiveness in international market. The top two significant dimensions of international marketing strategy fit that came up are the service strategy fit which measures the brand name and service design and style, and the second is distribution strategy fit; measured by the order processing system. The 3rd cycle of the action-research was unique as it took the interactions to a deeper dimension that sought to further address how internal capabilities could meet external dependences. One of such outcome was the hackathon contest which led to development of online ordering system and how this had a domino effect on the sales processing, account receivable, effective resource management, reduced operational cost and positioned to take advantage of new opportunities. According to Hsieh & Chen (2011: 12) "strategic fit concept helps firms manage their resources more efficiently, reduce operational costs, respond to environmental changes, and take advantage of new opportunities".

Above insight applied in practice affirms the influential effects of international marketing capabilities on international marketing strategy fit and thus suggest that mangers in international service ventures should realise that the appropriateness of a specific international marketing strategy should be considered as a process of achieving strategic fit (be it adapted, hybrid or standardised). The international marketing capabilities marketing implementation dimension of "executing international service marketing strategies quickly", "organising to deliver international service marketing programs effectively", and "translating international service marketing strategies into action", all shows the implication of international marketing strategy on the international marketing strategy fit.

This research has been able to cogently identify the most significant dimensions and measurable attributes to assess the effectiveness of existing measure international service ventures adopt to attain "strategy fit". This work has extended Katsikeas, Samiee & Theodosiou (2006: 869) "marketing strategy is the main mechanism for achieving fit between an organisation and its external market conditions" beyond performance in manufacturing sector to international service ventures.

6.2.4 International Marketing Strategy Fit and International Service Advantage

The finding in this study of positive relationship between international marketing strategy fit and international service advantage indicates that there is a need for greater emphasis from international business managers on ensuring attainment of marketing strategy fit so as to achieve the desired supremacy and competitive advantage in international market of interest. A major implication that must be noted is developing the required marketing capabilities and strategy fit (cultural relevance, environmental acceptance) towards attainment of positional advantage in such foreign market. This DBA thesis did not cover international service advantage but the researcher captured the data as part of the survey and analysed quantitatively. This is a future research opportunity for international business entrepreneurs to graduate their services and the introduction of country-of-origin as a moderator will effectively expand the model.

6.2.5 Likely Model Expansion and Control Variables:

The research finding showed that innovativeness has no significant direct effect on sensing. The researcher observation and possible explanation for this unexpected finding was that the tools that the international service ventures currently use and have access to monitor environmental changes for their development and understanding of the foreign markets are more conservative, and hence limited in its capacity to conceive innovative methods to sensing processes.

The introduction of moderator variables would have complicated this already complex mixed methods action research study, but this also presents a great opportunity for the model expansion in a future research. Moderator variables "influences the strength of a relationship between two other variables" while mediator variables "explains the relationship between two other variables". Hence effects of firm-specific variables and environmental variables could be controlled by including moderators like firm size, firm international experience, competitive advantage and psychic distance.

Hofstede (2011) dimensions of organisation culture and scope for competitive advantages in cultural matters indicated that "process versus results orientation relate to the type of work the organisation does and also to the type of market in which it operates" (Hofstede et al., 2010). This finding on the organisational culture could provide strong explanations to the rejected hypothesis of relationship between innovativeness and sensing when the international business venture orientation serves as a moderator. A process-oriented venture could exhibit more rigidity with less sensing while result-oriented will tend to be more aware and thus exhibit higher sensing relative to innovativeness. Hofstede et al. (2010) stated that "service oriented ventures and research and development type of businesses are more results oriented". This provides a significant opportunity area for future research to test how "process vs result" orientation of international service ventures influences the relationship between international entrepreneurial proclivity and its dynamic capabilities.

Moderating the relationship between innovativeness and sensing by competitive intensity observing the results at high and low level for example could introduce another dimension to the findings. To further corroborate this position, the researcher industry experience shows that the telecommunications companies, part of the industry studied have recently reduced their pace of innovation and hence focus largely on operational effectiveness and cost-cutting to keep the business afloat in the international venture because of higher competitive intensity which is not limited to pressure from business competitors but also include government policies, ease of doing business in the foreign market among others.

The result did not support that risk-taking in international venturing is related positively to frequent engagement in reconfiguring process. This could be seen from the perspective of likely enormous reconfiguring cost and less likely reasons for firms to take such risk which may further explain the insignificant relationships between proactiveness, risk-taking, and reconfiguring. Expanding the model by introducing psychic distance as moderator of the relationship between proactiveness and reconfiguring for example may introduce another dimension of result in international firms through confidence due to lower psychic distance likely rooted in close foreign markets, cultural similarities (Hofstede, 2011), or vice-versa. The researcher's organisation through this study could be said to have benefited from low psychic-distance advantage in the transformation of the customer experience in the Ghana operation which gave the team the confidence to perform the changes documented in the action research cycles. Nevertheless, there is need for more research to test these moderators and also shed more light on the exact nature of the relationship between international entrepreneurial proclivity and dynamic capabilities.

