

## HINDSIGHT AND INNOVATIVENESS OF TELECOMMUNICATION FIRMS IN RIVERS STATE

**Ogbogara, A.**

Department of Business Administration, Faculty of Administration and Management, Rivers State University, Nkpolu-Oroworukwo, Port Harcourt, Nigeria

and

**Asawo, S. P.**

Department of Business Administration, Faculty of Administration and Management, Rivers State University, Nkpolu-Oroworukwo, Port Harcourt, Nigeria

### ABSTRACT

This study investigated the relationship between hindsight and the innovativeness of telecommunication firms in Rivers State. The study specifically, examined the role of hindsight in the outcome of organisational innovativeness measures comprising strategic thinking, ideation and targeting. The paper was designed as an empirical study, adopting the correlational design and also utilizing a quantitative methodology. The structured questionnaire was utilised as the instrument in generating data from 21 respondents from four telecommunication firms in Rivers State. The Pearson Product Moment Correlation statistical tool was used to examine the bi-variate relationships. The correlation analysis revealed that hindsight significantly influences strategic thinking, ideation and targeting. All null hypotheses were therefore rejected as the findings revealed hindsight to significantly impact the extent of innovativeness of the telecommunication companies in Rivers State. It was concluded that the development of hindsight contributes to necessitating the required level of capacities for advancing organisational innovativeness outcomes such as strategic thinking, ideation and targeting, especially of GSM telecommunication companies in Rivers State. It was therefore recommended that the management of the telecommunication firms focus on leveraging their previous experiences and existing data in advancing their innovative objectives and goals.

**Keywords:** Organisational innovativeness, strategic thinking, ideation, targeting, contingency theory, hindsight.

### INTRODUCTION

The essential nature of the present-day world underlies a very fast and competitive society where the ability to dictate changes and transformation adds the utmost value. A competitive advantage in managing innovation and creativity is the key to this ability (Shoham, Vigoda-Gadot, Ruvio & Schwabsky, 2012). Hence, leading organizations particularly, when it comes to efficient management, requires giving top priority to the development of ways and mechanisms for improved organizational innovation and creativity. Innovation is central to competitiveness, and this is largely driven by the technological advancement, thus contributing to the emergence of a knowledge economy as well as high scale non-price competition in industries and various markets. Organizations, particularly, those driven technologically require being more innovative and pioneering than before to lead, to grow, to compete and to endure (Ho, 2022).

Organisational innovativeness describes the capacity for creative output or outcomes. It is a critical factor which determines the extent to which the organisation stands out and is able to meet the needs of its customers in a unique way, specific to the organisation (Tseng & Lin, 2011). However, to be innovative, organisations must be able to identify the areas or concerns wherein related opportunities for innovation can be exploited. This emphasizes the need for leader hindsight. The concern of hindsight is becoming increasingly relevant as part of the skillset of leaders in enterprises (Khanna, 2014). With enterprises no longer limited to the confines of their own borders, the ability to apply experience based on past experience and learning as a leader in an organisation could be pivotal in developing sustainable multinational enterprises into the future (Welter, 2011).

Leader demonstration or expression of hindsight, admittedly, is imperative in navigating the environment. It is a resource needed to grapple with the everchanging environment in the sense that it helps to proffer practical solutions to problems drawing on prior experience and demonstrated model effectiveness. Sterberg (2005) cited in Moronwane, (2019) describes hindsight as the ability to build on one's experience and learned capacities. Kutz (2008) views leader hindsight as the "drawing on prior experience or knowledge in advancing effective outcomes." Hindsight can also be viewed as the capacity to appreciate the limits of our knowledge especially in adapting the said knowledge to a different environment independent of where it was originally developed (Khanna, 2014). The terms adaptation, shaping and selection cut across the foregoing definitions which simply implies that due diligence, people-wisdom, procedural wisdom and contextual wisdom should be exercised in the use of contextual intelligence (Kutz, 2008; Moronwane, 2019).

While much study has been conducted on organisational innovativeness (Lin et al, 2008; Ahmad et al, 2020; Azeem et al., 2021), research addressing the relationship between leader hindsight and organisational innovativeness is however scarce, particularly within developing nations and contexts such as Nigeria. This study is therefore a departure from the focus of previous scholars as it investigates the relationship between hindsight and organisational innovativeness, within the context of GSM telecommunication firms in Rivers State, Nigeria. The study thus focused on addressing the role of hindsight in the outcomes of the innovativeness of telecommunication firms in Rivers State.

