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EFFECT OF SALESFORCE SIZE ON THE PERFORMANCE OF SELECTED LISTED MANUFACTURING FIRMS IN SOUTH-WESTERN NIGERIA

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Abstract

The intense competition in fast moving consumer goods (FMCG) subsector of the Nigeria food and beverage industry in recent years has made business firms to tie their performance to the quality and appropriate size of salesforce. Hiring and maintaining right of salesforce is one of the most challenging activities in salesforce management because of business firm needs to strive to have the right size or number of sales force required to achieve its stated objectives. The objective of this study is to determine the effect of salesforce on firms' performance using listed manufacturing firms in food and beverage sector operating in south-western part of Nigeria as a case study. The study used a combination of simple random and purposive sampling techniques to select three manufacturing firms out of fourteen firms that were listed in the food and beverage sector of Nigerian Stock Exchange. The study essentially sourced its data from secondary sources such as relevant and related literature to provide conceptual and theoretical background for the subject matter and Nigerian stock exchange Fact book that provides data on annual reports of the selected firms for ten years. Linear regression was employed as analytical techniques. Findings of the study indicated that, there is statistically significant relationship between the salesforce size and firms' performance and that salesforce size had significant effect on firms' performance. On the bases of this, it was recommended that management of manufacturing firms in the food and beverage industry should strategically manage the relationship that exists between salesforce size and firms' performance to ensure attainment of their firms' stated profit objectives.

Keywords: *Salesforce size, Firm performance, Listed firm, Net profit*

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Introduction

The growth and survival of any business firm depend on its ability to acquire, explore and exploit organisational resources such as materials, machines and personnel which are required in the day to day running of every business firm activities. However, effective and efficient utilisation of machine and material resources of every firm depend largely on how they are applied and exploited by the human element in the organisation and this is where the quality of human resources matters as its quality affects the performance of materials and machines resources as well as other organisational operational activities in many ways. Thus, business organisation should formulate recruitment and selection strategies that will be attractive to salespeople who have the requisite capacity to attain its stated goals and objectives.

Business organisations all over the globe operate with the objective of satisfying the needs of their target customers, realise profit and better the lot of society in general. To be able to do this effectively; business firms need to capture a reasonable size of the market and this will not happen by accident, it must be planned for through the adoption of apposite sales stimulating strategies. Although, there are various sales stimulating tools firms can use such as advertising, sales promotion, personal selling and public relations. Personal selling is the major tool that can be used to reach these goals and objectives because it is a more effective way of communicating with customers, for exploring their needs, for alleviating any concerns they may have, and for communicating the full benefits of a firm's offer to them.

In view of the foregoing, the formulation of appropriate human resources strategies becomes imperative for business firms operating in a sector such as fast moving consumer goods (FMCG) which is characterised by intense competition among rival firms especially in the area of headhunting of competent and goal setter salespeople within the sector. According to Gluck (2014) salespeople can make or mar the performance of any business firm depending on their level of professionalism, competency, commitment and integrity. He further pointed out that when hiring a salesforce, business firms must check references and use effective interview techniques to find people who best fit the company culture and its goals. Therefore, to operate successfully in Nigerian economy, managers in manufacturing industry need to embrace appropriate marketing strategies which enable them to hire and maintain the right quality and size of salespeople to effectively and efficiently perform sales management related functions.

This is because having the right size of salesforce is very crucial to the successful operation of any firm because an over-sized salesforce will increase the firm's marketing cost and consequently, the profit level of the firm would go down, while, if less salesforce are hired, the workload on each salesperson would increase, making it difficult for them to meet their targets.

The sector for fast moving consumer goods (FMCG) is highly characterised by differentiated marketing strategies and assortment of different products from local and international markets which necessitated the use of the right number or size of salespeople to ensure appropriate coverage of the target market and attainment of the firms' sales revenue and profit objectives. The eagerness to embark on the current work is based on the drive to determine the impact of salesforce size on profit performance of selected listed manufacturing firms operating in food and beverages sector of south western region of Nigerian economy.

Empirically, few studies such as the studies of Kanwal and Ahmed (2010), Pelham (2006) and Mustapha (2007) have investigated the impact of salesforce size on organisational performance. The few studies on the subject matter are either narrow in scope and issues they addressed, for instance, while Pelham (2006) and Mustapha (2007) investigated single firm each

in their studies, Kanwal or Ahmed (2010), examined two firms across sectors in their own study. Furthermore, Pelham (2006) studied causal relationships between sales management programs and firm performance using profit as performance indicator. Mustapha (2007) examined the influence of salesforce size on revenue generation. The desire to conduct a more broad study that examines more than two firms within a sector informed this study to seek to answer the question: What is the effect of salesforce size on firms' performance?

