

Entrepreneurial Innovations and Organisational Performance of Telecommunication Firms in Port Harcourt, Nigeria

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Abstract: *The study investigated the relationship between Entrepreneurial Innovations and Organisational performance of Telecom firms in Port Harcourt. The study used a correlational technique of inquiry and a quantitative research methodology. The population of the study comprised of 20 managers of 4 Telecommunication firms in Rivers. The study adopted a census study with a focus on the managerial staff (R&D manager, marketing manager and sales manager). The questionnaire was distributed in the frame of five (5) copies per firm. A total of 20 copies of the questionnaire were distributed. The reliability of the instrument was determined using the Cronbach's alpha test with the aid of Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 23 and it stood at 0.78 higher than the benchmark of 0.70. Descriptive and inferential statistics were used to analyze the data that were gathered for this study. The Pearson Product Moment Correlation Method was used to test various hypotheses formulated through the aid of Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 23.0. The findings revealed that entrepreneurial innovation dimensions of product innovations and process innovations showed positive, strong and significant relationship with Organisational performance. The study concluded that increase in product innovations and process innovations will lead to an increase in Organisational performance and Organisational performance of telecom firms in Port Harcourt. In line with the findings and conclusion; the study recommends that: telecom firms should explore product innovations as it will improve their network speed and impact greatly on Organisational performance and also, telecom firms should work more on process innovations; upgrade to 5G network in order to improve network speed.*

Keywords: *Entrepreneurial innovations; organizational performance; product innovations and process innovations.*

INTRODUCTION

In recent years, the telecommunications industry has experienced rapid growth and evolution, driven by technological advancements, changing consumer preferences, and increasing competition. As one of the key sectors driving economic development and connectivity, telecommunications firms play a crucial role in facilitating communication, commerce, and innovation.

Telecommunications firms operate in a dynamic and highly competitive environment characterized by constant technological innovation, evolving regulatory landscapes, and shifting consumer demands. In this context, the ability of telecommunications firms to innovate and adapt to changing market dynamics is paramount for maintaining competitiveness and achieving sustainable growth.

Entrepreneurial innovation, encompassing the development and implementation of novel ideas, products, and processes, has emerged as a critical determinant of organizational success and competitive advantage in the telecommunications industry (Kuratko, Morris,

& Covin, 2011). By fostering a culture of innovation and experimentation, telecommunications firms can drive organizational performance, enhance service delivery, and capitalize on emerging opportunities in the market. Product innovations, involving the introduction of new products or services, and process innovations, focusing on improvements in operational efficiency and effectiveness, are two key dimensions of entrepreneurial innovation that have garnered significant attention in the telecommunications sector (Bessant & Tidd, 2007). Product innovations enable firms to meet evolving consumer needs, differentiate their offerings, and penetrate new market segments, while process innovations enhance internal operations, reduce costs, and streamline business processes (Makadok, 2001).

However, despite the recognized importance of entrepreneurial innovations in driving organizational performance, empirical research on the relationship between entrepreneurial innovations and organizational performance within the telecommunications industry, particularly in the context of Port Harcourt, remains limited. Existing studies have predominantly focused on developed economies and broader industry sectors, leaving a gap in understanding the specific dynamics and determinants of entrepreneurial innovation in telecommunications firms operating in Port Harcourt.

Therefore, this study seeks to address this gap by investigating the relationship between entrepreneurial innovations and organizational performance of telecommunications firms in Port Harcourt. By examining the impact of product innovations and process innovations on organizational performance metrics, such as revenue growth, market share, and customer satisfaction, the study aims to provide valuable insights for telecommunications firms, policymakers, and industry stakeholders to inform strategic decision-making and enhance competitiveness in the dynamic telecommunications market of Port Harcourt.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

In the telecom sector of Port Harcourt, Nigeria, telecommunication play crucial role in driving economic growth and employment. However, many of these telecom firms face significant challenges in achieving optimal Organisational performance, which is essential for sustaining competitive advantage and long-term viability in the marketplace.

Many telecom firms encounter obstacles in implementing innovative marketing strategies due to limited resources, expertise, and technological capabilities. Despite recognizing the importance of adopting digital marketing tools, social media platforms, and customer relationship management systems, telecom firms often struggle to effectively leverage these tools to reach target markets and engage with customers.

