

## Service Orientation and Organisation Performance of Aviation Firms in Rivers State, Nigeria

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**Abstract:** *This study examines the relationship between service orientation and organizational performance of aviation firms in Port Harcourt, Rivers State, Nigeria. The study adopted the explanatory and quantitative method, hence correlational research design is employed. Sample size of three hundred and ten (310) employees was derived from a population of one thousand six hundred (1600) using Krejcie and Morgan determination table as sampling technique. Data collection was gathered through closed ended structured questionnaire. The reliability of the instrument was achieved by the use of the Cronbach Alpha coefficient with all the items scoring above 0.70. The hypotheses were tested using the Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient with the aid of Statistical Package for Social Sciences version 23.0. The tests were carried out at a 95% confidence interval and a 0.05 level of significance. The results of analysed data showed service orientation significantly correlated positively with the measures of organizational performance being quality service and patronage. Based on the empirical findings, the study concluded that service orientation has positive significant relationship with organizational performance. Therefore, the study recommends that management of aviation firms should ensure employees of the organization are trained to be up-to-dates on the trends and effect of service orientation as it is seen to enhance organizational performance.*

**Keywords:** *Service Orientation, Organizational Performance, Quality Service, Patronage.*

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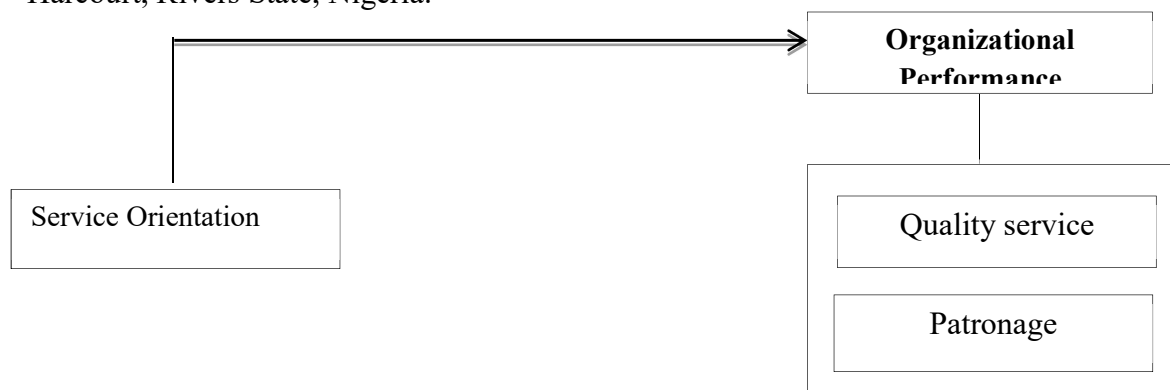
### INTRODUCTION

Organizational performance comprises the actual output or results of an organization as measured against its intended outputs. According to Richard et al. (2009) organizational performance should be related to factors such as profitability, improved service delivery, customer satisfaction, market share growth, and improved productivity and sales. Organizational performance is therefore affected by a multiplicity of individuals, group, task, technological, structural, managerial and environmental factors. Individual incompatibilities between the employees and in their groups can adversely affect their work output resulting in decreased performance (Eunice, Jacqueline, K., Buyeke, Wafula & Musyoki, 2014).

Organizations around the globe are in a continuous dilemma of maintaining business performance. Most business organization managers around the world find it difficult to constantly achieve targeted business performance due to the dynamic nature, open market competition and globalization characterized with the 21st-century industry. Firms in different industries around the world have experienced unstable performance, seemingly uncertain on strategies to employ in reacting to flexible policies and unstable performance arising from challenges in the local and international business context (Arokodare & Asikhia, 2020).

The decline in performance of firms, according to Zafari (2017) cut across developed, emerging and developing countries due to poor occupational hazard management and response to microeconomic and macroeconomic factor challenges like performance industry environmental factors, task environment, natural and technological environments, social environments, economic and cultural environments, and political, law and security environments coupled with the management of marketing content and product marketing. In developing countries especially African countries, harsh economic and external conditions have placed pressure on organizational performance (Bredenhann, 2019). The challenges facing firms operating in Africa are diverse and numerous such as political interference, lack of transparency, regulatory uncertainty, policy instability, ongoing infrastructure deficit, uncertainty, delays in passing laws, energy policies and regulations into law are stifling growth, development and investment (Pricewaters Coopers, 2018). The need to reverse this trend have led organisations to focus on service orientation in its quest to offer superior service delivery.