Objectives of the study

The main objective of the study is to investigate the effect of salesforce size on organisational performance. The specific objective of the study is to investigate the effect of salesforce size on firms' performance

Literature Review and Conceptual Background

Salesforce or personal selling is one of the promotional mix elements in marketing and it simply refers to the specific blend of promotion tools that the company uses to persuasively communicate customer value and build customer relationship (Kotler & Armstrong, 2012). These promotions or communication tools in views of Kotler and Armstrong (2012), Kumar and Meenakshi (2013), Kotler (2003) and Johnston and Marshall (2003) are advertising, public relations, personal selling, sales promotion and direct-marketing. These promotional tools are briefly discussed below based on the views of Kumar and Meenakshi (2013) and Johnston and Marshall (2003). However, personal selling which is the focus of the present study will be more emphasised in the study.

- i. **Advertising:** This refers to any paid form of non-personal presentation and promotion of ideas, goods or services by an identified sponsor.
- ii. **Public relations:** This is process of building good relations with the company's various publics by obtaining favourable publicity, building up a good corporate image and handling or heading off unfavourable rumours, stories and events.
- iii. **Sales promotion:** This refers to short term incentives to encourage the purchase or sale of a product or service.
- iv. **Direct marketing:** This is a direct connection with carefully targeted individual consumer(s) to obtain an immediate response and cultivate lasting customer relationships.
- v. **Personal selling:** This also refers to personal presentation by the firm's salesforce for the purpose of making sales and building customer relationship.

Salesforce / Salespeople

Sales force or sales people are the group of people who have been trained and organised for the specific purpose of selling their company's products. In other words, group of people who persuade other people to buy their company's products (Longman Dictionary of contemporary English, 2000). According to Oyelami (1992) salesforce or salespeople are the group of employees who persuade prospects to buy goods and services through face to face contact. Kotler and Armstrong (2012) rendered a broad meaning of when they observed that personal selling involves interpersonal interactions between salespeople and individual customers, whether face to face, by telephone, via e-mail, through video or web conferences or by other means. Thus, it is through personal selling or salesforce that manufacturing and other

business firms interact with their actual and potential customers and in the course of their interaction, salespeople identify the specific needs and problems of the customer, and tailor their sales presentation in the light of this knowledge (Kumar & Meenakshi, 2013).

Roles of the Salesforce

According to Kotler and Armstrong (2012) the roles of salesforce varies from company to company. Some firms have no salespeople at all, for example, companies that sell only online or through catalogues or companies that sell through manufacturer's representative, sales agents or brokers, however, where salesforce is used, they play significant roles in the life of such firms (Kotler & Armstrong, 2012). The primary role of salesforce is generation of revenue required to carry the core operations of their firms and in addition to generating income, the sales force builds trust with customers, they engage customers at all stages of the relationship and current customers gain their trust through consistent follow-up and communication. Salesforce also work to re-engage previous customers through promotions, discounts, and communications (Kotler & Armstrong, 2012). Elijah (2001) and Oyelami (1991) further observed that the importance of salesforce to any organisations is in the functions they perform such as answering objections, conducting market research and intelligence work, rendering technical assistance, and advising both the company and customers, communicating information to existing and potential buyers about products and services as well as promoting the image of the firm they represent. However, majority of the scholars in the field of marketing such as Kumar and Meenakshi (2013), (Kotler & Armstrong, 2012) Johnston and Marshall (2003), Kotler, (2003), Ode, Duru-Nnebue and Mathen (2002), Onu (2000) agreed that the functions of salespeople are prospecting, targeting, communicating, product demonstration, handling objections selling, servicing, information gathering, allocating products to customers and closing the sale.

Types of Salesforce

Basically there are three main types of salesforce and each form is identified by its functions. The three forms are order-getting salesforce, order-taker salesforce and supporting salesforce (Kumar & Meenakshi, 2013; Kotler & Armstrong, 2012; Johnston & Marshall, 2003; Kotler, 2003; & Oyelami 1991).