This was achieved through related objectives which included to:

- i. Determine the relationship between hindsight and strategic thinking of GSM telecommunication firms in Rivers State
- ii. Examine the relationship between hindsight and ideation of GSM telecommunication firms in Rivers State
- iii. Ascertain the relationship between hindsight and targeting of GSM telecommunication firms in Rivers State

## Conceptual Framework

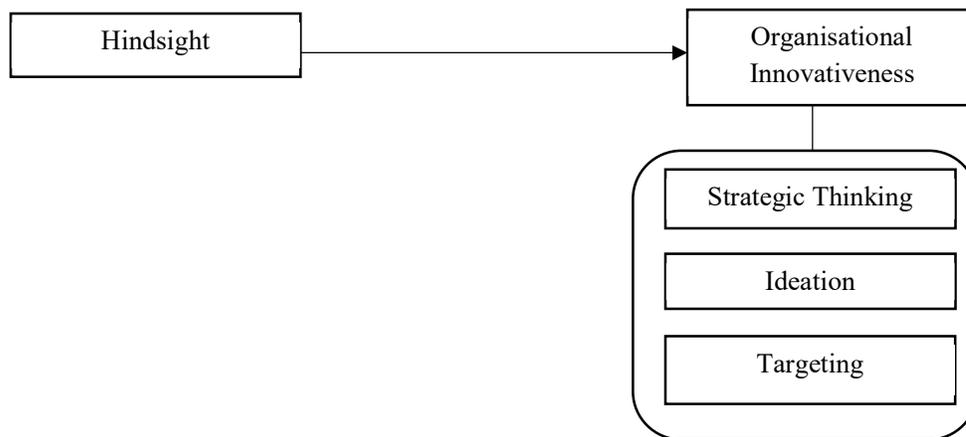


Figure 1.1: Conceptual framework for hindsight and organisational innovativeness

Source: Researcher's desk (2025) with the measures of organisational innovativeness adopted from Jelena et al (2013).

## Research Questions

The following research questions were put forward in line with advancing the goal of this research. These are as follows:

- i. What is the relationship between hindsight and strategic thinking of GSM telecommunication firms in Rivers State?
- ii. What is the relationship between hindsight and ideation of GSM telecommunication firms in Rivers State?
- iii. What is the relationship between hindsight and targeting of GSM telecommunication firms in Rivers State?

## LITERATURE REVIEW

### Theoretical Review

#### Contingency theory of the organisation

The contingency theory of the organisation was propounded by Fiedler in 1996. The contingency theory argues that the most 'appropriate structure' for an organization is the one that best fits a given operating contingency, such as scale of operation (Dornberger, 2019), technology (Karneli, 2023) or environment (Logman, 2008). This strand of research and theory underpins our understanding of the relationships between the nature of the task and technological environments, structure and performance. However, only some of the studies deal specifically with the question of how structure is related to innovation.

### Conceptual Review

#### Hindsight

This variable describes the extent to which the organisation is reflective and draws into consideration its previous experiences. Hindsight refers to sustained knowledge about the organisations past, previous dealings, collaborations and partnerships (Alharbi et al., 2019). It refers to data or information that are historical in a way, and which are useful in understanding the organisations progress and development over the years (Lumpkin & Dess, 1996). It provides background information on the organisation and its previous dealings, successes,

failures and other issues that contribute to informing on the organisation's capacities and experiences (Lumpkin & Dess, 1996; Ahmed et al, 2020).

### **Organisational innovativeness**

The notion „organizational innovation“ denotes, in general, a mechanism applied by the organizations to adapt to changing conditions of competition, technological advancement and market expansion by producing newer products, techniques and systems (Utterback, 1994; Dougherty and Hardy, 1996). In its simplest term, organizational innovation is the tendency of the organization to develop new or improved products/services and its success in bringing those products/services to the market (Gumusluoglu & Ilsev, 2009). It is also defined as the organizational capability to renovate ideas and knowledge into new products, services or processes continuously for the benefit its stakeholders. To define the concept more clearly, a distinction between creativity and organizational innovation is very useful.

### **Strategic thinking**

Strategic thinking is a process that defines the manner in which people think about, assess, view, and create the future for themselves and others. Strategic thinking is an effective and essential tool one can apply to arrive at decisions that can be related to his/her work or personal life (Jelena et al, 2013). This definition is essential to the entrepreneur who must think towards success in his or her business. Strategic thinking is about looking at the environment assessment of certain ingredients that are important to the success of the business, look at the possible treats in the business and possibly thinking positively towards the creation of opportunities for their businesses. Strategic thinking involves making a series of decisions about what actions the company or organization intends to take to become more successful in business (Jelena et al, 2013).

