



**MARKET INNOVATION AND EMPLOYEE PERFORMANCE OF BOTTLED WATER COMPANIES IN PORT HARCOURT,
NIGERIA**

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ABSTRACT

This study examined the relationship between market innovation and employee performance of bottled water companies in Port Harcourt. The study adopted a cross-sectional survey in its investigation of the variables. Primary data was generated through self-administered questionnaire. The population of the study was 167 employees of ten selected bottled water companies in Port Harcourt Nigeria and a sample of 117 was calculated using the Taro Yamane's formula for sample size determination. 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 Spearman Rank Order Correlation Coefficient with the aid of SPSS version 23.0. The tests were carried out at a 95% confidence interval and 0.05 level of significance. The study findings revealed that there is a significant relationship between market innovation and employee performance of bottled water companies in Port Harcourt. The study recommended that management of bottled water companies should adjust their policy on innovation and create more room for advancement of ideas.

Keywords: Market Innovation, Employee Performance, Timeliness, Effectiveness, Efficiency

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INTRODUCTION

The main source of water for domestic use in Port Harcourt is private boreholes. It is estimated that more than 50 percent of the water supply sources in the city is independent boreholes (FRN 2006). Other sources are commercial boreholes that have much higher storage capacity. Water from these commercial water providers is supplied directly to the consumers' home. Approximately 20 percent of the population in Port Harcourt has access to pipe borne water, which is either piped in to their homes directly or within their premises (FRN, 2006). The other challenge is the actual delivery of safe and adequate drinking water supply to the people of Port Harcourt which at the moment seems increasingly impossible. It is against this background that there has been an overwhelming increase in the demand for a more hygienic drinking water in the state. Agu (2014) posit that the situation calls for increasing participation of independent bottled water companies to increase their supply and make it more affordable through adoption of strategic innovation that encourages the employees to be more innovative such practice will of course help cut production cost through the use of modern technology.

The bottled water subsector of the manufacturing sector in Nigeria is saddled with low computer-integrated production system. This is a great obstacle constraining productivity in Nigeria as developments in technology and innovations are the primary forces propelling industrialization today. New processes and procedures for doing old things, and automation has revolutionized the manufacturing industry and multiplied productivity in industrial nations. Bottled water companies in Nigeria cannot acquire modern machines to monitor and control operations; it is now possible to track products continuously as they move through the factory and to report on a real-time basis, such information regarding production. Low technology is responsible for the inability of most bottle water companies to produce capital goods

such as raw materials, spare parts and machines, the bulk of which are imported.

The entry of new players in the bottle water industry does not only signify growth opportunities but also signals higher competition resulting in dwindling fortunes for already existing market players (Gitau, 2013). Therefore to ensure improved performance of bottled water companies in Port Harcourt, in this rapidly changing environment, industry players are embracing innovation. This is because innovation is widely recognized in literature as a critical enabler for firms to create value and sustain improved performance (Drucker, 2013). In order to be successful, bottled water companies in Port Harcourt must therefore continuously search for development of new ways of conducting work through innovation as a lever to sustainable performance. Organizational innovativeness can be viewed as engagement in innovative behaviours, which includes behaviors related to the innovation process that is idea generation, idea promotion and idea realization, with the aim of producing innovation (Ramamoorthy, Flood, Slantery & Sadessail, 2005). Damanpour (2001) argues that innovation is connected to the implementation or adoption of novel ideas and can be categorized as either technological (change in production, services, production processes) or administration (changes in activities, social processes, structures), and either radical or incremental, depending on the extent of their influence on existing products or processes.

Although creativity is central to the whole innovation process, many authors draw a line between creativity and innovation (Amabile, Cont, Lazenby & Harron, 1996). Innovation can be seen as a successful implementation of creativity that produces economic value and creativity has to do with ideas production (Scott & Bruce, 2004). Therefore, it can be argued that every innovation requires creativity, but creativity does not necessarily lead to innovation. Organizational

innovativeness can thus be argued to cover a broader range of behaviors than creativity. There is no doubt that employees are the main force for organizations and their innovative behaviors are vital for effective innovation performance of an organization. Therefore, the organizations have to take measures to stimulate the innovation willingness of employees and promote their innovation behavior so as improve organizational performance. The purpose of this study therefore is to examine the relationship between market innovation and employee performance of bottled water companies in Port Harcourt?

This study will also be guided by the following research questions:

- What is the relationship between market innovation relate and timeliness of bottled water companies in Port Harcourt?
- What is the relationship between market innovation and with effectiveness of bottled water companies in Port Harcourt?
- What is the relationship between market innovation relate and efficiency of bottled water companies in Port Harcourt?