The Order-Getter Salesforce

This categories of salesforce seek new orders, that is, seeking out potential buyers aggressively with well-planned sales presentation methods, well designed to attract the customer to buy the product, or service. They are usually excellent creative salesmen, who possess considerable communication and selling ability. They are also persuasive talkers and effective communicators who express their ideas so well that people will respond favorably (Johnston & Marshall, 2003; Oyelami 1991).

Order-Takers Salesforce

The order-takers salesforce keep the business going because they complete the bulk of sales transactions after the initial contact with order getter Salesforce. After the customers have acquired an initial interest in the product of a specific firm, either by an order getting salesperson, a supporting salesperson or through advertising or sales promotion, the order-taker salesforce may be necessary to answer any final question, take care of adjustment in the order

and complaint and keep customers informed and complete the sale (Johnston & Marshall, 2003; Oyelami, 1991).

Supporting Salesforce

Supporting salesforce are the ambassadors of good will and they provide specialised services. Supporting salesmen by their training work with both retailers and wholesalers and their activities naturally are directed towards obtaining sales, at least in the short run. Supporting salesmanship involves servicing the accounts, adjusting complaints, training the wholesalers' salespeople and sometimes working directly with him in helping the more important retail outlets to sell the goods. There are two types of supporting salesforce who support and assist the order-oriented salesforce. The two types are missionary salesmen and technical specialists (Johnston and Marshall, 2003; Oyelami 1991).

However, Kumar and Meenakshi (2013), Kotler and Armstrong (2012), Johnston and Marshall (2003) and Oyelami (1991) cautioned that there is no hard and fast rule about the structure of Salesforce functions. Although there are sufficient overlaps existing among their activities, there is sufficient basis for distinguishing these types. It is interesting to note that, a particular salesperson might be given at least two of these tasks and perhaps all (Oyelami, 1991).

In addition, the organisational structure of a firm's salesforce depend largely on the number of products, market coverage of the products and type of customers the firm is serving (Oyelami 1991; Johnston & Marshall, 2003; Kotler, 2003; Kotler and Armstrong, 2012; Kumar & Meenakshi, 2013). However, marketing scholars such as Kumar and Meenakshi (2013), Johnston and Marshall (2003), Kotler (2003) Ode, Duru-Nnebue and Mathen (2002), Onu (2000), Osuagwu (1999) and Oyelami (1991) suggested that business organisations can structure their sales force using markets, territories, products, and or hybrid structure which is a combination of any of these. They unanimously pointed out that there is no one best structural pattern for all organisations and that organisations should select any structural pattern that allows it to achieve its set organisational goals and objective. Kumar and Meenakshi (2013), Johnston and Marshall (2003) and Kotler (2003) further warned that reputable organisations need to revise their salesforce structure when economic and market situation demand for it.

Determining Salesforce Size

This is one of the most challenging activities in salesforce management because a marketing manager needs to strive to have the right size or number of salesforce required to achieve his stated objectives. In doing this, business firms should understand that salesforces is one of the company's most productive and expensive assets. This is because an increase in the number of salespeople will increase the total sale volume and this will also increase marketing expenditure (costs). Therefore, attaining the optimal balance between these considerations requires the adoption of appropriate technique (Kotler & Armstrong, 2012; Johnston & Marshall, 2003; Kotler, 2003). There are several techniques that can be used to determine the size of salesforce required on the field to achieve firms' goals and objectives. The three widely used techniques identified by Johnston and Marshall (2003) are breakdown, work load and incremental methods or techniques.

Breakdown method

The breakdown method is conceptually one of the simplest techniques. An average salesperson is treated as a salesperson unit, and each salesperson unit is assumed to possess the same productivity potential. To determine the size of the sales force needed, you have to divide

the total forecasted sales for the company by the sales likely to be produced by each individual salesperson. Mathematically it is expressed as: $N = S/P$ (Johnston & Marshall, 2003)

Where

N = number of sales personnel needed

S = forecasted sale volume

P = estimated productivity of one salesperson unit

Conceptually, the breakdown method according to Johnston and Marshall (2003) is not without its problems. One of the fundamental problems is the fact that, it uses reverse logic. Similarly, it treats salesforce size as a consequence of sales volume when, the required number of salesperson is a proactive element of the overall strategic marketing plan. The estimate of productivity per salesperson can be problematic, because, it fails to account for differences in the levels of ability of salespersons' potential in the markets; as well as the level of competition therein. Furthermore, a key shortcoming of the breakdown method is that it does not allow for profitability. It treats sales as the end in itself rather than as the means to an end. The number of salespeople is determined as a function of the level of forecast sales, not as a determinant of targeted profit.

