



**INNOVATION CULTURE AND RESPONSIVENESS OF FAST MOVING CONSUMER GOODS COMPANIES IN RIVERS STATE, NIGERIA**

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<sup>1</sup> Adim, C. V., & <sup>2</sup> Mezeh, A. A.

<sup>1</sup> Department of Management, Faculty of Management Sciences, Rivers State University, Nkpolu-Oroworukwo, PMB 5080, Port Harcourt, Nigeria

<sup>2</sup> Department of Management, Faculty of Management Sciences, Rivers State University, Nkpolu-Oroworukwo, PMB 5080, Port Harcourt, Nigeria

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**ABSTRACT**

*This study examined the relationship between innovation culture (IC) and responsiveness of Fast Moving Consumer Goods Companies in Rivers State, Nigeria. The study adopted a cross sectional survey research design. The population of this study was nine (9) fast moving consumer goods companies in Rivers State. Since the unit of analysis was at organizational level, only strategic managers were included. Five managers each were used for each company giving a total of forty five (45) respondents. Census sampling was adopted because the population was small. Primary data was collected using a 5-point Likert scaled 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 Spearman's Rank Order 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. Results from analysis of data revealed that there is a strong positive environmental dynamism and corporate vitality of fast moving consumer goods companies in Rivers State, Nigeria. The study recommended that managers of fast moving consumer goods companies should form and support work environments that inspire employees toward continuous learning and open search behaviours in order to exploit innovation opportunities.*

**Key Words:** Innovation Culture, Responsiveness, Strategic Sensitivity

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## INTRODUCTION

In today's dynamic and turbulent environment, organizations are expected to deal simultaneously with the present as well as the future, and they are also expected to be capable of combining routine behaviour with improvisation (Winter, 2003). As such the capability to respond effectively advances the organizations chances of survival, within its current environment as well as its estimated placement in the future. Hence, organizational responsiveness can be described as comprising of the strategic as well as operational features (Tamunomiebi & Green, 2020).

The business landscape in Nigeria recently has been quite unsatisfactory in its progress leading to a slow pace of growth, growing unemployment rate, poor industrial output and poor demand rate for services and tangible products (Oginni & Adesanya, 2013). Similarly, Adim, Tamunomiebi and Akintokunbo (2018) argue that the ability of organizations to survive is the ability to adapt and to thrive amidst these changes which in most cases may not be favourable. In Nigeria, many businesses have packed up, staggered, collapsed, and relocated as a result of unfavourable conditions of the environment.

Competition ensures change in the way things are done and raise quality bar to international standard as well helps to achieve appropriate pricing level (Adesina, 2003). Many good ideas about how products and services should be offered, how they should be produced and delivered have suddenly become obsolete in the face of change. In the same way, many organizations find it difficult to cope with changing customer needs, new technology and innovation as a result fold up or are taken over by more aggressive competitors.

Responsiveness is considered as an organization's ability to fathom its complex relationship with the outside world. This entails a sensing process which consists of three distinct stages: noticing, interpreting, and acting (Schilling, 2000). Huber (2004) argued that organizational responsiveness depends on the cumulative sensing effort of all

organizational members. The ability of organizations to survive is the ability to adapt and to thrive amidst these changes which in most cases may not be favourable. In Nigeria, many businesses have packed up, staggered, collapsed, and relocated as a result of unfavourable conditions of the environment (Ogunro, 2014). Kalay and Lynn (2014) opined that in a highly competitive environment, innovation is the essential key to a firm obtaining a dominant position and gaining higher profits. Therefore, the understanding of innovation culture is critical to responsiveness.

An organization's culture can be defined as the set of standard habits, behaviors and representations shared by its members. This culture serves as social cement for the life of the organization. It is also a powerful management tool that allows members of the organization to act independently and consistently (Cameron & Quinn, 2011). The "innovation culture" is a particular configuration that makes innovative thinking natural within the organization and encourages innovation activities at the level of all employees.