Service orientation is the strategic response of a company to be different from its competitors, and surpass the competition (Lee, Park & Yoo, 1999). Firms can achieve the competitive advantage, through discovering the desires of customers, and delivering superior value to them (Lee *et al.*, 1999). Service orientation is best conceptualized as an organizational predisposition; a strategic organizational affinity or preference for service excellence. Service-oriented organizations plan, pro-actively engage in, and reward service giving practices, processes and procedures that reflect the belief that service excellence is a strategic priority and that service significantly affects the creation of superior value, customer satisfaction, competitive advantage, growth, and profitability (Lytle & Timmerman, 2006:136). It is also important to examine a service orientation at the organizational level. Therefore, this study examines the relationship between service orientation and organizational performance of the aviation firms in Port Harcourt, Rivers State, Nigeria.



**Fig.1 Conceptual framework for workplace service orientation and organizational performance**  
**Source: Desk Research, 2022**

## **LITERATURE REVIEW**

### **Theoretical Foundation**

#### **AMO Theory**

The AMO theory was propounded by Bailey in 1993. AMO is the acronym of ability, motivation and opportunity. Bailey (1993) suggested that ensuring the employee's discretionary effort needed three components: employees had to have the necessary skills, they needed appropriate motivation and employers had to offer them the opportunity to participate. The components of Ability, Motivation, and Opportunity are the three-independent work-system elements that form employee characteristics and eventually lead to organizational performance. These three components of independent work system are critical part of employees work performance and necessary for us to see how the interwoven of these work element help in employees work skills.

Firstly, ability refers to those practices and policies that human resource undertakes to ensure that employees have or gain the required skills, knowledge and ability to perform their tasks with minimum supervision. Yahya, Tan and Tay (2017) states that ability- enhancing human resources management (HRM) practices are the practices that increase the employee's abilities and competencies to achieve organizational goals. On the other hand, ability-enhancing practices also refer to those practices that are taken to ensure effective recruitment and selection process to hire the right employees who have the right skills for the role requirements. In addition to recruitment and selection ability-enhancing HRM practices cover training and development practices as well, which provide employees with the necessary skills and knowledge to perform tasks, (Yahya et al., 2017).

Secondly, motivation refers to employee performance, amendment policies performed by HR to manage motivation in the organization. It also refers to the ways in which the employees are motivated to put more and extra efforts in performing assigned tasks mainly by rewarding them for the efforts they have already put in their jobs "motivation enhancing practice within the organizations to perform better which included contingent rewards and performance management" (Yahya, et al., 2017). Motivation enhancing practices can be performed in different forms, for example an organization can increase motivation through communicating performance feedback to their employees or through providing them with financial rewards.

#### **Service Orientation**

In the stream of different perceptions which are trying to assess an organization's ability to provide excellent outcome there is the idea of organizational service orientation; it is not widely known among practitioners. Organizational service orientation describes staff attitudes and behaviours, which directly affect the quality of service delivery process in a service organization and determine the state of all interactions between an organization and its customers. An organizational service orientation is defined by Lytle, Hom, and Mokwa (1998) as an organization-wide embracement of a basic set of relatively enduring organizational policies, practices and procedures intended to support and reward service-giving behaviours that create and deliver "service excellence".

The service orientation stays in the strong relationship with intangible aspects of an organization. It exists when the organizational climate for service crafts, nurtures, and rewards service practices and behaviours known to meet customer needs (Lynn Lytle, & Bobek, 2000). It is also taken as something that manifests itself in the attitudes as well as actions of members of an organization which highly values the creation and delivery of an excellent service (Yoon, Choi, & Park, 2007).

According to Lytle *et al.* (1998) an organizational service orientation consists of ten fundamental elements, which were led out from the best-in-class service practices and procedures. These elements (dimensions) are grouped into four service orientation attributes. These attributes and dimensions are as followed: service leadership practices (servant leadership, service vision), service encounter practices (customer treatment, employee empowerment), service system practices (service failure prevention and recovery, service technology, service standards communication), human resource management practices (service training, service rewards).