Work Load Method

The basic premise underlying the work load method of determining sales force size is that all sales personnel should shoulder an equal amount of work. Management estimates the workload required to serve the entire targeted market. The total workload estimated is treated as a function of the number of accounts each salesperson should call on, and for how long. This estimate is then divided by the amount of workload an individual salesperson should be able to handle, and the result is the total number of salespeople required (Johnston & Marshall, 2003).

The work load is used to determine salesforce size with several attractive features. It explicitly recognises that different types of accounts should be called on with different frequencies. The inputs are readily available or can be secured without much trouble. Unfortunately, it also possesses some weaknesses. It does not allow for differences in sales response among accounts that receive the same sales effort. Also, the method does not explicitly consider the profitability of the call frequencies. It does not take into account such factors as the cost of servicing and the gross margins on the product mix purchased by the account. Finally, the method assumes that all salespeople use their time with equal efficiency (Kotler, 2003).

Incremental Method

In the views of Johnston and Marshall (2003) the basic premise underlying the incremental method of determining sales force size is that sales representatives should be added as long as the incremental profit produced by their addition exceeds the incremental costs. The method recognises that decreasing returns will likely be associated with the addition of salespeople. For instance, adding one more salesperson might produce ₦300,000, two more might produce only ₦550,000 in new sales. The incremental sales produced by the first salesperson is ₦300,000 but for the second salesperson is ₦250,000.

The incremental approach to determining sales force size is conceptually sound. Also, it is consistent with the empirical evidence that decreasing returns can be expected with additional salespeople. Decreasing returns can also be expected with other territory design features such as the number of buyers per salesperson, the number of calls the salesperson makes on an account, and the actual time the representative spends in face-to-face contact.

The review of empirical studies in this area indicated that Pelham (2006) investigated causal relationships between sales management programs designed to build customer relationships by solving customer problems and selling firm performance. The study used multiple regression as analytical technique. The finding of the study indicates that consulting-oriented post-sales training and consulting-oriented evaluation are significant influences on salesforce efficiency and the strongest influences on profit growth were discovered to be initial sales training and post-sales training learning. More so, Kanwal and Ahmed (2010) examined the relationship between sales force automation and organisation profitability and discovered that there is positive relationship between information technology and salesperson performance. It also found that there is relationship between salesforce automation and organisation profitability. Finally, Mustapha (2007) investigated the influence of salesforce on revenue generation using ordinary least square regression (OLS) as analytical instrument and discovered that there is positive relationship between the (predictor variable) salesforce size and (dependent variable) sales revenue generated.

Theoretical Framework

This study leans on extant theories made up of person-job fit and person-organisation fit theories. The theory of Person –Job (P-J) fit is the traditional foundation for employee selection (Welbel & Gilliland, 1999). The primary concern in employee selection has been with finding those applicants who have the skills and abilities necessary to do the job. Traditionally, person – job fit is assessed by determining the demand of the job through job analysis, which identifies the essential job tasks that an incumbent performs and the requisite skills knowledge, abilities to perform the tasks. Edward (1991) observed that the thrust of person-job theory is that person-job fit should be categorised into demand abilities and needs-supplies perspectives. Theory says that the demand-abilities perspective could be achieved when individuals (salesforce) bring sufficient knowledge, skills and abilities (KSAs) to meet the job demand, while the needs-supplies fit exists when the supplies offered from jobs are compatible to the needs, preferences and desires of individuals (salesforce). Thus, individuals (salesforce) would be satisfied with his/her job once the organisational policies, and programmes could fulfil their preferences accordingly (Kristof, 1996).

According to Chatman (1989) person-organisation fit theory is the congruence between the norms and values of organisations and the values of individual persons (salesforce), while Kristof (1996) defines person-organisation fit theory as the compatibility between people and organisations (Kristof, 1996). In employee selection research, person-organisation can be conceptualised as the match between an applicant and broader organisational attributes (Judge & Ferris, 1992; Rynes & Gerhart, 1990). Researchers and practioners contend that person-organisation fit is the key to maintaining the flexible and committed workforce that is necessary in a business competitive environment and tight labour market (Bowen, Ledford, & Dunn, 1991; Kristof, 1996).