In a rapidly evolving business environment, telecom firms must continually innovate and adapt their marketing strategies to meet changing consumer preferences, industry trends, and competitive pressures. However, many telecom firms struggle to keep pace with market dynamics and lack the agility and flexibility needed to respond effectively to emerging opportunities and challenges.

Despite the wealth of research on entrepreneurial innovations and organizational performance in various industries, there is a paucity of empirical studies specifically

focusing on the telecommunications sector in Port Harcourt. Therefore, this study aims to address this gap by investigating the relationship between entrepreneurial innovations and organizational performance within telecommunications firms operating in Port Harcourt. By examining the impact of product innovations and process innovations on organizational performance metrics, such as revenue growth, market share, and customer satisfaction, the study seeks to provide valuable insights for telecommunications firms, policymakers, and industry stakeholders to inform strategic decision-making and enhance competitiveness in the dynamic telecommunications market.

Aim and Objectives of the Study

The study investigated the relationship between Entrepreneurial Innovations and Organizational performance of telecom firms in Port Harcourt. The specific objectives of the study include were to:

- i. Examine the relationship between product innovations and organizational performance of telecom firms in Port Harcourt.
- ii. Investigate the relationship between process innovations and organizational performance of telecom firms in Port Harcourt.

Research Questions

The following research questions were formulated in order to address the objectives of the study:

- i. What is the relationship between product innovations and organizational performance of telecom firms in Port Harcourt?
- ii. What is the relationship between process innovations and organizational performance of telecom firms in Port Harcourt?

Research Hypotheses

- H₀₁ There is no significant relationship between product innovations and organizational performance of telecom firms in Port Harcourt.
- H₀₂ There is no significant relationship process innovations and organizational performance of telecom firms in Port Harcourt.

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

Concept of Entrepreneurial Innovations

Innovation is described as "the introduction of new or improved processes, products, or services based on new scientific or technological knowledge and/or organizational know-how" (OECD, 2015). An invention is the first occurrence of an idea for a new product or process, whereas innovation is the act of putting it into practice. According to Trott (2008), there are different types of innovation in business; however, it can be related to new products or services, new production processes, new marketing techniques, or new organizational or managerial structures (Rebound, 2008). Innovation may also involve technology, intellectual property, business, or physical activity (Sundbo, 2003).

Innovation is a way to continue to build and develop an organization that can be achieved through the introduction of new technologies, new applications in products and services,

developing new markets, and introducing new forms of organization (Widodo, 2012). Innovation can refer to goods, services, or ideas that are new to someone. Innovation can take the form of a company mechanism to adapt to a dynamic environment. Innovation is the process of converting knowledge into value through the application of new or improved products, processes, and systems. Okpara (2007) defined innovation as adding something new to an existing product or process. "Innovation" is the successful exploitation of new ideas. Okpara (2007) further explains that innovation is a process by which entrepreneurs convert market opportunities into workable, profitable, and marketable ideas. Innovation is the application of something creative that has a significant impact on an organization or society.

Entrepreneurial innovations, characterized by the introduction of novel ideas, products, and processes, are essential for telecommunications firms to thrive in this rapidly evolving industry (Frasquet et al., 2019). These innovations encompass a wide range of activities, including the development of new services, technologies, and business models, as well as the optimization of internal processes and workflows (Huang et al., 2020). By fostering a culture of innovation and embracing entrepreneurial initiatives, telecommunications firms can differentiate themselves from competitors, drive operational efficiency, and capitalize on emerging market opportunities (Oghojafor et al., 2019).

Dimensions of Entrepreneurial Innovations

Product Innovation

Any product or service that a person or business believes to be novel can be described as product innovation (Abdilahe et al., 2017). In addition, it describes the launch of new goods or services to attract customers in existing markets or to expand them (Wan et al., 2005; Obunike & Udu, 2018). Product innovation requires a variety of organizational tactics in addition to original inputs that produce cutting-edge results (Martinez-Ros & Labeaga, 2009). Numerous managerial phenomena, such as entrepreneurial firms in developing nations, continuous innovation in established firms, collaborative networks, R&D spillovers, human resource systems, organizational culture, and leadership, have all been linked to production innovation research (Doran & Ryan, 2014; Dimnwobi et al., 2016).

