

## MARKET INNOVATION AND EMPLOYEE PERFORMANCE IN WATER PRODUCING FIRMS IN PORT HARCOURT, RIVERS STATE

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### ABSTRACT

This study examined the relationship between market innovation and employee performance in water producing firms in Port Harcourt, Rivers State. The objective of the study was to determine the relationship between market innovation and measures of employee performance (adaptive performance, task performance, conceptual performance) in water producing firms in Port Harcourt, Rivers State. The study adopted correlational survey design conducted in a non-contrived setting and cross-sectional for time horizon. The population of the study comprised of 167 employees of 10 selected water producing firms in Port Harcourt. The sample size for the study was 117 derived using Taro Yamene formula for sample size determination. Data for the study was generated through primary sources. The main data collection instrument for this study was a structured questionnaire. To ensure the validity of the instruments for this study, the content and face validity was adopted in ascertaining the extent to which the instrument can be said to be accurate and precise in the measurement of the variables under investigation. The reliability for the study was determined using the Cronbach alpha coefficient. The bivariate analysis was carried out using Spearman's Rank Order Correlation Statistics.

**Keywords:** Market innovation, employee performance, task performance, adaptive performance, conceptual performance

### INTRODUCTION

The performance of an employee in an organization is one of the most important factors that indicate the success or failure of an organization. No organization, no matter the size and resources can survival without competent and motivated employees. This fact highlights the point that employee performance is very important for the survival of the organization. According to Suhartini (2012) employee performance is a mutual result of efforts, abilities and perception of tasks. Swasto (2015) said that employee performance is the action or the completion of errands that were done by individuals within specific period of time.

The entry of new players in an industry does not only signifies growth opportunities but also signals higher competition resulting to dwindling fortunes for already existing market players (Gitau, 2013). Therefore, to ensure improved performance of organizations 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, organizations must therefore

continuously search for development of new ways of conducting work through innovation as a lever to sustainable performance. Innovation is one concept that has gained enormous popularity in both business research and practice to improve organizational sustainability (Odumeru, 2013).

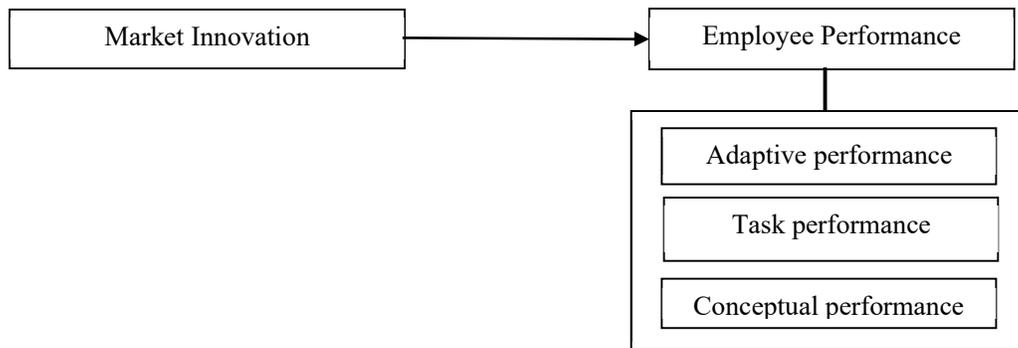
Market innovation is defined in the OECD (Oslo Manual, 2005) as the implementation of a new marketing method involving significant changes in product design or packaging, product placement, product promotion or pricing. Market innovations target at addressing customer needs better, opening up new markets, or newly positioning a firm's product on the market with the intention of increasing firm's sales (Gunday *et al.*, 2011). Rodriguez-Cano *et al.* (2004) asserts 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). Despite its obvious importance to business, market innovation has received inadequate attention in literature. Few articles have been written concerning market innovation yet quite a number have been written on the attributes of market innovation, including pricing strategies, product package design properties, product placement and promotional activities (Cooper & Edgett, 2009). Intense market innovation ensures survival of businesses in an environment of fast changing market and technological advances. Management of firms therefore needs to invest in market innovation to maintain a competitive advantage against other firms. Furthermore, a lack of proper knowledge and experience with market innovation especially among the newer firms in an industry as well as uncertainty about their commitment to the entire process of market innovation has led to undesired results in the enactment of this strategy (Cooper & Edgett, 2009).