Methodology

The study adopts explanatory method of research design in the conduct of the work. The population of the study consists of all the 14 listed manufacturing firms in the food and beverage sector of Nigerian Stock Exchange (NSE) operating in South-Western Nigerian as published in the 2013 edition of NSE Fact book. The adoption of quoted firms as case study is not uncommon as studies such as Abubakar, (2011) and Mustapha (2013) used quoted firms as their case studies. The study used 20% of the population as sample size. The justification for this selection was based on Gay and Diehi (1992) who opined 20% sample size, when the study population is too small. Thus, three firms in the sector were used as the study's sample size and these firms are Cadbury Nigeria Plc, Nestle Nigeria Plc and Honeywell Nigeria Plc. To arrive at the above selected firms, the study used a combination of sampling techniques which is normally adopted when a single sampling technique is considered inadequate (Zahradeen, 2003; Greener, 2008; Mustapha, 2013). The sampling techniques used for this work include simple random and purposive sampling. The purposive sampling was employed to select Honeywell Nigeria Plc from Ibadan, Oyo State to refrain the samples from being excessively skewed to Lagos State, while simple random sampling technique was used to select two firms which are Cadbury Nigeria Plc and Nestle Nigeria Plc located in Lagos state. Therefore, two (2) firms which represents 66.67% of the total sample size were selected from Lagos state while one (1) firm which represents 33.33% was purposefully selected from Ibadan, Oyo state.

The study relied essentially on secondary data through content analysis. Secondary data were sourced from related literature and annual reports and statement of accounts of the sampled firms published in the NSE Fact book for a period of ten years, that is, year 2003 to 2012. The adoption of the secondary data to measure firms' performance was used in line with the studies of Patrick (2012) and Mustapha (2013).

Model Specification

Firm performance (dependent variable) was measured using profit generated for the period under consideration. The study used profit as a performance indicator in line with the arguments of Mustapha (2007), Radzi, and Taha (2008) and Mustapha (2013) that organisational performance can be measured using sales revenue generation, sales growth, profit, return on investment, return on asset, market share, overall financial performance and product success. Profit performance is measured in terms of the ability of the firms under review to use shareholders' funds to generate profit after all expenses were deducted (i.e. net profit). Thus, net profit after taxes in the context of this study refers to gross profit accruable to a manufacturing firm less operating expenses and taxes within a given accounting period. The use of net profit as a form of measuring corporate performance is important because it measures the ability of the firm to use shareholders' funds to generate profit. This type of corporate performance measurement is always of interest to shareholders because they can easily calculate their dividend from it since it uses net profit after taxes. On the other hand, the salesforce size (independent variable) refers to the total number of employees that are directly involved in the sales and marketing activities of the selected firms.

$$\text{NetP} = a + \text{SFSize} + x_n$$

Where:

NetP = Net profit as a performance indicator (Dependent variable)

a = Intercept (constant)

b = Slope (rate of change in salesforce size)

SFSize = Salesforce size (Independent variable)

Data Presentation and Discussion Results

Table 1: Summary Statistics of the Variables used in the Regression Analysis

	N	Maximum	Minimum	Mean	Std. Dev.	Skewness	Kurtosis	Prob.
NetP.	10	13.63318	4.34579	11.59326	1.43065	0.87316	3.85213	0.000
SFSize	10	6.41472	0.32631	0.06743	0.133261	0.47931	2.93641	0.002

Source: Researchers' simulation from SSPS Output

Table 1 is presented in the descriptive statistics and number of observations. The table indicates that there are 10 number of observations for firms' performance and salesforce size. Net profit has the highest mean and standard deviation values of 11.59326 and 1.43065 respectively. While the mean and standard deviation values of salesforce size are 0.06743 and 0.133261 respectively. The maximum and minimum values of net profit (firms' performance) is also higher than that of salesforce size. The analysis is also rejuvenated by the values of skewness, kurtosis and probability of the two variables under review. The values of 0.85213 and 0.47931 for skewness and 3.852113 and 2.93641 for kurtosis for the two variables are normal because they are all close to the threshold of 0.000 and 3.000 for both skewness and kurtosis respectively. All descriptive statistics of the variables are significant at 1% level of significance.

Results of Regression Analysis

The dependent variable (Net profit) was regressed on the independent variables (salesforce size) to determine the relationship. The study takes the Net profit (Y) as a dependent variable while the sales force size (X) is taken as an independent variable.