Extant literature in the fields of strategy suggests that several organizational outcomes are dependent on organizational responsiveness. Georgewill (2021) theoretically examined structural flexibility and corporate responsiveness in the business environment. Nadube and Barango-Tariah (2020) studied corporate responsiveness and customer satisfaction of stock broking firms in Port Harcourt. Mei (2012) examined customer orientation and organizational responsiveness. Hult, Toma, Ketchen and Slater (2005) also found that market orientation's performance effects were felt through responsiveness. Sinkula (1994) and Slater and Narver (1995) suggest that the market-driven organization is well-positioned to anticipate the developing needs of customers and to respond to them through the addition of innovative products and service. However, there is paucity of studies that have considered the relationship between innovation culture and responsiveness of fast moving consumer goods companies in Rivers State

hence, a gap exists which this study sought to fill by examining the relationship between innovation culture and responsiveness of fast moving consumer goods companies in Rivers State.

This study also provided answers to the following research questions:

- What is the relationship between innovation culture and strategic sensitivity of fast moving consumer goods companies in Rivers State?
- What is the relationship between innovation culture and adaptability of fast moving consumer goods companies in Rivers State?



**Figure 1: Conceptual framework for relationship between innovation culture and responsiveness**

Source: Researcher (2021)

**LITERATURE REVIEW**

**Theoretical Foundation**

**Resource -Based View Theory**

The underpinning theory for this study was the Resource-Based View theory. This theory tries to explain the internal sources of a firm’s sustained competitive advantage (Kraaijenbrink, Spender and Groen, 2010). The resource-based strategy paradigm emphasizes distinctive, firm-specific, valuable, imperfectly inimitable and rare resources and capabilities confer competitive advantage on the firm that possesses them (Wernerfelt, 1984). Its innermost proposition is that if a firm is to attain a state of sustainable competitive advantage it must obtain and control valuable, rare, inimitable, and non-substitutable (VRIN) resource and capabilities, plus have the firms in the place that can absorb and apply them. Resources relate to a firms intangible and tangible assets whereas capabilities are the way of accomplishing firm activities, depending on the availability of resources (Wernerfelt, 1984; Barney, 1991).

Simply stated, in order to produce a competitive advantage that is sustainable, firms should base their success in their distinctive competencies

which are grounded in their resources and routines. For Menguc and Auh (2006), innovativeness is a rare, valuable and hard-to-copy firm level competence. It is the key driver of innovation in a firm (Damanpour, 1991; Dobni, 2006), and represents a firm’s ability to continually develop innovations (Damanpour, 1991; Dobni, 2006). The essence of the argument is that innovativeness is constructed by the purposeful orchestration and strategic application of practices that accumulate bundle and leverage resources (Wernerfelt, 1984; Moingeon et al., 1998; Ireland et al., 2003). In order to create innovativeness a firm must implement strategic practices that enhance their innovativeness competence (that is, strategic practices are the “how to” for creating innovativeness).

**Innovation Culture**

Innovation refers to implementation of new ideas, processes, products or services (Bitar, 2003). Jin, Hewitt and Thompson (2004) cited in Ejo-Orusa and Adim (2018) defined innovation as a future-focused business development framework that identifies breakthrough growth opportunities, accelerates business decisions and creates near-term, measurable impact within the context of a longer-

term vision for sustainable competitive advantage. Strategic innovation challenges an organization to look beyond its established business boundaries and mental models and to participate in an open minded, creative exploration of the realm of possibilities. On the other hand, innovation management refers to the entire set of innovative practices involving the analysis of competition mechanisms, such as creating an innovative vision, harmonizing business strategy, expanding the strategy to all organizational levels, market tendencies, technologies and competitor acts (Ejo-Orusa & Adim, 2018).