6.2.6 Implication for Government and Policy Makers

The evidence presented in this study offers couple of guidance for national and services internationalisation policy makers towards stimulating and enhancing international business venture activities in and out of specific country, and across regions like ECOWAS, African Union (AU), European Union (EU) to mention a few. Nigerian government should take this findings and potentials to the economy to create a more enabling environment for international business ventures exploiting opportunities in the country; as it pertains to services industry bill, concessions to encourage foreign investments to grow the economy as this provides job opportunities for citizens, training for SMEs as services represents a huge avenue for foreign exchange earning into the country, training on internationalisation of services in the process of attaining international service advantage. Services internationalisation training and educational programme delivered through conferences and seminars under the umbrella of Federal Ministry of Trade and Investment to empower international business entrepreneurs to develop appropriate skills and capabilities which will ensure significant contributions to the international service venture outcomes.

6.3 Limitations and Future Research

6.3.1 Introduction

The findings of this study and conclusions should be interpreted in the light of certain limitations inherent in this research. Thiétart et al. (2001) called this “sound research practice”. The limitations referenced in this research effort touches on general matters, research design considerations, ontological and epistemological approach and techniques adopted. The reflections are provided below.

6.3.2 General Limitations

First, this empirical effort was restricted solely to the geographical boundaries of Nigeria (the most populous black nation in the world). Hence, the results of this study of service firms' internationalising their offerings may suffer from limited external validity. The action-research executed on the findings of the empirical inquiry was conducted as an insider research in the same industry. As a result, attempts to apply the conclusions to other research context may suffer limitations in appropriateness. Nevertheless, it could be argued that there are international service ventures with similar market and environmental conditions (e.g. other emerging markets) and the foreign markets where these firms operate, are similar to others in emerging and developed markets. This thus may allow inference from these results. Coghlan & Brannick (2010: 149) supported this positon even from action research perspective when they stated that "extrapolation from a local situation to more general situation is important".

Second, this research effort is limited by the fact that a specific empirical context was selected; services industry in Nigeria. Thus, it is suggested that research conclusions and implications derived from this empirical inquiry may only be generalised to the service industry in Nigeria, and by extension emerging African country. Third, a single source within each service organisation stood as the key informant to meet the objective of this study.

6.3.3 Research Design Considerations

The cross-sectional research design adopted prevented the possibility of drawing cause-effect conclusions with respect to the relationship of the variables included in the research conceptual model. This is related to the descriptive nature of the research design and the static nature of the parameters also limits how far one can go to make inferences based on association between the variables of inquiry. The causality issues remain a very difficult aspect of management research as this will require huge capital investment and human resources to meet the empirical requirements (Leonidou & Katsikeas, 1996).

6.3.4 Methodological Limitations

This was a mixed methods action research (MMAR) built on Ivankova (2015) framework. This sequential mixed methods research demonstrated required rigour in approach by “using the same criteria as would be used in a quantitative and qualitative investigation, as well as specific mixed methods criteria” (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2011: 32). The quantitative aspect of the study adopted proven measurement scales and constructs adapted and refined to meet the context of research were thoroughly tested and pre-tested to ensure required validity and reliability while the focus group involved in the action research investigated the survey findings to reveal greater levels of understanding and were guided through the respondent validation, pretesting among others. Nonetheless, the empirical effort adopted the use of key informant approach in the data collection process. This practically means a knowledgeable individual involved in the international operations in the service firm was identified and requested to complete the survey questionnaire.

Even though lots of planning and effort was put into this process 1000 firms were telephonically contacted and assessed qualified to participate in the survey) to reduce the likely problems associated with this approach, there is still possibility of some decimated degree of informant bias.

The action research aspect was subject to Reason (2006) choice points, and context, quality of relationships, and quality of the action research process itself and outcome were critically considered in and out of the cycles of action and reflection, nonetheless, the context was limited to the local and international operations teams in the organisation.

Even though the years of international service venture of participating service firms was captured, another limitation is that the empirical analysis conducted in this study did not put into consideration the different stages of internationalisation process that each of the firms that participated in the research was as at the time of the study. This is also applicable to the action research conducted.

6.4 Future Research

Even though this study can be extended in a number of ways, the areas that requires particular attention in future research, and how scholars and practitioners can go about this process is discussed below.

First, as discussed in section 6.3.2 under general limitations, this research was done within a particular nation context (i.e. Nigeria) and this requires further considerations when attempt to apply the findings to international service ventures in other countries. It is thus recommended that international marketing researchers consider the formulation and implementation of replication efforts in both developing and developed countries, so as to assess the external validity of the result of this study, and also bring the light on any differences in international service venture practices among the different economies.