LITERATURE REVIEW

Blue Ocean Theory

The rapid pace of innovation and change in recent years has led scholars and executives to search for an approach that is more dynamic than Harvard Professor Michael Porter's classic "five forces. The Blue Ocean Theory, a concept outlined by Kim and Mauborgne (2005) argues that companies can succeed not by battling competitors, but rather by creating "blue oceans" of uncontested market space. The metaphor of "Blue Oceans" describes the market universe and denotes all the industries not in existence today, the unknown market space, untainted by competition, where demand is created rather than fought over (Kim & Mauborgne, 2005). In blue oceans, competition is not relevant and there is

ample opportunity for growth that is both rapid and profitable. The aim of value innovation is not to compete, but to make the competition irrelevant by changing the playing field of strategy. Value innovation challenges Porter (1985) idea that successful businesses are either low-cost providers or niche-players. Instead, blue ocean strategy proposes finding value that crosses conventional market segmentation and offering value at lower cost. Blue ocean theory therefore derives its importance in emphasis on disregarding traditional rules and using competition as a benchmark (Kim & Mauborgne, 2005). It encourages organizations to tap into their creativity through innovation to come up with product, process and market innovations that challenge the fundamental principle of conventional strategy, create new and uncontested market space and consequently improve their performance.

Market Innovation

Market innovation is defined in the OECD (Oslo Manual, 2005) as the implementation of a new marketing method involving significant changes in product design or packaging, product placement, product promotion or pricing. Market innovations target at addressing customer needs better, opening up new markets, or newly positioning a firm's product on the market with the intention of increasing firm's sales (Gunday, Ulosoy, Kilic & Alpkhan, 2011). Market innovations are strongly related to pricing strategies, product package design properties, product placement and promotion activities along the lines of four P's of marketing (Kotler, 1991). In the recent years, new ways of gathering consumer information through market innovation has enabled firms to reach customers more effectively than before. The use of technology has led to the development of new ways to market, key among them the use of the internet in marketing. This has seen the rise of online shops, online advertisements and online arrangements for both product and service delivery (Rodriguez-Cano, Carrillat & Jaramillo, 2004).

Technology has led to a wider reach of customers, ensuring more sales while at the same time reducing the cost of doing business.

According to Johne (1999), market innovation deals with the market mix and market selection in order to meet a customer's buying preference. Continual market innovation needs to be done by a firm because state-of-the-art marketing tools, particularly through the internet, make it possible for firms to reach potential customers across the globe quickly. Rodriguez-Cano et al. (2004) assert that market innovation plays a crucial role in fulfilling market needs and responding to market opportunities. In this respect, any market innovation has to be directed at meeting customers' demand and satisfaction (Rosli & Sidek, 2013).

Employee Performance

The debate on performance measures has been a domain of interest for academicians and practitioners. Employee performance is the ultimate dependent variable of interest for scholars concerned in area of management and also an indicator for evaluating the operational efficiency of a business. Despite the importance of the concept, studies have revealed disparities as to what constitute organizational performance. Venkatraman and Ramanujan (1986) note that there are no agreed definitions and measures of employee performance. They argue that the concept has multiple meaning depending on the specific discipline such as the service, production and manufacturing industry. For instance, Delaney and Huselid (1996) placed high emphasize on financial performance which are objective such as accounting measures such as profit per employee, return on sales, productivity per employee or subjective measures (perception of performance relative to similar organizations or relative to product market competitors). Guest (1997) criticizes the overreliance of financial performance that does not capture the full impact of human resource management on overall performance. Dess

and Robinson (1984) and Venkatraman and Ramanujam (1987) comparing objective and subjective measures of employee performance revealed that the two methods are appropriate in different situations. In this regard, recent studies have focused on a combination of the different methods in order to avoid bias toward one or the other measure, that is, objective or subjective. The Balanced Scorecard (BSC) proposed by Kaplan and Norton (1996) is the most dominant performance module used world over.

Measures of Employee performance

Timeliness

When the employees are productive, they accomplish more in a given amount of time. In turn, efficiency saves their company money in time and labour. When employees are unproductive, they take longer time to complete projects, which cost employee's more money due to the time lost (Olajide, 2000). The importance of higher productivity of the employees in public enterprise cannot be overemphasized, which include the following; Higher incomes and profit; Higher earnings; Increased supplies of both consumer and capital goods at lower costs and lower prices; Ultimate shorter hours of work and improvements in working and living conditions; Strengthening the general economic foundation of workers (Banjoko, 1996). Armstrong (2006) stated that productivity is the time spent by an employee actively participating in his/her job that he or she was hired for, in order to produce the required outcomes according to the employers' job descriptions. As suggested by Bloisi (2003) the core cause of the productivity problems in the South African society are people's motivation levels and their work ethics.