Innovation culture is defined in different ways in the literature. According to Koberg and Chusmir (1987); Deshpande, Farley, and Webster (1993), the key concepts associated with being innovative, from a cultural perspective, are creativeness, openness, accepting new ideas insightfully (not being closed to new ideas), taking risks and entrepreneurial mentality. While Capon, Farley, Lehmann, and Hulbert (1992) point to having an open and informal communication climate to define Innovation Culture, Kuczarski (1998) defines it as the formation of a holistic belief and mentality with regard to supporting innovations among employees. For innovation to take place, the climate, values and philosophy of an organization need to be oriented towards openness and employee encouragement (Randall, 2005; Jolly, (2003). According to Al-salaymeh (2013), Innovative culture is a set of procedures, processes and behavior that leads to improving the general atmosphere in the organization and activating the creative performance through motivating employees to solve problems and decisions in a more creative and unusual way of thinking. Innovation is all about changing the way organization do business, meeting customer demands or needs, embracing uses of technology.

Therefore, innovation is central to building a proactive and entrepreneurial organization (Johannessen, Olsen, & Lumpkin, 2001) that has become widely recognized as key to competitive

success (Francis & Bessant 2005). Organizational innovation culture is about driving growth, capability, idea generation, risk taking and collaboration of ideas (Karlsson, 2010). Innovative culture empowers employees to be creative and more outspoken within a company. Odom, Boxx and Dunn (1992) stated that employee attitudes and behaviors is enhanced by a culture exhibiting innovative characteristics. In other words, firms possessing an Innovation culture are places with an atmosphere in which entrepreneurship and risk taking are supported and rewarded, and employees and product development teams are not punished, even when new products become unsuccessful in the market (De Brentani & Kleinschmidt, 2004).

An analysis of the literature shows that the innovation culture has specific characteristics in five dimensions: the presence of innovative leaders and managers; the presence of innovative teams; the presence of innovative individuals; an organizational context conducive to innovation; multiple and easy links with outside of the organization (Christensen Dyer & Gregersen, 2013).

### **Responsiveness**

Responsiveness refers to the extent to which firms react rapidly to changes in a business environment to seize potential opportunities (Bernardes & Hanna, 2009). This responsiveness reflects “the efficiency and effectiveness with which firms sense, interpret, and act on market stimuli (Garrett, Covin & Slevin, 2009), and has been treated as a competitive advantage. For example, Wei and Wang (2011) proposed that this responsiveness represents a competitive marketing advantage by deploying resources to satisfy customer needs. Inman Sale, Green, Jr and Whitten (2011) noted that a firm with a high level of responsiveness outperforms its competitors in terms of operations. Inman *et al.* (2011) noted that a firm with a high level of responsiveness outperforms its competitors in terms of operations.

Scholars have conducted numerous studies to explore how responsiveness can be enhanced (Wei & Wang, 2011). According to Bernardes and Hanna



(2009) central to this concept of organizational responsiveness seems to be the capability to learn fast in an environment where changes are fast-paced and difficult to foresee. Accordingly, scholars have increasingly realized that to develop and maintain responsiveness, a firm must constantly learn from partners with rich experiences in terms of responding to market changes (Yu, Jacobs, Salisbury & Enns, 2013).

From the perspective of dynamic capabilities, organizational responsiveness assumes the role of adaptive capacity, which is reflected in the company's ability to reconfigure its resources and coordinate processes according to the fast-changing environment. Although some recent research has been carried out into the responsiveness of firms from the perspective of dynamic capabilities (Thongsodsang & Ussahawanitchakit, 2011), these investigations are still in their early stages and require more consistent results. What can be observed is that the perspective of dynamic capabilities is a versatile integrated theoretical approach both to the broader theories of management, such as RBV, and the more specific approaches to marketing, as in the case of market orientation (Morgan, 2012).

In dynamic and complex environments, responsiveness presents itself as the adaptive capability of the company. Organizations can anticipate unexpected changes and uncertainties more rapidly when this pattern fits their strategic direction. Zhou and Li (2010) underline this point when point to strategic orientation as an important driver of the adaptive capacity of a company. According to the authors, strategic orientation influences the way. Market responsiveness is a market-driven behavior of the firm and its units. Responsiveness requires some market maturity, as customers, competitors, and other relevant market actors need to be distinguished. The firm would then be able to specify a suitable degree of responsive action, such as product customization and building customer relationships (Pehrsson, 2014).