Product innovation often arises from the creation and marketing of novel goods (i.e., products or services) or those with enhanced performance attributes. By providing answers to personal or societal problems, product innovations help businesses stand out from the competition. According to Alegre et al. (2006), product innovation is the enhancement of original goods, modifications to recognized goods' designs, or use of new materials in the construction of recognized goods. Product innovation is something new or has not been used before in the market that the company serves. Product innovation is described as a new product that is completely different from an existing product. It is believed that the terms "newness" and "product innovation" go hand in hand (Dada, 2016). According to Suhaq et al. (2015) product innovation is a process which involves the practical design, research and development, administration and marketable actions which concerned in the promotion of the novel good.

Process innovation

Process innovation is a new mode of producing or delivering a new product or service, for example, innovation in production processes, technological roadmaps, or production equipment (Pilav-Velic, & Sicilia, 2016). For a manufacturer, process innovation includes the adoption of new processes, techniques, manufacturing methods, and technologies to achieve advantages in cost, quality, lead time, development cycle, and delivery speed, or to improve the custom-making capacity of products and services (Davey & Sanders, 2012). The telecommunications sector has introduced the 5G network in order to improve network speed. Fifth-generation technology is considered an important upgrade for telecommunication networks and devices when it comes to leading telecommunication companies. It offers a higher speed compared to previous cellular broadband network standards and has much lower latency.

Concept of Organizational performance

Organizational performance is the ability of an organization to reach its goals and optimize results. According to Adebakin and Gbadamosi (1996) organization comprise of two or more people who exist on continuous basis with the intention of accomplishing set goal(s). Every organization consists of three major elements, which must interrelate effectively it's the objectives and goals of leadership to be achieved. They are the management, time, people and task. Performance is seen as an outcome of entrepreneurial activity and is measured using economic, social and environmental benefits to stakeholders. These benefits are often measured at firm level and include financial and non-financial measures of business results such as profitability, market share, growth, stakeholder satisfaction (Lumpkin & Dess, 2001; Rauch *et al.*, 2009; Stephan, Hart & Drews, 2015).

Empirical evidence which connects innovation with organizational outcomes such as financial performance abounds in literature. In the study of a business operating in Istanbul, Turkey, Gokmen and Hamsioglu (2011) discovered the existence of a relationship between innovation and organisational performance. Costa and Cabrel (2010) studied the effect of differentiated knowledge source and learning process on technology capacity to innovate and competitive performance using selected Brazilian export companies. The study found the existence of a positive relationship between knowledge, innovative capabilities and competitive performance. Lim *et. al.*, (2010) studied the effect of innovation on performance of construction firms using data statistical data across 18 Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) countries and expert interviews in Singapore. They discovered that due to the fact that construction projects are awarded by clients based on lowest cost, innovation appears to be an unfeasible competitive strategy. However, their study revealed that construction firms can develop their competitive advantage through manipulating innovations that consumers are willing to pay for and innovations that would reduce construction costs.

Product Innovation and Organisational Performance

Product innovations, which involve the introduction of new services, features, or technologies, have a significant impact on organizational performance within the telecommunications sector (Laforet & Tann, 2006). Research suggests that innovative product offerings can enhance customer satisfaction, attract new subscribers, and

increase market share (Oliveira & Martins, 2010). For example, the launch of 5G technology and IoT-enabled services has revolutionized the telecommunications landscape, enabling faster data speeds, lower latency, and new possibilities for connected devices and applications (Chourabi et al., 2012).

Process Innovation and Organisational Performance

In addition to product innovations, process innovations play a crucial role in enhancing operational efficiency and effectiveness within telecommunications firms (Abdul-Aziz et al., 2020). Process innovations involve the optimization of internal workflows, the adoption of advanced technologies, and the implementation of best practices to streamline operations and reduce costs (Kotabe & Murray, 2004). By automating repetitive tasks, improving resource allocation, and minimizing time-to-market, process innovations enable telecommunications firms to deliver high-quality services and remain competitive in a fast-paced environment (Lin et al., 2017).

Theoretical Review

The study adopted the Theory of Innovative Enterprise

The Theory of innovative enterprise, first published in 1911, Joseph Schumpeter, drawing inspiration from Karl Marx. This theory argues that superior economic performance depends on innovative enterprise: the development and utilization of productive resources to generate higher quality, lower cost goods and services. Government policies to support the achievement of superior economic performance must be based on a theory of how an innovative enterprise evolves, operates and performs. In this study, a theory of innovative enterprise in which social conditions summarized as strategic control, organizational integration, and financial commitment are central to the development and utilization of productive resources. The need for these social conditions derives from the uncertain, collective and cumulative character of the innovation process (Lazonick, 2013).