Timeliness according to Mayberry, Nicewander, Qin and Billard (2006), can be referred to as the ability to reduce waiting times and sometimes harmful delays to clients by employees in attending to their needs.

The scholar went further to emphasize that a high degree of responsiveness with respect to an activity that is not essential in achieving the organizations goals does not contribute to the effectiveness of organizations; hence hindering their ability to become competitive.

Effectiveness

Georgopoulos and Tannenbaum, (1915) defined effective organisation as one that is productive, flexible, and lacks organizational strain. This view is supported by (Caplow, 1964), who perceived organization as one that has stability, integration, voluntarism and achievement. For him, an effective organisation is not only stable but achieves its goal. The views of these authors are supported by Yuchtman & Seashore (1967); Price (1968); Schien (1970). Being successful, means being more than just effective. It means making an important input to the long term interests of the shareholders by adding value. Effective organisations are built on effective individuals who work effectively in groups Lawler (1972).

Efficiency

Ogboso & Amah (2016) opines that efficiency refers to the accomplishment of goals with minimum resources or waste. It includes measures such as time minimization, cost minimization, and waste minimization. Speed and time are important resources for any organization and must be seen to seek to maximize speed and minimize time. The way an organization does this indicates how efficient and productive they are. Speed and time were the essence of time and motion studies since the day of scientific management introduced by Taylor that led to management efficiency. They are sources of competitive advantage. Doing the right thing in corporate governance terms is an important, but not a sufficient, condition for performance. And doing the wrong thing (e.g. an ineffective audit committee, or lack of independence among the executives) will make it more difficult for an organization to perform

but is not a measure of success or lack of it either. The questions relating to organization efficiency are: How effective is the organization in dispatching businesses (including through organization committees in and between meetings) and following up on decisions, does the organization identify and focus on key (not just a long list of) issues and risks facing the organizations; is the organization able to take initiatives, dealing with crises and identifying emerging issues?

Market Innovation and Employee Performance

Stredwick (2000) who argued that market which its reward of profit, sale and proper customer information which becomes a helpful tool in adapting to the change of market trend. The time which it requires for the product to be within the reach of the consumer is paramount. Also it highlights the need for HR practitioners to understand the business needs of the organization and market to come with some ideas which are innovative in nature to fit in the market trend that change employee efficiency which will lead to increased and employee performance that will in turn lead to increased organizational innovation.

New ways of gathering consumer information through market innovation have enabled firms to reach customers more effectively than before. The use of technology has led to the development of new ways to market, key among them the use of the internet in marketing. This has seen the rise of online shops, online advertisements and online arrangements for both product and service delivery (Rodriguez-Cano *et al.*, 2004). Technology has led to a wider reach of customers, ensuring more sales while at the same time reducing the cost of doing business.

Market orientation also provides critical information to firms that cope with stiff international competition. It assures business executives that the strategies they put in place will maintain or even

boost their rank among other insurance firms in terms of competition. Organizational culture, defined as beliefs, ideas or values that members of an organization share in common is also seen as an enabler of product innovation. An organization that grows and maintains a culture that sees the benefit of product innovation and encourages its stakeholders, mainly its employees to develop new products is more likely to succeed (Bakar & Ahmad, 2010).

From the foregoing point of view, we hereby hypothesized thus:

- H_{o1}:** There is no significant relationship between market innovation and timeliness of bottled water companies in Port Harcourt.
- H_{o2}:** There is no significant relationship between market innovation and effectiveness of bottled water companies in Port Harcourt.
- H_{o3}:** There is no significant relationship between market innovation and efficiency of bottled water companies in Port Harcourt.