A large stream of empirical research has examined the concept of employee performance using various predictor variables. Achieng, Ochieng and Owuor (2012) studied the effect of job redesign on employee performance in commercial banks in Kisumu, Kenya. Mildred (2016) studied the effect of Employee Involvement on employee performance at the Kenyan Medical Research Institute (Centre for Global Health Research) Kisumu. Also, Njiru (2016) carried out a study on the Influence of flexible work practices on employee performance in public sector: A case of ministry of interior and coordination of National Government, Embu County. Ikon and Chukwu (2018) studied employee engagement and performance of selected private universities in delta State, Nigeria. However, there has been relatively little empirical research reports that details how firms can achieve improved employee performance through market innovation among bottled water companies in Port Harcourt. Therefore, this study intends to empirically fill that gap by examining the relationship between market innovation and employee performance in water producing firms in Port Harcourt, Rivers State.

Specifically, the objectives were:

- i. Examine the relationship between market innovation and adaptive performance in water producing firms in Port Harcourt, Rivers State.
- ii. Determine the relationship between market innovation and task performance in water producing firms in Port Harcourt, Rivers State.
- iii. Ascertain the relationship between market innovation and conceptual performance in water producing firms in Port Harcourt, Rivers State.

### Conceptual Framework



**Figure 1:** The relationship between market innovation and employee performance

**Source:** Desk Research (2025), with measures adapted from the work of Gakii (2017).

### Research Questions

In view of the objectives stated above, the following research questions guided the study:

- i. What is the relationship between market innovation and adaptive performance in water producing firms in Port Harcourt, Rivers State?
- ii. What is the relationship between market innovation and task performance in water producing firms in Port Harcourt, Rivers State?
- iii. What is the relationship between market innovation and conceptual performance in water producing firms in Port Harcourt, Rivers State?

### Statement of Hypotheses

The following hypotheses were stated in null form to achieve the stated objectives.

- Ho:1** There is no significant relationship between market innovation and adaptive performance in water producing firms in Port Harcourt, Rivers State.
- Ho:2** There is no significant relationship between market innovation and task performance in water producing firms in Port Harcourt, Rivers State.
- Ho:3** There is no significant relationship between market innovation and conceptual performance in water producing firms in Port Harcourt, Rivers State.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

### Theoretical Foundation

The underpinning theory for this study was Resource-Based View Theory and Blue Ocean Theory.

### Resource-Based View Theory

The resource-based view (RBV) theory was postulated in 1984 by Wernerfelt as a major philosophy that has been embraced to investigate the matter (Hogler, 2016). The argument in the theory is that a firm consists of a collection of productive resources' and these resources

may only contribute to a firm's competitive position to the extent that they are exploited in such a manner that their potentially valuable services are made available to the firm. Wright and McMahan (2009) affirm that RBV is more suitable in explaining performance, based on path dependency and administrative heritage. It is however less useful in predicting under what circumstances the specific resources of a company will generate a sustainable competitive advantage. Another criticism is that the inside-out perspective tends to neglect the importance of contextual factors, including the Porter-based factors (such as threat of market entry and threat of suppliers), as well as the institutional setting, which is particularly crucial from a HRM point of view. Hence, to fully understand (strategic) human resource management in, for example, different institutional settings, there is need for an additional theory (Wright & McMahan, 2009).

In the resource-based view, strategists select the strategy or competitive position that best exploits the internal resources and capabilities relative to external opportunities. Given that strategic resources represent a complex network of inter-related assets and capabilities, organizations can adopt many possible competitive positions (Wright & McMahan, 2009). Although scholars debate the precise categories of competitive positions that are used, there is general agreement, within the literature, that the resource-based view is much more flexible than Porter's prescriptive approach to strategy formulation. This theory was relevant to the present study as it provides a framework for understanding how a firm's unique resources and capabilities can be leveraged to achieve a competitive advantage through process innovation, ultimately contributing to long-term sustainability.

### **Schumpeterian Theory on Innovation**

Schumpeter theory of Economic Development on Innovation was propounded by Schumpeter (1949). The theory believes that individuals possess mental and creative ability to convert innovative ideas to economically viable products or services that meet the demands of the people. This assertion is premised on the fact that business environment changes over-time and exerts considerable in businesses. The theory argues that entrepreneurs are risk-takers and their innovative ideas are orchestrated based on their proactiveness in the environment. Although, environmental factors are succinctly external to them but responding to the environmental factors calls for holistic understanding on the interplay of those factors for sound decision making. The theory opines that being proactive to the business environment helps entrepreneurs to secure and sustain greater operational effectiveness that afford them greater leverage for improved performance. However, the theory describes entrepreneurs as visionary change management agents who introduce new economic activity that leads to a change in the market. Schumpeter argued that anyone seeking profits must innovate. That will cause the different employment of economic system's existing supplies of productive means (Schumpeter, 1934). Schumpeter believed that innovation is considered as an essential driver of competitiveness (Porter & Stern 1999) and economic dynamics (Hanush & Pyka, 2007). This theory is relevant to the present study as it provides a deeper understanding of market innovation that influences employee performance.