Second, as discussed in section 6.3.3 under research design consideration, the cross-sectional design prevents the ability to make causal inferences between the variables treated in the research model. For better understanding of the underlying factors of how international entrepreneurial proclivity influences firms competitive advantage, and the forces behind how international marketing capabilities influences international marketing strategy fit, longitudinal investigations would shed more light on the extent to which cause-effect relationships can be established between international entrepreneurial proclivity and international dynamic capabilities, international marketing capabilities and international marketing strategy fit, international marketing strategy fit and international service advantage, and so on.

Third, as discussed in section 6.3.4 under methodological limitations, the research survey data collected from a single source (key informant) within each service organisation. Future research should consider data from multiple sources and different levels within the organisations including mid-level managers, employees in the international operations division, country-of-origin customers and foreign customers. However, the action research conducted based on this survey data complemented for this gap as participation cut-across levels in the organisation.

Fourth, an interesting extension of this study would also be the “model expansion” to investigate how certain service firm internationalisation characteristics and external factors like firm size, firm international experience, country of origin effect (COO), psychic distance and competitive intensity influences the nature of relationships underlying the research model.

Finally, as discussed in section 6.3 under methodological limitation, the empirical analysis conducted in this research did not put into consideration the different stages of internationalisation process that each of the firms that participated in the research was, at the time of data collection. International marketing literature has documented that there are several stages in the internationalisation development process of a firm (Cavusgil & Knight, 2015). Future research should look into how the relationships shown in the conceptual model can vary across the different stages of the firm's internationalisation. This will further help business practitioners in international service ventures to further exploit their entrepreneurial proclivity and dynamic capabilities with required insight at different stages of internationalisation. This will also help the government to formulate right policies that aids national development, taking into consideration required support and promotion programmes that is tailored to firm's level of involvement in international service ventures.

6.5 Conclusion

This study findings have clearly shown why managers in international service ventures should pay careful attention to the way they manage dynamic capabilities available to their business such that they upgrade to attain substantive capabilities and be the master in deploying effective and efficient marketing strategies in international markets. More than ever before, global world leaders and summits are now targeted towards economic diversification as oil sector plummeted seriously affecting oil-dependent economies like Nigeria; the time is now for firms involved in international business ventures to exercise these capabilities to grow their business and develop the economy through forex inflow into the nation. Having established the significance of international marketing capabilities on marketing strategy fit, it is crucial that the international service venture managers responsible for the design and implementation of international marketing strategies are able to assess the appropriateness of a given international marketing strategy; be it standardised, adapted or combination of the two (Katsikeas, Samiee & Theodosiou, 2006: 882) and promptly correct misfit (Katsikeas, Samiee & Theodosiou, 2006: 882).

This research proposition that international entrepreneurial proclivity has a strong positive relationship on dynamic capabilities received full support on proactiveness positively related to sensing and reconfiguring but risk-taking in international venturing had strong support for sensing but medium level support for reconfiguring. It thus resonates that international firms in service ventures inclined to risk-taking behaviour should devote more energy to searching and exploring foreign opportunities. Similarly, innovativeness has a medium level relationship with sensing but strongly related to reconfiguring. A possible explanation for this is that the international firms still depend on conventional approaches to acquire new knowledge, and in sensing and monitoring their target foreign markets, thus giving room for little or no room for innovativeness. It could also be industry related, and as such should be further investigated, to see how technology plays a role in innovativeness and sensing for international service ventures. On another note, innovativeness was strongly related to reconfiguring (extending and modifying capabilities in response to changes in the market and technologies), as the workplace action-research outcome shows the innovativeness through hackathon yielded business transformational experience. This re-establish the crucial role innovativeness plays in refining and adapting processes and strategies, implementation of new leadership method, new ways of delivering same service and newer technologies to deliver same service, especially as the environment and taste changes. Innovativeness may be the competitive advantage that reconfiguring adopts to ensure customers are best served in the foreign market. It is important to mention there is often associated cost with reconfiguring and this may be the reason why there was medium relationships with risk-taking,

The results of this workplace-based action research clearly point to the importance of entrepreneurial proclivity in developing competitive advantage in international service venture. Through the conceptual model developed for this study, International proactiveness, risk-taking and innovativeness were thoroughly evaluated in service-oriented organisations and relationships with dynamic capabilities serving as the interlink to further establish relationship with international marketing strategy and international competitive advantage. The study results imply that entrepreneurial proclivity kindles the growth and repeated use of dynamic capabilities. For scholars, this study has contributed to existing body of knowledge by creation of new knowledge that will help international firms to successfully cope with new market realities. This study and the findings are timely as the emerging and developed markets now seek economic development through services sector, this comes accessible for service ventures seeking to internationalise their offerings, and for entrepreneurs desiring understanding of how to expand its services to foreign markets, and for mature international service ventures looking for ways to be more effective, efficient and be more competitive in differentiating their offerings in the foreign market. Chapter Eight proceeds to outline the limitations and future research.