EMPIRICAL REVIEW

Issau, et., al., (2021) assess the influence of innovation orientation dimensions on the performance of manufacturing small- and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) in Ghana. The study adopted probability sampling techniques, particularly the simple random method. An approximately 81% response rate was achieved from a total sample size of 346. Furthermore, the PLS-SEM technique was used to determine the relationships among the study variables. The result showed that market innovation significantly predicted SMEs' performance. Conversely, a non-significant positive nexus was established between process innovation and SMEs performance, as well as between product innovation and SMEs' performance. Based on the outcome, the stakeholders in the SME sector should aim to improve their market, products, and process innovations. Nadeem, et., al., (2013) carried out a study on the Role of Innovation on Organizational Growth: Evidences from Pakistan. The objective of study was to ascertain the role of innovation on the growth of organization. The study adopted a survey design. Data was sourced from primary and secondary sources. A sample of 100 employees was selected randomly from the population. Data collection instrument used was by standard questionnaire and analysis was done using correlation coefficient through SPSS. The study found that innovation play significant role on the growth of organization.

Gilbert, (2018) examines the effect of entrepreneurial innovativeness on firm performance and the moderating effect of MO in the relationship between entrepreneurial innovativeness and firm performance. The study adopted explanatory research design using a survey of all the top 600 med-sized firms in Kenya between 2006 and 2013. Actual participating firms were 536 with responses obtained from 394 firms. Data was collected using a questionnaire and analyzed using descriptive statistics, Pearson's bivariate correlation, multiple regression, and moderated regression analysis. Results revealed that entrepreneurial innovativeness has a direct positive relationship with performance of mid-sized firms.

Islam and Mohamed (2011) conducted a study on the impact of organizational innovation on firm performance in a Malaysian-based ICT Companies. Data were collected via electronic survey from 115 small and medium enterprises operating in the ICT industry in Malaysia. Specially designed questionnaire was used to measure the research constructs. The sampling frame consists of 1488 small and medium-sized firms listed in the National ICT Association of Malaysia's (PIKOM) directory. The study found that organizational innovation was positively related to company performance which was measured in terms of both market and financial metrics.

Mweta and Suwadi (2021) investigated the innovation barriers affecting manufacturing MSMEs. The study was conducted among the 45 manufacturing MSMEs operating in Malawi's commercial city of Blantyre. The study adopted a case-study approach and employed both quantitative and descriptive approaches. Empirical data was collected using a semi-structured questionnaire and a one-on-one interview. The results of the study revealed that factors such as market competition, difficulty in accessing loans, inadequate government support, labor laws, taxes, and regulations in the external environment, inadequate financial resources, a lack of qualified personnel, and poor financial performance within the enterprises hamper innovation activities within the MSMEs. Results of the study also revealed that despite government efforts to promote MSMEs innovativeness, most MSMEs do not participate in such government interventions, and worse still, some are not even aware of the existence of such interventions. The study therefore recommends that the government intensify its efforts to provide financial support in the form of soft loans and entrepreneurial training to MSMEs and promote innovation in MSMEs through relevant policies.

Omede and Aghanenu (2021) looked at innovation and entrepreneurship performance in Aba, Abia State. Three hypotheses were formulated to ascertain whether or not there is a significant relationship existing between the two intervening variables, i.e., innovation and entrepreneurship performance, in Aba, Abia State. A survey research design was adopted, and data were obtained through a structured questionnaire and analyzed using Pearson's product-moment coefficient of correlation. From the analysis, the result showed that there is an existing relationship between innovation and the performance of entrepreneurship. Based on the findings, it was concluded that for entrepreneurship to stand the test of time in the face of escalating competition in emerging economies like Nigeria, a premium must be placed on formulating and developing an innovative culture aimed at encouraging employees to bring on board innovative ideas and strategies capable of providing innovative products and services to customers with valued and

satisfying benefits better than competitors to enhance performance and productivity. The study therefore recommended, among other things, that entrepreneurship policies and programs be designed in ways that address horizontal concerns and generate better and more viable inducements for innovation activities.