## **2.2 Conceptual Review**

### **2.2.1 Concept of 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 *et al.*, 2011). Information technology is noted in literature as a key facilitator to the success of market innovation (Govindarajan & Rarnarnurti, 2011). In the recent years, 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.

Rodriguez-Cano *et al.* (2004) asserts 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). Despite its obvious importance to business, market innovation has received inadequate attention in literature. Few articles have been written concerning market innovation yet quite a number have been written on the attributes of market innovation, including pricing strategies, product package design properties, product placement and promotional activities (Cooper & Edgett, 2009). Intense market innovation ensures survival of businesses in an environment of fast changing market and technological advances. Management of firms therefore needs to invest in market innovation to maintain a competitive advantage against other firms. Furthermore, a lack of proper knowledge and experience with market innovation especially among the newer firms in an industry as well as uncertainty about their commitment to the entire process of market innovation has led to undesired results in the enactment of this strategy (Cooper & Edgett, 2009).

### **Employee Performance**

The concept "Employee Job Performance" has received varies of definition by different scholars in the field of management and organizational behaviour. Performance involves the art of completing a given task within the defined boundaries (Lqbal, Ljaz, Latif, & Mushtaq, 2015). Employee job performance indicates the effectiveness of employee's specific actions that contribute to attaining organizational goals. It involves the way to perform the job tasks according to the prescribed job description. Employee job performance, therefore, is the effort an employee applied towards the attainment of organization strategic goals (Armstrong, Brown, & Reilly, 2011). From this definition, employee performance is an activity engaged by the employee to produce a viable or valuable outcome towards the attainment of organizational goal.

Performance is defined as the record of outcomes produced on a specified job function or activity during a specified time period. According to this definition, employee performance is set of outcomes produced by employees during a certain time period. By and large, the idea of performance implies the objectives the organization try to accomplish through their workers. It interfaces activities and objectives by means of workers' obligations inside organizations. As such, it is the people's obligations and activities that their work comprises of, which ought to be done in the correct manner taking into cognizance the qualified employees' capacities to do them (Katua, Mukulu, & Gachunga, 2014). Employee's performance can be characterized as performing various exercises and responsibilities that their work comprised.

## Measures of Employee Performance

### Adaptive Performance

Many researchers prefer to define adaptive performance as the ability of individuals or groups to change cognitions and behaviors to adapt to changing environments. However, others define adaptive performance as employees “modifying their behavior to meet the demands of a new situation, event, or changing environment” (Park et al., 2020: 4). According to Kaya and Karatepe (2020), adaptive performance refers to the ability of employees to adjust their behavior in different personal situations. As for Tabiu *et al.*, (2020), they explain that adaptive performance in an organizational context means the level or degree to which an individual employee adapts to various changes in his role or work environment in order to meet the requirements of his organization or environment, or new events or situations in the workplace. Adaptive performance in the work environment refers to adjusting to and understanding change in the workplace. An employee who is versatile is valued and important in the success of an organization. Adaptive performance comprises the collection of behavioural responses in which individuals engage when anticipating or experiencing uncertainty.

### Task Performance

Task performance can be defined as the effectiveness with which job incumbents carry out activities that contribute to the organization's "technical core" either directly by executing a part of its technical process or indirectly by providing it with needed materials or services. Task performance describes the core job responsibilities of an employee. It is also called "in-role prescribed behavior" (Koopmans et al. 2011) and is reflected in specific work outcomes and deliverables as well as their quality and quantity. Task performance covers a person's contribution to organizational performance, refers to actions that are part of the formal reward system (i.e., technical core), and addresses the requirements as specified in job descriptions (Williams and Karau, 2021). At a general level, task performance consists of activities that transform materials into the goods and services produced by the organization or to allow for efficient functioning of the organization (Motowidlo et al., 2017). Thus, task performance covers the fulfillment of the requirements that are part of the contract between the employer and employee.