Organizational service orientation plays an important role in a service enterprise. There are researchers' opinions as well as empirical examinations that acknowledged this. Some authors' organizational service orientation plays a crucial role in success of enterprises (Homburg, Hoyer, & Fassnacht, 2002). Service orientation is positively related to the main service delivery characteristics and business performance as well. Empirical investigations show the important influence service orientation on such variables as: service quality image, organizational commitment, profitability (ROA) in a banking sector (Lytle & Timmerman, 2006). Service orientation is also related to business performance characteristic such as re-patronage intention and positive word of mouth, with mediating role of staff satisfaction, service value, and customer, whose relationship was demonstrated in the medical service industry (Yoon *et al.*, 2007).

### **Organizational Performance**

Robbins and DeCenzo (2005) defined organization as a systematic arrangement of people brought together to accomplish some specific purpose. From this perspective, the organization comprises of people who are coordinating from different geographical location with the objective of achieving the purpose of the organization. Organizational performance depends on the people who put all other resources together to achieve the purpose. Without the people who convert other resources to finish products, organizations cease to exist. In the words of Hitt (1988) cited in Adewale, Abolaji and Kolade, (2011) organization is the framework of responsibility, authority and duties through which the resources of an enterprise are brought together and coordinated for the achievement of set goals. As expected organizations strive for performance and continuity on one hand, which are paramount focus of the people in the organization.

Organizational performance is a subjective perception of reality, which explains the multitude of critical reflection on the concept and its measuring instruments (Lebas, 1995; Wholey J., 1996). At present, there are a variety of definitions attributed to the concept of organizational performance due to its subjective nature. Thus, the concept of organizational performance has gained increasing attention in recent decades, is pervasive in almost all spheres of human activity. Organizations perform various activities to achieve their organizational objectives. Quantified repeatable activities help to utilize processes for the organization to be successful in order to ascertain the level of performance and management to make informed decisions on

where, if needed, within the processes to actions to improve performance (Georgopoulos, 1957; Robbins, 1987). Therefore, it is possible to claim that there is a close relationship between the organizational objective and the concept of organizational performance. Nevertheless, organizational performance is one of the most argued concepts about which there has never been an agreement among various researchers and theorists (Selden & Sowa, 2004).

Also, Cameron (1986) mentions an absence of adequate understanding or explanation in the definition of the concept of performance. In the lack of any operational definition of performance upon which the majority of the relevant scholars agree, there would naturally be different clarifications and inferences opined by various people according to their perceptions. As a result, a commonly acknowledged definition of the concept looks various difficulties, which means that the possibility of any definitions and originating some standards to arrive at the desired definition is still questionable. Moreover, organizational performance has always had a significant influence on the actions of companies (Crook JR, Bratton VK, Street VL, 2006).

### **Quality Service**

The term service quality is an association of two different words; service and quality. Service means any activity or benefit that one party can offer to another that is essentially intangible and does not result in ownership of anything. Quality on the hand has come to be recognized as a strategic tool for attaining operational efficiency and better performance of the business. Nowadays people live in an environment that is increasingly moving towards a service based economy. Other services are not small part of the economy, but are considered as the heart of value creation in economy. Due to the increasing role of service organizations in the areas of the economy and the importance of quality in the areas of competition, service organizations must look to service quality management with dynamic and strategic approach and have a clear understanding of the quality status of services, the expectations of the client (customer) and the general characteristics of their quality.

Service with regards compared to goods are intangible and are considered an integral part of service providers, thus their assessment by their customers are more difficult. Service quality means the ability of a service provider to satisfy customers in an efficient manner through which he can better the performance of the business. In the service sector, quality is an important element for the success of business. It is because of the realization of its positive link with profits, increased market share and customer satisfaction.

Services quality is defined as a measure of meet customer needs and expectations by the service. Therefore, services quality can be defined difference between customers' expectations of service and services received. In addition, services quality has been defined as "an attitude or general judgment of customers in relation to supremacy of a service, (Koozehchian & et al, 2011). Services quality in marketing literature is defined as: overall assessment of customers from company services. The concept of service quality includes service delivery process and also the results offered services, (Najafizadeh & et al, 2013).