This chapter covered the specific limitations of this research by the way of, general limitations; research design limitations; and methodological approach limitations. The chapter also covered rich discussion of areas of future research that will further enrich our collective understanding and development of international marketing theory and practice. At the third person level of inquiry and impact, I have documented this thesis and the learning to surpass my limited contact with people, and integrated the three persons through this action research. If you are reading up to this point, this cause has been fulfilled just as I have attempted to not only describe, or explain the world of "improving competitive advantage of international service venture" but I have also changed my world of practice.

Finally, to my fellow scholars from the positivism to critical realism and action research, why can't we have the best of both worlds? The hypothetical response from a friend was "they are different in their philosophical foundations". My response was, you mean on the ground of knowledge? Absolutely she sighted. I responded again, since they both have same ontological foundation, they exist in the same planet, but different countries; even different planets in the solar system are connected indirectly by the sun despite light years from each other. I think this is a welcome reality, as living in both worlds enriches my capacity to do more. Hence, I chose to pay the price to become a scholar practitioner.

I am a scholar practitioner, I belong to both worlds, and I have dual citizenship. I have dual citizenship, and all I do is to book my flight as at when needed and once in a country, I live by the modus operandi. I continually use my synthetic knowledge based on my exposure to both worlds to improve the lot of the two paradigms. Hence, I have the benefit of both worlds and I positively contribute to the development of the two. I am a scholar-practitioner, wouldn't you rather be like me?

CHAPTER 7

Final Reflection

7.0 Final Reflection

7.1 Introduction (From Residency to Date)

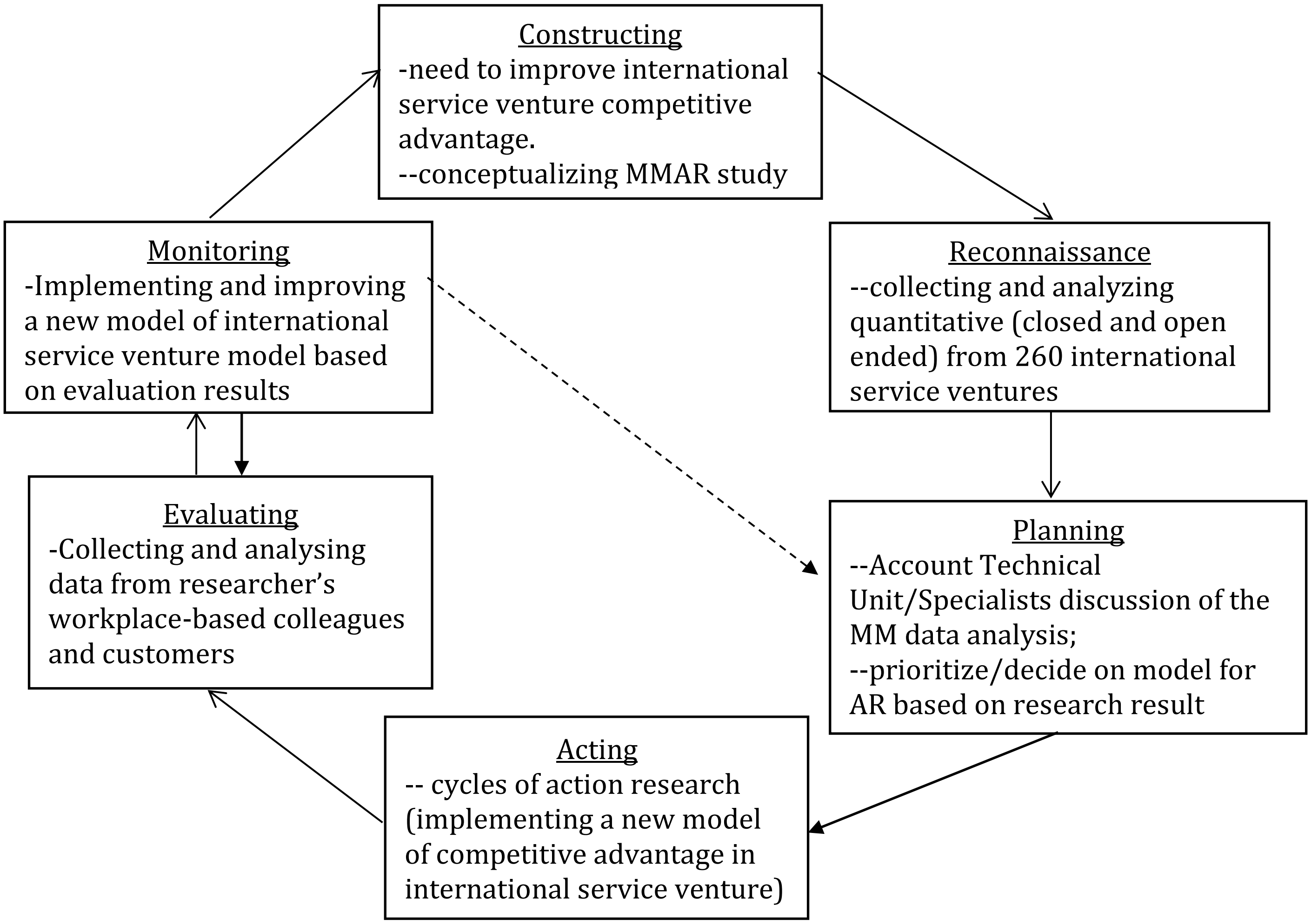

Figure 31: Adapted Ivankova (2015) Mixed Methods Methodological Framework Adapted for Final Research Reflection