### Conceptual Performance

Conceptual performance is the ability to think about and understand ideas and concepts. This includes things like problem solving, creativity, and critical thinking. It's a key part of many jobs, especially those that require a lot of abstract thinking. Conceptual performance is all about taking ideas and turning them into something tangible (Mintzberg, 2014). For example, let's say you are a product designer. You might need to come up with a new idea for a product, and then figure out how to turn that idea into a working prototype. This requires both creative thinking and logical reasoning. Conceptual performance in the workplace is all about how well employees are able to think creatively and apply their knowledge to solve problems. It's about having the ability to see the big picture and understand how the pieces fit together. It also involves being able to communicate ideas clearly and persuasively, both orally and in writing. Employees with strong conceptual performance are able to take initiative and make decisions that lead to positive outcomes for the organization.

Conceptual performance helps managers to face with changes, create plans for future developments and absorb new opportunities. It is an integrated view from a business in manager's mind. Seeing beyond is quite different from seeing front, because the first one let

you create the future. Conceptual performance places a premium on synthesis and integration and requires the ability to examine new possibilities dealing with large chunks of information and the ability to pull up pieces together into a big picture (Mintzberg, 2014). It is an important aspect of workplace performance but sometimes it can be hard to measure. There are few different ways to assess conceptual performance, such as looking at the quality of an employee's idea, their ability to identify new opportunities, and their overall contribution to the organization's goals.

### **Empirical Review**

Bamidele, Abdulraheem and Brimah (2019) examined the relationship between market innovation and organizational performance. Survey research design was used in the study. Data for this research was obtained from primary sources with the aid of a structured questionnaire. Krejche and Morgan formula was used to estimate the sample size. 355 copies of questionnaires were administered to employees of the selected companies out of which only 309 copies were found to be useful for data analysis. The data were analyzed using descriptive statistics and inferential statistics of partial least square structural equation model (PLS-SEM). The hypothesis was tested at 0.05 alpha levels. Findings revealed that market innovation significantly impacts market performance ( $\beta = .317, t = 4.720, p = .000$ ). The next vital predictor in order of importance is market innovation and employee performance ( $\beta = .313, t = 4.286, p = .000$ ) and finally, market innovation and financial performance ( $\beta = .220, t = 4.061, p = .000$ ). The study concludes market innovation is a key determinant of organizational performance. The study recommended that in order to sustain a competitive edge in today's market; organisations have a twofold mission of continuously generating extra value for their customers whilst thriving to cut costs and increase their productivity.

Lim et al (2020) studied the effect of innovation on performance of construction firms using data statistical data across 18 organization 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. They also recommended that construction firms first utilize quality improvements to exploit consumers' willingness to pay for innovative products. This initiative would enable construction firms to improve their finances for innovation and develop their "brand" in construction products.

Ngamsutti and Ussahawanitchakit (2016) examined the link between marketing innovation capability and marketing performance of electrical and electronic appliances businesses in Thailand. A literature review on marketing innovation capability and its consequences was conducted. The hypothesized relationships among variables were examined through an ordinary least square (OLS) regression analysis. The results were derived from a survey of 639 firms doing business in electrical and electronic appliances in Thailand. Finally, the data are useable 187 firm. The results revealed that marketing innovation capability had has a positive effects on marketing performance.

Ezekiel, *et al.* (2024) examined the direct influence of marketing innovation on SME performance and also investigated the mediating role of research & development in the relationship between marketing innovation and SME performance. The study adopted a survey research design and data. A structured questionnaire was used to collect data from 175 small-medium enterprises in Oyo township using a convenient sampling technique. Two hypotheses

were tested with the IBM-SPSS version 25. The study found that there is a positive relationship between perceived product innovation and perceived performance. The study found that perceived collaboration innovation exhibited a positive relationship with perceived performance. The study found that perceived distribution channel innovation also showed a positive association with perceived performance. The study found that there was a joint influence of (product innovation, digital marketing technologies, collaboration innovation, and distribution channel innovation) on perceived performance. The study found that research & development mediated the relationship between perceived workload and life satisfaction. The study concluded that marketing innovation influences SMEs' performance and research & development also mediated the link between marketing innovation and SMEs performance.