Responsiveness is the ability of a firm to respond to customers' needs in terms of quality, speed and flexibility and it is characterized by combined goals such as time, quality and flexibility (Asree, Zain, and Razalli, 2010). An organization's performance is often determined by its ability to respond quickly to changes in the business environment. Responsiveness enables organizations to detect market changes quickly, reconfigure their processes to meet new market requirements, share information across organizational units, take maximum advantage of information processing systems, and adopt new product and process technologies ahead of competitors (Hoyt, Huq, and Kreiser, 2007). The level of uncertainty in the operating environment of firms supports the assertion that responsiveness is a key determinant of competitiveness. It is an essential condition that allows firms to develop competitive advantage. Furthermore, organizational responsiveness includes employee response, response time, response speed, information integration and procedural response. Employee response: service personnel must have sufficient responsibility, flexibility and willingness to help customers.

### **Innovation Culture and Responsiveness**

A culture susceptible to innovation fosters firm-wide recognition of the necessity to innovate. Therefore, the firm's culture is undisputedly considered crucial to the firm's technological capabilities in the long term (Ekvall & Ryhammar, 1998). Cultural resistance to innovation may arise from entrenched routines and interpretative barriers. Routines, whether deliberately organized or spontaneously evolved, structure activities, processes and information. This tempts employees to focus solely on their own tasks and responsibilities. As a result, barriers arise when looking for solutions that surpass individual responsibilities. This is in conflict with the inherent collective nature of innovation projects that demands all participants to work towards a common objective (Dougherty, 1992). Likewise, the

extent to which various departments of the firm cooperate is believed to affect technological viability.

The foregoing argument gave rise to the following hypotheses:

**Ho<sub>1</sub>:** There is no significant relationship between innovation culture and adaptability of Fast Moving Consumer Goods Companies in Rivers State, Nigeria.

**Ho<sub>2</sub>:** There is no significant relationship between innovation culture and adaptability of Fast Moving Consumer Goods Companies in Rivers State, Nigeria.

### METHODOLOGY

The study adopted a cross sectional survey research design. The population of this study was nine (9) fast moving consumer goods companies in Rivers

State. Since the unit of analysis was at organizational level, only strategic managers were included. Five managers each were used for each company giving a total of forty five (45) respondents. Census sampling was adopted because the population was small. Primary data was collected using a 5-point Likert scaled questionnaire. Forty five 45 copies of questionnaire were distributed but only thirty eight (38) copies were returned and used for data analysis. 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's Rank Order Correlation Coefficient with the aid of Statistical Package for Social Sciences version 23.0. The research instrument was also subjected to reliability test and was found reliable as presented below:

**Table 1: Reliability Coefficients for the Variables**

S/No	Dimensions/Measures of the study variable	Number of items	Number of cases	Cronbach's Alpha
1.	Innovation Culture	5	38	0.868
2.	Strategic Sensitivity	5	38	0.878
3.	Adaptability	5	38	0.809

Source: SPSS Output

### DATA ANALYSIS AND RESULTS

#### Bivariate Analysis

The secondary data analysis was carried out using the Spearman rank order correlation tool at a 95% confidence interval. Specifically, the tests cover hypotheses Ho<sub>1</sub> to Ho<sub>3</sub> which were bivariate and all stated in the null form. We have relied on the

Spearman Rank (*rho*) statistic to undertake the analysis. The 0.05 significance level is adopted as criterion for the probability of either accepting the null hypotheses at ( $p > 0.05$ ) or rejecting the null hypotheses at ( $p < 0.05$ ).

We commenced by first presenting a proof of existing relationships.