Writing this final section in itself is a process of critical reflection of 6 years' journey for me as a researcher and practitioner. It has been a cyclic, reflective and reflexive journey anchored by critical reflection, deep thinking, self-renewal, and yearning for pragmatic-knowledge as a zealous scholar-practitioner consumed by scholarly work within the practice-context through the lens of rigour-relevance (Starkey & Madan, 2001; Gray, Watson

& Lies; 2009) and continually exploring ways of sustaining “the flames of learning” (Hebert, 2011).

From the beginning of the programme, my anchor has been the inner-zeal and desire, passion to understand, preserve and change my world (Wisker et al., 2006). It is three years that this thesis journey started after completion of my residency in Liverpool and subsequent submission of my conference paper and Doctoral Development Plan (DDP). This journey has indeed been revealing and maturing for me as a scholar-practitioner, and in a lot of ways can be related to the cyclic framework in Figure 31. The constructing phase started prior to the DBA residency Aug-Sept 2013 in Liverpool as I engaged more in critical reflection and reflexivity (Antonacopoulou, 2004), especially in identifying a workplace-based problem for my conference paper. I quickly spotted employee participation in decision making as a major and pressing workplace issue in a view to improve employee productivity/job satisfaction (a major issue in the industry, and the country at large) and was able to surface usable insight from the research titled “*The Relationship between Employee Participation in Decision Making (PDM) and Employee Job Satisfaction in a Bank in Nigeria*”, and the findings supported the argument that job satisfaction increases as PDM increases, but also revealed that level of desired PDM varies from one employee to another. It was during residence that I approached my supervisor, having been my doctoral tutor during the class modules, and given her depth further demonstrated at the residency in the areas of my research interest, I had no doubt she would be the best to take the journey with, yet mindful in all my proceedings and it was rightly so.

Still connected and consumed with the passion to make a difference, the time came for my doctoral thesis, and my thesis proposal was still focussed on addressing participative decision making, as a major leadership issue in the workplace. This PDM issue was conceived to be rooted in a cultural bureaucracy authoritarian style of hierarchical organisational centralised structures that need to be de-layered into hybrid structure (Thorpe & Morgan, 2006). Hence my proposal title was "*Participative decision making and organizational performance: investigating the internal process through organizational capabilities and marketing strategy implementation* "submitted 17th June, 2014 and final approval on 17th July, 2014 was the beginning of another chapter of my life-journey and learning, of which I have grown and become "a-better-me" with a geometrical relevance in all spheres of my life.

Post proposal approval, I received approval of my management and colleagues that this is a worthwhile workplace-based problem. Gary, Watson & Lies (2009: 2) argued that "knowledge is generated in the context of multi-stakeholder teams that transcend the boundaries of traditional disciplines, working on problems to be found in working life". We set out on this journey to explore the problem of employee participation in decision making (EPDM) and organisational performance (Lowin, 1968; Westhuizen, Pacheco & Webber, 2012), link between marketing strategy formulation and implementation (Noble & Makowa, 1999) and effect on marketing strategy implementation and organisational capabilities (Morgan, Katsikeas & Vorhies, 2012), and then set out to engage wider workplace-based colleagues in sensemaking process of this problem. This constructing phase of stakeholders' engagement surfaced deeper-level of problems that espouses participation in decision-making as a subset of organisational culture and also correlated the issue with the organisation dynamic capabilities (Coghlan, 2010). I sought more insight from literature and came to understand that PDM is a sub-set of organisational culture, and also grew in my understanding of a scholar-practitioner prerogative of rigour-relevance balance, amidst ontological and epistemological divide, but maintained focused per-relevance and thus narrow down to the researcher specific industry (service sector) and with the involvement of the workplace-based stakeholders framed this problem as ""*Identifying the path through which entrepreneurial proclivity influences competitive advantage: Does dynamic capabilities, marketing capabilities and international marketing strategy fit matter?".*

This marks the beginning of the reconnaissance phase, as the researcher dig deeper in literature and with workplace group members/coresearchers meetings, to kick-start the data collection process of this mixed methods action research project, generated useable primary data from 260 service firms, including the researcher's organisation, and this became provided the levers for the successful workplace-based focus group cycle of action research in the planning phase. The survey analysis was deeply insightful in the conceptual model context and this contribute immensely to setting the action research context and modes of engagement.

It became apparent that the problem is more complex than it appears, and this will require radical change in the way we currently do our international business

(Bartunek et al., 2006). Further deliberations through the planning phase by the champions in the focus-group brought to light more complexities that the action research cycle following the framework helped kept hope active, ensured issues were framed in context of assumptions and known underlying relationships.