A service may be defined as a change in condition of a person or of a good belonging to some economic unit, which brought about as the result of the activity of some other economic unit, with the prior agreement of former person or economic unit (Caruana, 2002)). Bitner and Hubbert (1994) defined service quality usually as the customer's impression of the relative

superiority/inferiority of a service provider and its services. However, this is often considered similar to the customer's overall attitudes of the company. Service quality is perceived as a customer's subjective interpretation of his or her experience. Service quality can pay rich dividends when done well. Higher levels of service quality produce higher levels of customer satisfaction that lead to increased patronage intentions and increased sales. Service quality play serious role on organizational performance. When the perceive service quality of organizational workforce exceeds the customers expectation, customers loyalty is achieved.

### **Patronage**

According to the Oxford English Dictionary (2008) the word customer or consumer patronage mean a person or thing that eats or uses something or a person who buys goods and services for personal consumption or used. People patronize organizations products/services at one point or the other. Some authors or scholars use customer patronage and loyalty interchangeably because customer patronage precedes loyalty. There is a strong relationship between patronage and loyalty. Patronage is burn out of a desire to be committed to an organization either based on its service quality or perceived service qualities as well as products qualities. Hence, the extent to which a customer will patronize the services of a retail outlet depends on how the customer perceives the business physical environment, the treatment, price and how the customer also thinks and feels that the condition of the service rendered by the retails outlet is consistent with his / her expectation. The desire of a customer to keep shopping in a particular business organization is as a result of the outcome of the previous services perceived by the customer.

The banking sector is one of the competitive business environments. It is imperative to note that, banking businesses in the 21st century often compete for customers in order to increase their market share and enhance their sustainability and growth. The possibility of any of these businesses to achieve their stated aims is hinged on their ability to evolve products and services that will satisfy the needs and wants of their target customers better than their competitors. Also, their service quality and delivery strategies play a significant role in the success of the business. Therefore, there is need for management of the business to improve while looking for new avenues to regularly attract and retain their customers. It is on record that, the essence of repeat customer patronage is that an increase in sales volume will ultimately and significantly impact on the company's profitability level, Gabriel (2013). Service quality has been widely discussed since its inception in term of getting positive results; due to its important role of firm's performance (Al-Enezi, 2002; Al-Naser, 2012; Bell, Auh & Smalley, 2005). Offering superior level of service quality will surely enhance the firm's image and acquiring new customers (Elmayar, 2011).

### **Service Orientation and Organizational Performance**

The overall service quality level was identified; the changes in enterprises' market share, also changes in: profitability, clients' satisfaction and clients' loyalty were identified. The correlation coefficients were counted between all service orientation attributes and also a global score of service climate and other performance variables. There is a significant relationship between organizational service orientation attributes and majority of service performance variables. The most important conclusion is that there is influence of service orientation on service quality, all service orientation attributes have significant correlations. It proves that the service orientation is a really important predicator of service quality performance. So, it could be considered that

service orientation construct is a pretty good measure, which can assess the ability of a service organization to provide an excellent service. Taking into consideration that many service sectors were examined it allows to suggest that Service could be the universal cross-sector tool. The next performance variable which in a significant way is affected by service orientation is clients' loyalty. The correlation coefficients are significant with all service orientation attributes. And it is not surprising that there is an attribute (service encounter practices) that is correlated to the loyalty and not correlated to clients' satisfaction. Satisfaction might be the main loyalty predictor but not often (Oliver, 1999), nevertheless loyalty seems to be one of the most important organizational performance components (Reichheld & Teal, 2001). Further service performance correlations also prove the important role of the organizational service orientation.

From the foregoing discourse, the study hypothesized thus:

**H<sub>01</sub>:** There is no significant relationship between service orientation and quality service of the aviation firms in Port Harcourt, Rivers State, Nigeria.

**H<sub>02</sub>:** There is no significant relationship between service orientation and patronage in the aviation firms in Port Harcourt, River State, Nigeria.