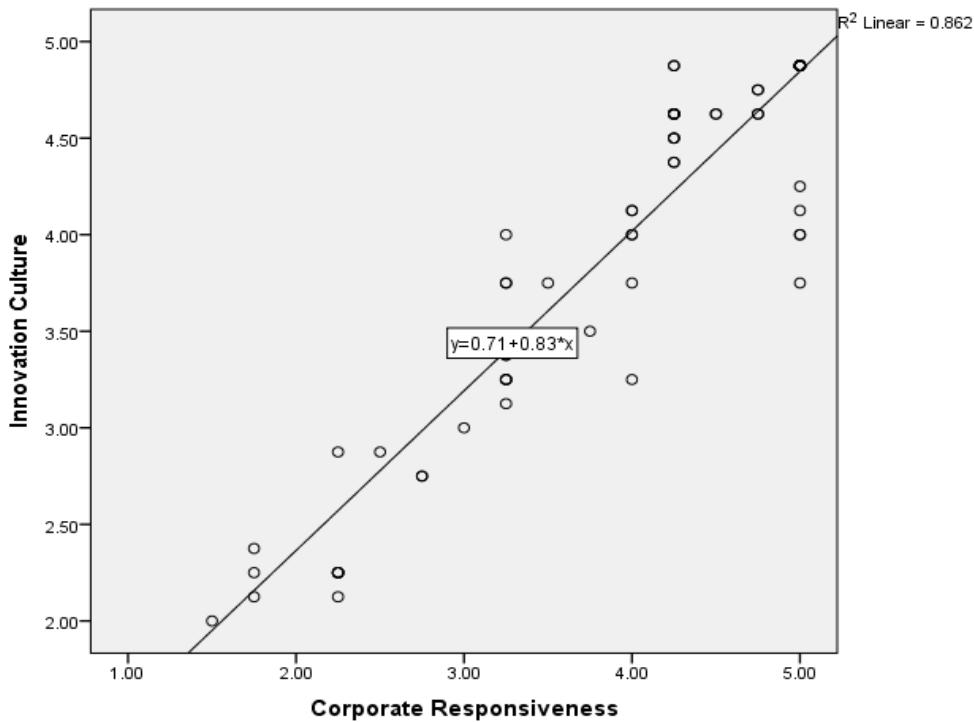


Figure 2: scatter plot relationship between innovation culture and responsiveness

The scatter plot graph showed at  $R^2$  linear value of (0.862) depicting a very strong viable and positive relationship between the two constructs. The implication is that an increase in innovation culture simultaneously brings about an increase in the level

of responsiveness. The scatter diagram provided vivid evaluation of the closeness of the relationship among the pairs of variables through the nature of their concentration.

Table 2: Correlation Matrix Innovation Culture and Measures of Responsiveness

		Innovation Culture	Sensitivity	Adaptability
Spearman 's rho	Innovation Culture	Correlation Coefficient	1.000	.877**
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.	.000
		N	166	166
	Sensitivity	Correlation Coefficient	.877**	1.000
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.
		N	166	166
	Adaptability	Correlation Coefficient	.803**	.668**
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000
		N	166	166
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000
		N	166	166

Source: SPSS output, version 23.0

The table above illustrates the test for the two previously postulated bivariate hypothetical statements.

$H_{01}$ : There is no significant relationship between innovation culture and strategic sensitivity



of fast moving consumer goods companies in Rivers State, Nigeria.

The result in table 2 showed the correlation for innovation culture and strategic sensitivity ( $r = 0.877$ ). This represented a very high correlation indicating a very strong substantial relationship. By interpretation, there is a strong positive relationship between innovation culture and strategic sensitivity of fast moving consumer goods companies in Rivers State, Nigeria. This finding provided answer to research question 1, implying that strategic sensitivity is dependent on the adoption of innovation culture in the studied fast moving consumer goods companies in Rivers State, Nigeria. Similarly displayed in table 2 is the statistical test of significance ( $p$  - value), which makes possible the generalization of our findings to the study population. From the result obtained the probability value was  $(0.000) < (0.05)$  level of significance; hence the study rejected the null hypothesis and concluded that there is a significant relationship between innovation culture and strategic sensitivity of fast moving consumer goods companies in Rivers State, Nigeria.