METHODOLOGY

The research study adopted descriptive survey design using a quantitative approach; the population of the study comprised of 20 managers of 4 Telecommunication firms in Rivers. The study adopted a census study with a focus on the managerial staff (R&D manager, marketing manager and sales manager). The questionnaire was distributed in the frame of five (5) copies per firm. A total of 20 copies of the questionnaire were distributed. The reliability of the instrument was determined using the Cronbach's alpha test with the aid of Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 23 and it stood at 0.98 higher than the benchmark of 0.7. The data collected for this study were analyzed through descriptive and inferential statistics. The Pearson Product Moment Correlation was employed to test the various hypotheses formulated through the aid of Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 23.0.

Data Presentation and Analysis

Questionnaire Distribution and Retrieval

Issued	20
Returned	20

Source; survey Data, 2024

The table above shows the questionnaire distribution and retrieval. The researcher issued 20 copies of the questionnaire and retrieved 20 copies.

Test of Hypothesis One (1)

H0₁ There is no significant relationship between product innovations and Organisational performance of telecom firms in Port Harcourt.

			product innovations	Organisational performance
Pearson (r)	product innovations	Correlation Coefficient	1.000	.819*
		Sig. (2 tailed)	.	.001
		N	20	20
	Organisational performance	Correlation Coefficient	.819*	1.000
		Sig. (2 tailed)	.001	.
		N	20	20

*Correlation is significant at 0.05 levels (2 tailed)

Source: SPSS Output, 2024.

The output analyzed the extent to which product innovations relate with Organisational performance of telecom firms in Port Harcourt. The result revealed that product

innovations has a strong correlation Organisational performance ($r = .819^*$) and the symbol * indicates that this correlation is significant at 0.05 level. Consequently, the null hypothesis (H_{01}) is rejected and the alternate hypothesis is accepted which implies that there is significant relationship between product innovations and Organisational performance of telecom firms in Port Harcourt.

Test of Hypothesis Two (2)

H_{02} There is no significant relationship process innovations and Organisational performance of telecom firms in Port Harcourt.

			process innovations	Organisational performance
Pearson (r)	process innovations	Correlation Coefficient	1.000	.604*
		Sig. (2 tailed)	.	.002
		N	20	20
	Organisational performance	Correlation Coefficient	.604*	1.000
		Sig. (2 tailed)	.002	.
		N	20	20

*Correlation is significant at 0.05 levels (2 tailed)

Source: SPSS Output, 2024.

The output analyzed the extent to which process innovations relate with Organisational performance of telecom firms in Port Harcourt. The result revealed that process innovations has a strong correlation with Organisational performance ($r = .604^*$) and the symbol * indicates that this correlation is significant at 0.05 level. Consequently, the null hypothesis (H_{02}) is rejected and the alternate hypothesis is accepted which implies that there is significant relationship between process innovations and Organisational performance of telecom firms in Port Harcourt.

Summary of Findings

- i. There is significant relationship between product innovations and Organisational performance of telecom firms in Port Harcourt.
- ii. There is significant relationship process innovations and Organisational performance of telecom firms in Port Harcourt.

Discussion of Findings

Product innovations showed a significant and positive relationship with Organisational performance of telecom firms in Port Harcourt. The analysis revealed that product innovations showed a very strong relationship with Organisational performance @($r = .819^*$). The finding was supported by the study of Nadeem, et., al., (2013) who carried out a study on the Role of Innovation on Organizational Growth: Evidences from Pakistan. The finding revealed that innovation play significant role on the growth of organization.

Also, the process innovations showed a significant and positive relationship with Organisational performance of telecom firms in Port Harcourt. The analysis revealed that process innovations showed a strong relationship with Organisational performance @($r = .604^*$). The finding was supported by the study of Kotabe and Murray (2004) who stated

that process innovations involve the optimization of internal workflows, the adoption of advanced technologies, and the implementation of best practices to streamline operations and reduce costs.

CONCLUSION

The study looked at the connection between Organisational performance and entrepreneurial innovation in Port Harcourt's telecom firms. The results of the conducted bivariate analysis revealed a positive, substantial, and robust association between Organisational performance and the entrepreneurial innovation dimensions of process and product innovations. This study concludes that telecom firms in Port Harcourt will see higher Organisational performance and Organisational performance as a result of more advancements in both process and product innovation.

RECOMMENDATIONS

In line with the findings and conclusion; the study recommends that:

- i. Telecom firms should explore product innovations as it will improve their network speed and impact greatly on Organisational performance.
- ii. Telecom firms should also concentrate more on process innovations and upgrade to a 5G network to increase network speed.

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