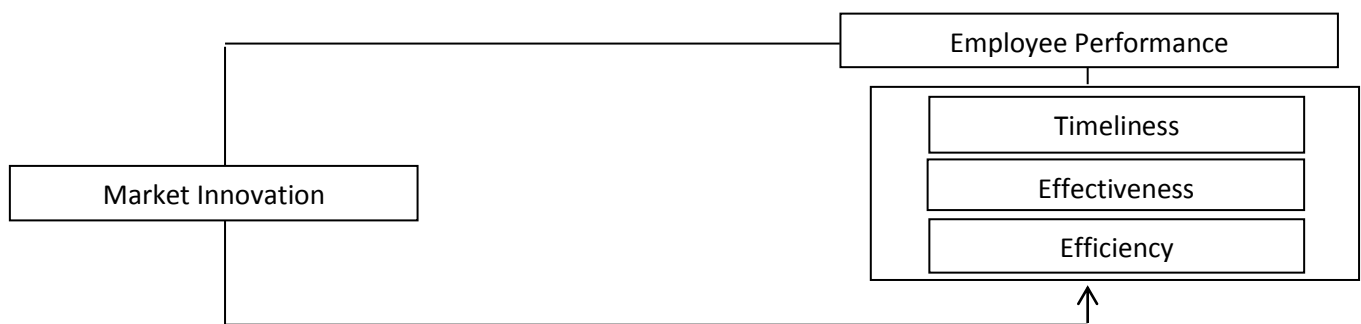


Figure 1: Conceptual framework for relationship market innovation and employee performance
Source: Author’s Desk Research, 2019

METHODOLOGY

The study adopted a cross-sectional survey in its investigation of the variables. Primary data was generated through self-administered questionnaire. The population of the study was 167 employees of ten selected bottled water companies in Port Harcourt Nigeria and a sample of 117 was calculated using the Taro Yamane’s formula for sample size determination. 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 Spearman Rank Order Correlation Coefficient with the aid of SPSS version 23.0. The tests were carried out at a 95% confidence interval and 0.05 level of significance.

DATA ANALYSIS AND RESULTS

Bivariate Analysis

Secondary data analysis was carried out using the Spearman’s Rank Order Correlation Statistics at a 95% confidence interval. Specifically, the tests of hypothesis were declared in the null form. We based on the statistic of Spearman Rank (rho) to carry out the analysis. The level of significance 0.05 was adopted as a criterion for the probability of accepting the null hypothesis in ($p > 0.05$) or rejecting the null hypothesis in ($p < 0.05$).

We began by presenting first a test of existing relationships.

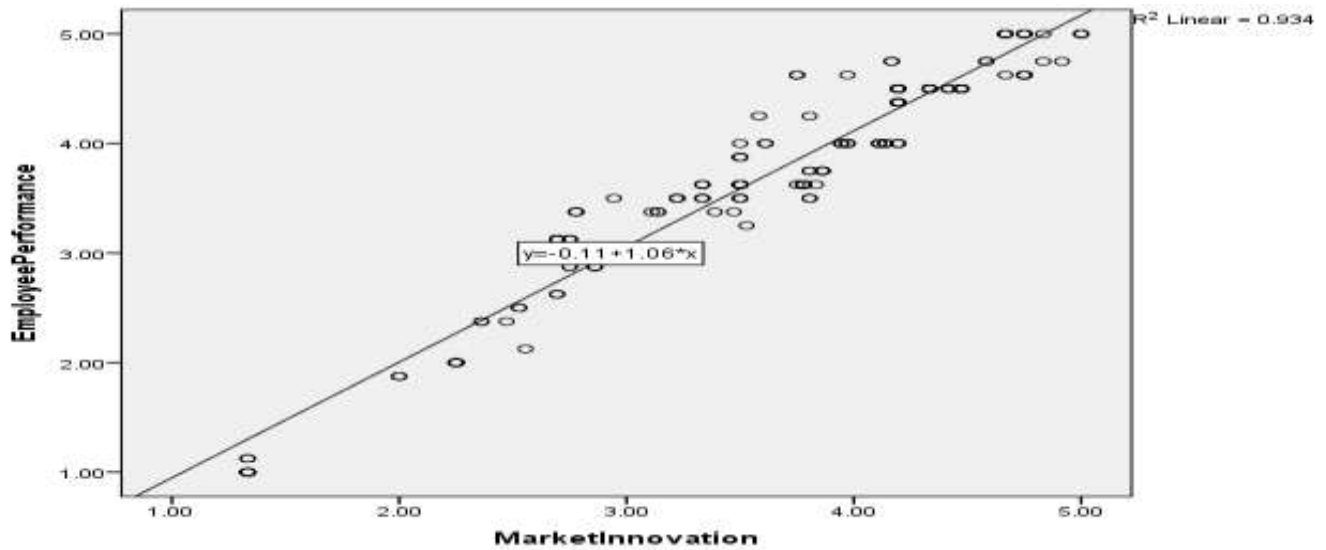


Figure 2: Scatter plot relationship between market innovation and employee performance

The scatter plot graph shows at R^2 linear value of (0.934) depicting a strong relationship between the two constructs. The implication is that an increase in market innovation simultaneously brings about an

increase in the level of employee performance. The scatter diagram has provided vivid evaluation of the closeness of the relationship among the pairs of variables through the nature of their concentration.