The acting, evaluating and monitoring phases were more cyclical in practice, and the actions taken in the implementation of new model for competitive advantage in the international service ventures were measured quantitatively and feedback sought from qualitative perspective from customers, and extended team-members which provided the robust evaluation and input aiding the improvement of the new model based on the outcomes. Coghlan & Brannick (2010) stated that “as you enact cycles of action and reflection, you will discover new information and new constraints emerge”.

Going through this process provided a lifetime development platform for me as a scholar, as a practitioner, a researcher, a father, an industry subject matter expert, and a concerned citizen among others. The overarching context remains constant, that is the inevitability of change for the organisation to remain profitable and sustainable. The entire process testifies to a classical action research where messy problem was addressed through action, collective participation and research, adopting a mixed methods approach, and the problem reframed with clarity on how events have led to alternative meaning with evidence and rationale for the new shared meaning upon which further action was based. This was the core of my development going through these cognitive contests and constantly challenging my theories-in-use to my espoused theory (Cunliffe, 2004) while maintaining an integrated focus group rooted in epistemic reflexive values (Susman & Evered, 1978). Coghlan concluded that “framing and selecting an AR project in itself is a complex matter and the acts of framing, reflecting on how it fits or not, and selecting the AR project are themselves AR learning cycles” (Coghlan & Brannick, 2010: 61).

The core action research project success was with major learning like perseverance, can-do attitude, professionalism, leadership and integrity. The narration and reflection of the three cycles of action and reflection are documented in 5.3 The Core Action Research Project

The remaining sectors delve deeper into my reflection-in-action (Schön, 1983; Coghlan & Brannick, 2010), learning, development at a first-person (through upstream experience has become a better and learning scholar practitioner), second-person (working with colleagues solving a workplace-based problem of mutual concern as a joint team) and third-person inquiry/practice level (through this narration serving as reference for scholars, practitioners, and policy makers).

7.2 Personal Transformation

This DBA journey and experience has been a total transformation for me. Though married for 15 years with great things to show for it, the last 3 years can be related to the gains of fuelling my dynamic capabilities to utmost “fit-for-purpose” level in every area of my life. The first-person, second-person and third-person voices has shaped my ontological and epistemological view of life. In personal inquiry, I am more vulnerable to learning, and this has aided unprecedented growth in my capacity to influence, to give, and to make things happen.

Though I was the business director with lots of leadership and management experience of over 18 years. This final thesis and the process of going through a second-person inquiry through this core action research project opened a new realm of influence for results in every area of my life. At the same time, “being more aware” going through this process took me to the place Moore (2007) original sin. I decided to quit after the successful completion of the core action research. Having “eaten from the tree of knowledge” and seeing the opportunities that avails with risk-taking, innovativeness and proactiveness as an entrepreneur versus holding on tightly to my position in the organisation as the business group director with its associated benefits, I decided to take my future in my hands and build my own business with the advantage of my fresh knowledge and understanding. I am most grateful to my doctoral supervisor for going through this developmental journey with me, of which I have developed and grown to provide platform for many to realise their potentials. To second supervisor, and the Viva Panel for the critical feedback that challenged me to rewrite my methodology and the indescribable learning going through this rigorous process, and the learning thereof, and to the entire team that make this programme possible. Thank You!

I am most excited building a leaderful organisation (Raelin, 2010) embrace collective, concurrent, collaborative and compassionate leadership. The move from a business group to now an entire organisation has been revealing for me. My sphere of influence, and capacity to build/grow with required content and substance to provide leadership across diverse spheres of life and business/personal interest has increased tremendously. I am able to give back to the society during this period, take on more challenges and constantly question my assumptions, my fears and boundaries. I was recently awarded the "The best Father Ever" by a top-five secondary school in Nigeria (Greensprings) where I double as a father for championing the first ever 2-weeks entrepreneurial coding programs (first of its kind in Nigeria) using MIT Inventor (EduPEAR, 2016), STEM programs, etc. I am currently working on another technovation with the aim of giving a voice to a girl-child through computer coding and inspire women in technology and entrepreneurship.

This research launched me into my world of possibilities. Engaging over 300 international service ventures in the course of my doctoral research not only opened my eyes to depth of building a competitive service business, but grabbed a deeper understanding of the macro/micro environmental factors, the literature insight into dynamic capabilities and correlations to other constructs as documented in this work, and the opportunity to actually put this to use through action, in-practice for practice.

Over the last one year I have been able to start 2-businesses as an entrepreneur, the first loyalty-e-commerce Startup in Nigeria (Loyalbonus, 2016), and by extension in Africa. Going through this process ignited a cord that change my life, all the learning (actively and passively) came together to make sense, the ontology, the epistemology, action, the research, the participation, approach all connected and yielded a genuine liberation in me, and corresponding progressive result on my immediate team, extended team, business, and society at large.