**METHODOLOGY**

This study adopted correlational survey design conducted in a non-contrived setting and cross-sectional for time horizon. The population of the study comprised of 167 employees of 10 selected water producing firms in Port Harcourt. The sample size for the study was 117 derived using Taro Yamene formula for sample size determination. Data for the study was generated through primary sources. The main data collection instrument for this study was a structured questionnaire. To ensure the validity of the instruments for this study, the content and face validity was adopted in ascertaining the extent to which the instrument can be said to be accurate and precise in the measurement of the variables under investigation. The reliability for the study was determined using the Cronbach alpha coefficient. The bivariate analysis was carried out using Spearman’s Rank Order Correlation Statistics.

**DATA ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS**

**Relationship between Market Innovation and the Measures of Employee Performance**

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

			Market Innovation	Adaptive performance	Task performance	Conceptual performance
Spearman’s rho	Market Innovation	Correlation Coefficient	1.000	.573**	.851**	.737**
		Sig.(2-tailed)	.	.000	.000	.000
		N	90	90	90	90
	Adaptive performance	Correlation Coefficient	.573**	1.000	.676**	.914**
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.	.000	.000
		N	90	90	90	90
	Task performance	Correlation Coefficient	.851**	.676**	1.000	.774**
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.	.001
		N	90	90	90	90
	Conceptual performance	Correlation Coefficient	.737**	.914**	.774**	1.000
		Sig.(2-tailed)	.000	.000	.001	.
		N	90	90	90	90

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

Source: Research Data 2025, (SPSS output version 27.0)

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

Ho:1 There is no significant relationship between market innovation and adaptive performance in water producing firms in Port Harcourt, Rivers State.

The correlation coefficient ( $r$ ) shows that there is a moderate and positive relationship between market innovation and adaptive performance. The rho value 0.573 indicates this relationship and it is significant at  $p=0.000<0.05$ . The correlation coefficient represents a 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 adaptive performance in water producing firms in Port Harcourt, Rivers State.

Ho:2 There is no significant relationship between market innovation and task performance in water producing firms in Port Harcourt, Rivers State.

The correlation coefficient ( $r$ ) shows that there is a very strong and positive relationship between market innovation and task performance. The rho 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 very 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 task performance in water producing firms in Port Harcourt, Rivers State.

Ho:3 There is no significant relationship between market innovation and conceptual performance in water producing firms in Port Harcourt, Rivers State.

The correlation coefficient ( $r$ ) shows that there is a strong and positive relationship between market innovation and conceptual performance. The rho 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 conceptual performance in water producing firms in Port Harcourt, Rivers State

### **Discussion of Findings**

The test of hypotheses shows that there is a significant positive relationship between market innovation and measures of employee performance. The positive values of (0.573, 0.851 and 0.737) show the strength of the relationships between the variables. The P-value (0.00) is less than the level of significance at (0.05). Therefore, this suggests that a significant and positive relationship exists between Market innovation and adaptive performance, task performance and conceptual performance. Hence, the null hypotheses were hereby rejected. This finding is in line with Bamidele, Abdulraheem and Brimah (2019) who examined the relationship between market innovation and organizational performance. Survey research design was used in the study. Findings revealed that market innovation significantly impacts market performance ( $\beta = .317$ ,  $t= 4.720$ ,  $p=.000$ ). The study concludes market innovation is a key determinant of organizational performance. Ngamsutti and Ussahawanitchakit (2016) also examined the link between marketing innovation capability and marketing performance of electrical and electronic appliances businesses in Thailand. The results revealed that marketing innovation capability had has a positive effect on marketing performance. Furthermore, the study of Ezekiel, *et al.* (2024) found that there is a positive relationship between perceived product innovation and perceived performance. The study found that perceived collaboration

innovation exhibited a positive relationship with perceived performance. The study found that perceived distribution channel innovation also showed a positive association with perceived performance. The study found that there was a joint influence of (product innovation, digital marketing technologies, collaboration innovation, and distribution channel innovation) on perceived performance.

### CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

An organization's ability to survive and prosper depends on its ability to provide the best possible products and/or services at the lowest possible cost. Improved employee performance depends on several critical factors, of which market innovation is suggested to be crucial for its survival. The study concludes that market innovation significantly influences employee performance in water producing firms in Port Harcourt, Rivers State.

It is therefore recommended that management of water producing firms in Port Harcourt, Rivers State should leverage on digital marketing, social media, and data analytics to create targeted, engaging campaigns that resonate with the organization's target audience. This will bring about increased sales, improved customer experience, and sustainable performance.

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