Table 1: Correlations Market Innovation and the Measures of Employee Performance

		Market Innovation	Timeliness	Effectiveness	Efficiency	
Spearman's rho	Market Innovation	Correlation Coefficient	1.000	.573**	.851	.737**
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.	.000	.000	.000
		N	97	97	97	97
	Timeliness	Correlation Coefficient	.573**	1.000	.676**	.914**
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.	.000	.000
		N	97	97	97	97
	Effectiveness	Correlation Coefficient	.851	.676**	1.000	.774**
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.	.001
		N	97	97	97	97
	Efficiency	Correlation Coefficient	.737**	.914**	.774**	1.000
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.001	.
		N	97	97	97	97

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

Source: Research Data, 2019, (SPSS output version 23.0)

Table 1 illustrated the test for the three previously postulated bivariate hypothetical statements. The results showed that for:

Ho₁: *There is no significant relationship between market innovation and timeliness of bottled water companies in Port Harcourt*

The correlation coefficient (r) showed that there is a significant and positive relationship between market innovation and timeliness. The *rho* value 0.573 indicates this relationship and it is significant at $p < 0.000 < 0.05$. The correlation coefficient represents a high moderate relationship. Therefore, based on

empirical findings the null hypothesis earlier stated is hereby rejected and the alternate upheld. Thus, there is a significant relationship between market innovation and effectiveness of bottled water companies in Port Harcourt.

Ho₂: There is no significant relationship between market innovation and effectiveness of bottled water companies in Port Harcourt

The correlation coefficient (r) shows that there is a significant and positive relationship between market innovation and efficiency. The ρ value 0.851 indicates this relationship and it is significant at $p < 0.000 < 0.05$. The correlation coefficient represents a high correlation indicating a strong relationship. Therefore, based on empirical findings the null hypothesis earlier stated is hereby rejected and the alternate upheld. Thus, there is a significant relationship between market innovation and efficiency of bottled water companies in Port Harcourt.

Ho₃: There is no significant relationship between market innovation and efficiency of bottled water in Port Harcourt

The correlation coefficient (r) shows that there is a significant and positive relationship between market innovation and effectiveness. The ρ value 0.737 indicates this relationship and it is significant at $p < 0.000 < 0.05$. The correlation coefficient represents a high correlation indicating a strong relationship. Therefore, based on empirical findings the null hypothesis earlier stated is hereby rejected and the alternate upheld. Thus, there is a significant relationship between market innovation and effectiveness of bottled water companies in Port Harcourt.

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

This study using descriptive and inferential statistical methods investigated the relationship between market innovation and employee performance of bottled water companies in Port Harcourt. The

findings revealed a significant positive relationship between market innovation and employee performance of bottled water companies in Port Harcourt using the Spearman's rank order correlation tool and at a 95% confidence interval. This finding is in line with Stredwick (2000) who argued that market with its reward of profit, sale and proper customer information which becomes a helpful tool in adapting to the change of market trend. The time which it requires for the product to be within the reach of the consumer is paramount. Also it highlights the need for HR practitioners to understand the business needs of the organization and market to come with some ideas which are innovative in nature to fit in the market trend that change employee efficiency which will lead to increased and employee performance that will in turn lead to increased organizational innovation.

New ways of gathering consumer information through market innovation have enabled firms to reach customers more effectively than before. The use of technology has led to the development of new ways to market, key among them the use of the internet in marketing. This has seen the rise of online shops, online advertisements and online arrangements for both product and service delivery (Rodriguez-Cano *et al.*, 2004). Technology has led to a wider reach of customers, ensuring more sales while at the same time reducing the cost of doing business. Market orientation also provides critical information to firms that cope with stiff international competition. It assures business executives that the strategies they put in place will maintain or even boost their rank among other insurance firms in terms of competition.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The study concluded that a significant positive relationship exists between market innovation and employee performance. Based on the findings obtained from summary of discussion and empirical

findings we conclude thus that market innovation significantly influences efficiency of bottled water companies in Port Harcourt.

Based on the discussion and conclusion above, the following recommendations are hereby made:

- Management of bottled water companies should adjust their policies on innovation and create

more room for advancement of ideas by encouraging employees to share their ideas. Organization innovation practice relates to the magnitude of effect the employee performance of those bottled water companies.

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