7.3 Organisational Transformations

The core action research project was the first of its kind in the organisation, and being the insider action researcher (IAR) and business group director clearly shows my role duality. This was effectively used to make lasting impact across teams as my preunderstanding added the needed blend to keep the team active, focussed, challenged, aspire to succeed, see the possibilities among others. Amidst challenges like budget cut and conflicting priorities, the shared vision and connectedness kept the One-team to be One.

Everyone calls me "Prof", colleagues, seniors, partners, including the GM, as my scholar-practitionership became obvious to all, across every segment of the business. I became advocate for practical organisation change with theoretical scaffolding in every intellectually stimulating context. I am committed to ignite the leader in everyone I see, I meet, I lead and this started with my immediate team, and the impact spread within a short time across the organisation where I served for 9 years.

7.4 Scholarly Level

It started quietly but like a city set on a hill that cannot be hidden, so it is with my knowledge and practice. It has grown beyond me, as colleagues now refer to Prof's standard, and my learning is to all not to "stop learning", enquiring, reflecting, taking action, and reflecting-in-action, and subjecting personal ideologies and assumptions to critical reflections.

Finally, and to the third person level of inquiry and impact, I have documented this thesis and the learning to surpass my limited contact with people, and integrated the three persons through this action research. If you are reading this reflection, this cause has been fulfilled just as I have attempted to not only describe, or explain the world of “improving competitive advantage of international service venture” but I have also changed my world of practice.

Finally, to my fellow scholars from the positivism to critical realism and action research, why can't i have the best of both worlds? hypothetical response from a friend was “they are different in their philosophical foundations”. My response was, you mean on the ground of knowledge? Absolutely she sighted. I responded again, since they both have same ontological foundation, they exist in the same planet, but different countries; even different planets in the solar system are connected indirectly by the sun despite light years from each other. I think this is a welcome reality, as living in both worlds enriches my capacity to do more. Hence, I chose to pay the price to become a scholar practitioner.

I am a scholar practitioner, i belong to both worlds, and i am a legal citizen. i have dual citizenship, and all i do is to book my flight as at when needed and once in a country, i live by the modus operandi. I continually use my synthetic knowledge based on my exposure to both worlds to improve the lot of the two paradigms.

Hence, i have the benefit of both world and I positively contribute to the development of the two. I am a scholar-practitioner, wouldn't you rather be like me?

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

Ethics Approval

Subject: Ethics Review Outcome

Dear Yomi,

Following the review of your revised proposal, I am pleased to write and confirm that you have obtained research ethics approval for you work. By copy of this email I invite your supervisor to complete the associated section in the grade center of your Thesis BB class (please, see attached file with guidelines to complete the process).

Best wishes for an interesting and successful DBA research project.

Kind Regards,

APPENDIX B

Survey: Questionnaire

Identifying the path through which entrepreneurial proclivity influences competitive advantage in international service ventures: Do dynamic capabilities, marketing capabilities and international marketing strategy fit matter?

Please answer all questions as fully and honestly as possible. In most questions, it is your personal feeling that we are interested in.

Your cooperation is invaluable to the success of this study!

SECTION 1: THE INTERNATIONAL SERVICE VENTURE

By ***"international service venture"*** what is meant is a ***single service*** or ***service line*** to a ***specific foreign market (country)***. For example, an international service venture could be information which comprises of Infotech consultancy, broadcasting, computers, internet & ict, software sales, or educational services (computer education and training) or, transportation & warehousing (taxi, limousine, air transportation, postal service, travel agencies & tours) or other services - religious organisations, barbers/beauty salon, ("the venture service offering") exported to Ghana, Cameroon, Togo ("the international service venture"). The venture you choose should have been running for at least three years.

Which *country* is the international service venture market? ....

Please describe briefly the international (service) venture service: ....

....

In which of the following categories would you mainly place this international service venture service offering?

Industrial/Business-to-Business ☐ Consumer ☐

For how many years has this international service venture been running for (approximately)? ....

SECTION 2: INTERNATIONAL ENTREPRENEURIAL PROCLIVITY

In answering the following questions, please focus on your organisation and indicate the extent of your agreement or disagreement with each of the following statements:

	Strongly Disagree						***Strongly Agree***
Our top managers have regularly attended local/international service venture trade fairs.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Our top managers have usually spent some time abroad to visit.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Our top management actively seeks contact with suppliers or clients in international service ventures.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

Our top management regularly monitors the trends in the international service ventures	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Our top management actively explores business opportunities abroad	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Our top management focuses more on opportunities than risks abroad.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
When confronted with decisions about international service venture operations, our top management is always tolerant to potential risks.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Our top managers have shared vision towards the risks of international service ventures.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Our top management values risk-taking opportunities abroad.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Our top management always encourages new service ideas for international service ventures.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Our top management is very receptive to innovative ways of exploiting international service ventures' opportunities.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Our top management believes the opportunities in international service ventures are greater than that of the domestic market.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Our top management continuously searches for new international service ventures opportunities.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Our top management is willing to consider new suppliers/clients abroad.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

SECTION 3: DYNAMIC CAPABILITIES AVAILABLE TO INTERNATIONAL SERVICE VENTURE

In answering the following questions, please focus on the international service venture and indicate how often have you carried out the following activities in the last four years?