**Ho<sub>2</sub>:** There is no significant relationship between innovation culture and adaptability of fast moving consumer goods companies in Rivers State, Nigeria.

The result in table 2 showed the correlation for innovation culture and adaptability ( $r = 0.803$ ). This represented a very high correlation indicating a very strong substantial relationship. By interpretation, there is a strong positive relationship between innovation culture and adaptability of fast moving consumer goods companies in Rivers State, Nigeria. This finding provided answer to research question 2, implying that adaptability is dependent on the adoption of innovation culture in the studied fast moving consumer goods companies in Rivers State, Nigeria. Similarly displayed in table 2 was the statistical test of significance ( $p$  - value), which makes possible the generalization of our findings to the study population. From the result obtained the probability value is  $(0.000) < (0.05)$  level of

significance; hence the study rejected the null hypothesis and concluded that there is a significant relationship between innovation culture and adaptability of fast moving consumer goods companies in Rivers State, Nigeria.

### **Discussion of Findings**

The findings of this study confirmed that there is a very strong positive and significant relationship between adaptability of fast moving consumer goods companies in Rivers State, Nigeria. This corroborates with Nadube and Barango-Tariah (2020) whose study found that there is a strong, positive and statistically relationship between corporate responsiveness and customer satisfaction of stock broking firms in Port Harcourt. Specifically, the results indicated that responsiveness has moderate relationships with perceived quality and perceived value respectively

The study finding supports the views of Teece *et al.* (1997) clearly stated that their approach is in line with the Schumpeterian world of innovation-based competition. Evidently, the dynamic capabilities approach has been built on Schumpeter's ideas, so accordingly some parallels can be drawn. A review of the literature indicates that some notions can be found in both areas. Innovation capability is a result of learning processes continuously developed over time. Indeed, learning and transforming knowledge and ideas into new or improved products, processes and systems for the benefit of the firm is the main goal related to innovation capabilities (Birchall & Tovstiga, 2005).

The result of this study corroborates Kalay and Lynn (2014) findings that showed that Innovation culture has a positive effect on firm innovation performance. In other words, it was determined that firms possessing an organizational environment that promote risk taking, rewards success, and provides freedom to experiment were more successful. This result is consistent with the research results determining a positive impact of innovation culture on firm innovation performance (Damanpour, 1991; Oke *et al.*, 2012; O'Regan *et al.*, 2005).

This finding corroborates extant literature which is clear that the central role of dynamic capabilities is changing internal components of the firm and creating new changes (Teece, 2007). A change in the resource base, as Helfat *et al.* (2007) state, implies that a firm is doing something different, but not necessarily better than before. In contrast, innovation is about change, indeed the key basis for innovation is the need to change (Verloop, 2004).

## CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Today's consumers are highly knowledgeable and demanding. For firms in the fast moving consumer goods companies to succeed in the competitive environment, they have to be responsive to the needs and wants of their target customers better than competitors. The growing riskiness of the environment of business makes strategic planning difficult (Grant, 2003) as it makes the environment of business difficult to predict, dynamic fast changing, and leading to the entropy of fast moving consumer goods companies. This call for fast moving consumer goods companies to have innovation culture that encourages openness,

creativity and innovativeness. The study thus concluded that innovation culture positively and significantly influences the responsiveness of fast moving consumer goods companies in Rivers State as it result in increased sensitivity and adaptability. Based on this the following, recommendations were here proffered:

- Fast moving consumer goods companies should embrace innovation culture towards service quality improvement, better service delivery, process improvement, efficient organizational management and finally to ensure customer satisfaction.
- Fast moving consumer goods companies management should adopt organizational culture that encourages creativeness, openness, taking risks and entrepreneurial mentality.
- Managers of fast moving consumer goods companies should form and support work environments that inspire employees toward continuous learning and open search behaviours in order to exploit innovation opportunities.

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