Table 2: Model Summary

Model	R.	R. Square	Adjusted R. Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.921 ^a	.866	.719	46.5506

a: Predictors: (Constant), Sales force size.

Source: Researchers' simulation from SSPS Output

The summary of the regression model result of salesforce size on Net profit is presented in table 2. The R-value of 0.921 and R²-value show that the variables are positive correlated. The value of adjusted R² which is 0.719 explains the proportion of variance in salesforce size that accounted for Net profit. This simply implies that only about 72% of the variation is explained by salesforce size.

Table 3: ANOVA

Model	Sum of square	Df	Mean square	F	Sig.
1 Regression	653412.6	1	653412.665	192.057	.001 ^a
Residual	588627.1	18			
Total	684760.5	19			

a. - Predictors: (constant), sales force size

b. - Dependent variable: Net profit

Source: Researchers' simulation from SSPS Output

The ANOVA result in table 3 shows an F-value of 192.057 (0.001) which implies that there is a very strong relationship between the dependent variable (net profit) and the independent variable (salesforce size).

Table 4: Coefficient Estimates

Model	Unstandardised coefficients		Standardised coefficients	T	Sig
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
1 (Constant)	-89.768	35.967		-3.526	.002
Sales force size	6.745	.463	.859	14.418	.000

Dependent variable: Net profit

Source: Researchers' simulation from SSPS Output

Table 4 shows the coefficient estimate which revealed that salesforce size is significant at $P < 0.05$. This indicates that a positive relationship between salesforce size and performance (net profit).

Test of Hypothesis

The earlier stated hypothesis will be tested in this section to enable the study attain its objectives.

H₀: Salesforce size does not have significant effect on firms' performance

The earlier stated objective for the study which is to investigate the effect of salesforce size on Firms' performance is consistent with the above hypothesis. Table 2 shows that 87 % of the total variation in the dependent variable (net profit) is being explained by the independent variable (Salesforce size), the adjusted R^2 reveals that the regression model obtained can be used to predict the effect of salesforce size on net profit (organisational performance). This implies that about 87 percent of the Net profit is explained by the sales force size. The F-statistic is also significant. This confirms the hypothesis tested above that there exist significant relationship between the two variables.

Thus, the regression model is: Net profit = -89.768 + 6.745 (Sales force size).

From table 4 the independent variable (salesforce size) shows that the P-value is 0.002 and the result is significant at 1% level, hence, we reject the null hypothesis and conclude that salesforce size has significant effect on firm's performance.

Discussion of Results

The above result shows statistically that salesforce size influenced firms' performance (net profit) of the three sampled firms. The result shows that net profit of the firm increases as result of salesforce size of the firms as 87 % of the total variations in the level of net profit is explained by sales stimulating activities of salespeople, while other variables that were not included in the study's model explain for 13 % variations in the organisations' levels of net profit.

This finding is not strange as it is in agreement with the results of the studies of Pelham (2006) who investigated causal relationships between sales management programs designed to build customer relationships by solving customer problems and selling firm performance and found that consulting-oriented post-sales training and consulting-oriented evaluation have significant influences on salesforce efficiency and the strongest influences on profit growth and that of Mustapha (2007) investigated the influence of salesforce on revenue generation and discovered that there is positive relationship between salesforce size and sales revenue generation of marketing organisations.

Conclusions and Recommendations

This study investigated the impact of salesforce size on Firms' Performance of selected listed manufacturing firms operating in the food and beverages of Nigeria economy. The regression model developed for the study was statistically significant at 5 % level, and based on this, the study draws the following conclusions:

- i. that statistically there is significant relationship between the salesforce size and performance of selected manufacturing firms' performance (i.e. sales forces size has influence on the amount of net profit realised by selected manufacturing firms).
- ii. the salesforce size had significant effect on performance (net profit realised) of the selected listed manufacturing firms operating in the food and beverages of Nigeria economy.

In view of the findings and conclusions of the study, it is recommended that marketing managers and other management team of manufacturing firms operating in the food and beverage sector of Nigeria economy should:

- i. Strategically manage the relationship that exists between salesforce size and performance to ensure attainment of their firms' profit objective and other organisational objectives.
- ii. Ensure that appropriate number or size of salespeople are hired, trained, motivated and retained to maintain the synergetic relationship that exists between salesforce size and profit performance of manufacturing firms.

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