	Rarely						***Very Often***
Implementation of a new or substantially changed company international service venture marketing strategy.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Implementation of new kinds of international service venture marketing practices	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
New or substantially changed international service venture marketing practices or strategies	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
New or substantially changed technological equipment, manufacturing or service delivery processes	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Substantial renewal of business processes	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Initiation of new procedures or systems	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
New or substantially changed ways of achieving our targets and objectives in the foreign markets	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
People involved in international activities participate in professional association activities	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Employees involved in international activities attend scientific or professional conferences	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
We connect with our active network of contacts with the scientific and research community							

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
We use established processes to identify international service venture segments, changing foreign customer needs and international service venture customer innovation	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
We observe the best practices in our sector	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

SECTION 4: MARKETING CAPABILITIES AVAILABLE TO INTERNATIONAL SERVICE VENTURE

Please rate your international service venture market, relative to your major international service venture competitors, in terms of its marketing capabilities in the following areas.

	Much Worse than Competitors						***Much Better than Competitors***
Using pricing skills and systems we respond quickly to international service venture market changes	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Knowledge of international service competitors' pricing tactics	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Doing an effective job of pricing services in the international service venture market	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Monitoring international service venture competitors' prices and price changes	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Ability to develop new services for the international service venture market	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Developing new services to exploit R&D investment	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Successfully launching new services in the international service venture market	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Ensuring that service development efforts are responsive to foreign customer needs	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

Strength of relationships with foreign distributors	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Attracting and retaining the best foreign distributors	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Adding value to your foreign distributors' businesses	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Providing high levels of service support to foreign distributors	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Developing and executing advertising programs	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Advertising management and creative skills	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Public relations skills	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Brand image management skills and processes	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Giving international service sales personnel the training they need to be effective	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Sales management planning and control systems	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Selling skills of international service sales personnel	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Sales management skills	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Providing effective sales support to the international service sales personnel	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Ability to effectively segment and target international service venture market	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Developing creative international service venture marketing strategies	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Thoroughness of marketing planning processes	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Allocating marketing resources effectively	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Organizing to deliver international service marketing programs effectively	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Translating international service marketing strategies into action	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Executing international service marketing strategies quickly	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

SECTION 5: INTERNATIONAL SERVICE VENTURE MARKETING STRATEGY FIT

Please indicate the extent to which the following elements of your international service venture marketing program" match" or "fit" the environmental (e.g., international customer needs preferences that prevail in their international service venture, economic environment, legal environment, cultural environment) and market (e.g., customer needs and preferences) conditions that prevail in the international service venture.

	No Fit At all						***Perfect Fit***
Services design and style	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Brand name	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Labelling	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Warranties	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Pre- and after-sales service	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Selling price to trade customers	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Selling price to end-users	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Profit margins to trade customers	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Profit margins to end-users	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Sales terms	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Advertising message	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Advertising creative presentation	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Advertising media strategy	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Publicity and public relations activities	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Sales promotion tools	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Personal selling techniques	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Length of distribution channels	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Type of middlemen used	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Distribution coverage	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Control over distribution channels	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

Inventory controls	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Order processing systems	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

SECTION 6: SERVICE ADVANTAGE

Considering the international service venture, please indicate if your company's perceived level of service offering have become much worse than competitors or much better than competitors over the past year

	Much Worse						***Much Better***
Service accessibility	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Technical support and after-sales service	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Delivery speed and reliability	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Overall end customer rating of service quality	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Overall end customer satisfaction with product, service offering	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

SECTION 7: YOUR EXPERIENCE

Please indicate the time you have been with:

Your company………………………………………………

The specific international service venture service or service line………………………

The international service venture…………………………………..

The company's international service venture sales department…………………………………..

SECTION 8: GENERAL INFORMATION

What is the approximate number of full time employees in your company? ....

Please indicate the approximate <u>total</u> sales turnover of your firm in the last year (USD): ………………

Please indicate the approximate <u>international service venture</u> sales turnover of your firm in the last year (USD): ……………………

Approximately, how long has your firm been in international service venture operations?…….

Is there a section in your firm fully responsible for international service venture operations?
Yes ☐ No ☐

What is the approximate number of full time employees in your company partly or fully involved in international service venture operations?

What is the approximate number of countries to which your firm operates?………………………………

What is the approximate number of overseas customers, to whom your company offered services in form of (rented use-right, hired labour/expertise of your personnel or received payment for access to your facilities and networks) last year? ……………………

Please indicate your age………………………………………………..

Please indicate your gender……………………………………………..

Please indicate your position in the company (ie. job title): ………………………………………………………

Thank you for your co-operation in this important study ☺☺☺