## METHODOLOGY

The study adopted the explanatory and quantitative method, hence correlational research design is employed. Sample size of three hundred and ten (310) employees was derived from a population of one thousand six hundred (1600) using Krejcie and Morgan determination table as sampling technique. Data collection was gathered through closed ended structured questionnaire. The reliability of the instrument was achieved by the use of the Cronbach Alpha coefficient with all the items scoring above 0.70. The hypotheses were tested using the Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient with the aid of Statistical Package for Social Sciences version 23.0. The tests were carried out at a 95% confidence interval and a 0.05 level of significance.

## DATA ANALYSIS AND RESULTS

**Table 1 Correlation matrix for service orientation and organizational performance**

		Service Orientation	Quality Service	Patronage
Service Orientation	Pearson Correlation	1	.961**	.989**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000	.000
	N	280	280	280
Quality Service	Pearson Correlation	.961**	1	.985**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000		.000

	N	280	280	280
	Pearson Correlation	.989**	.985**	1
Patronage	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	
	N	280	280	280

\*\* . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Source: SPSS Output

**H<sub>01</sub>:** There is no significant relationship between service orientation and quality service of the aviation firms in Port Harcourt, Rivers State, Nigeria.

The table 1 showed the correlation of hypotheses one and two; the hypothesis five showed a significant correlation at  $r = .961^{**}$  where  $P\text{-value} = .000$  ( $P < 0.001$ ). This implies a strong and significant relationship between both variables at 95% level of confidence. We therefore reject the null hypothesis ( $H_{0:1}$ ), and upheld the alternate and restated, thus; there is a significance relationship between service orientation and quality service in the aviation firms in Port Harcourt, Rivers State, Nigeria.

**H<sub>02</sub>:** There is no significant relationship between service orientation and patronage in the aviation firms in Port Harcourt, River State, Nigeria.

The hypothesis two showed a significant correlation at  $r = .989^{**}$  where  $P\text{-value} = .000$  ( $P < 0.001$ ). This implies a strong and significant relationship between both variables at 95% level of confidence. We therefore reject the null hypothesis ( $H_{0:6}$ ), and upheld the alternate and restated, thus; there is a significance relationship between service orientation and patronage in the aviation firms in Port Harcourt, Rivers State, Nigeria.

## DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

The one and two hypotheses showed that, there is a strong positive relationship between service orientation and the measure of organizational performance; quality service and patronage of which the significant is based on  $r=0.961$ ;  $p= 0.000 < 0.05.$ , and  $r=0.989$ ;  $p= 0.000 < 0.05.$ , both at 95% confidence interval leading to the rejection of the null hypothesis ( $H_{0:5}$ ) and ( $H_{0:6}$ ), stated in the chapter one, and upheld the alternate and restated thus; there is a significant relationship between service orientation and quality service and patronage. This study findings support the empirical findings of Reichheld and Teal (2001) when they concluded that the overall service quality level was identified; the changes in enterprises' market share, also changes in: profitability, clients' satisfaction and clients' loyalty were identified. The correlation coefficients were counted between all service orientation attributes and also a global score of service climate and other performance variables. There is a significant relationship between organizational service orientation attributes and majority of service performance variables. The most important

conclusion is that there is influence of service orientation on service quality; all service orientation attributes have significant correlations. It proves that the service orientation is a really important predictor of service quality performance. So, it could be considered that service orientation construct is a pretty good measure, which can assess the ability of a service organization to provide an excellent service. Taking into consideration that many service sectors were examined it allows to suggest that Service could be the universal cross-sector tool. The next performance variable which in a significant way is affected by service orientation is clients' loyalty. The correlation coefficients are significant with all service orientation attributes. And it is not surprising that there is an attribute (service encounter practices) that is correlated to the loyalty and not correlated to clients' satisfaction. Satisfaction might be the main loyalty predictor but not often (Oliver, 1999), nevertheless loyalty seems to be one of the most important organizational performance components.

## **CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION**

The study concludes that service orientation positively enhances organizational performance in the aviation firms in Port Harcourt, Rivers State, Nigeria.

Therefore, the study recommends that management of aviation firms should ensure employees of the organization are trained to be up-to-dates on the trends and effect of service orientation as it is seen to enhance organizational performance.

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