### **Ideation**

Generating ideas is the systematic process of creating and capturing ideas in accordance with the requirements set by the organization, and it includes elements related to creativity and details of the organizational structure to support the process (Jelena, et al, 2013). Jelena et al (2013) state that almost all innovation processes include idea generation and selection of ideas or opportunities. Welter (2011) emphasizes that all innovation is based on an idea that can be inside or outside the company. Competitors may also provide new ideas. The knowledge of a competitor's product can instigate a team to create a new product or improve a product already marketed by the company (Jelena et al, 2013).

### **Targeting**

This refers to the specification of focus and the pattern or approach through which an outcome or goal is to be pursued and achieved. It is a key aspect of organisational innovativeness as it determines the extent to which related actions, behaviour and processes are aligned and structured to ensure the particular design, or quality in terms of products or services (Jelena et al, 2013). Targeting details the way in which creativity is to be harnessed and the direction in which it is to be channelled. It is thus crucial as it demonstrates the extent of synchrony in the plan or blueprint of the organisation and its intended outcome (Welter, 2011).

### **Empirical Review**

#### **The relationship between Hindsight and Organisational Innovativeness**

Innovativeness is important worldwide, and leadership style seems to influence innovation in different industries (Amar & al., 2009). Canon and Nokia were two companies that had benefited from innovation. These companies were able to maintain their global market share

by developing new and improved products (Bowonder and al.,2010). The benefits of innovation, such as software innovation, are not without risks, because the failure of software innovation can cost shareholders and taxpayers billions of dollars each year (Charette, 2005). Even with the high-risk and high cost of software innovation, for example, internet and software companies dedicates 13% to research and development, (Jaruzelski and Dehoff, 2008).

The organisations capacity for hindsight, ensures of the organisations monitoring of its own performance and the control of its activities. This is as hindsight assures of the organisation’s capacity for reflexivity and its assessment of its past actions and origins. Lumpkin and Dess (1996) opined that organisations that are able to consistently draw on past experiences, and frameworks, can clearly define their goals and vision with much clarity that consistency than organisations that are unable to. Azeem et al (2021) argued that it is through such actions or practices of reflexivity and hindsight that organisations are able to track their success as well and justify their accomplishments over time. Following this discussion, it is evident that literature on organisational innovativeness has barely captured and addressed the role of hindsight in its outcome. This position necessitated this study.

### METHODOLOGY

The correlation design is considered suitable for this research as it anchors on addressing case features and characteristics in line with the manifestation of the variables within the context of interest – the Nigerian telecommunication industry. The population for this study comprises four GSM telecommunication firms in Rivers State, Nigeria. These are sourced from the directory of the Nigerian Communications Commission (NCC, 2025) as listed on their website (www.ncc.gov.ng) of licenced operators. Representatives from each of the telecommunication firms were sourced from key management positions making it six from each organisation and a total of 24 study elements from all four SM telecommunication firms. Primary data was sourced using the structured questionnaire instrument. For this study, the Cronbach alpha reliability instrument was adopted in the test for the reliability for the study. A benchmark of 0.70 based on Nunally’s (1979) position on best reliability test practices for social research, was adopted in this study (Bryman & Bell, 2015). The Pearson Product Moment Correlation statistical tool was used to examine the bi-variate relationships.

**Table 1:** Reliability result

Variables	Dimensions/Measures	Items	Alpha coefficient
Hindsight		3	0.924
Organisational Innovativeness	Strategic Thinking	3	0.801
	Ideation	3	0.893
	Targeting	3	0.911

**Source:** Survey Data, 2025

Table one indicated that all items on the study instrument were reliable with Alpha coefficients all above the benchmark of 0.70.

**DATA ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS**

**Bi-variate Analysis**

This section addressed the relationship between hindsight and the measures of organisational innovativeness. Thus, answering the following research questions:

- i. What is the relationship between hindsight and strategic thinking of GSM telecommunication firms in Rivers State?
- ii. What is the relationship between hindsight and ideation of GSM telecommunication firms in Rivers State?
- iii. What is the relationship between hindsight and targeting of GSM telecommunication firms in Rivers State?

**Table 2:** Hindsight and organisational innovativeness

		Hindsight	Strategic Thinking	Ideation	Targeting
Spearman's rho Hindsight	Correlation Coefficient	1.000	.798**	.866**	.751**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.	.000	.000	.000
	N	21	21	21	21
Strategic Thinking	Correlation Coefficient	.798**	1.000	.818**	.703**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.	.000	.000
	N	21	21	21	21
Ideation	Correlation Coefficient	.866**	.818**	1.000	.686**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.	.001
	N	21	21	21	21
Targeting	Correlation Coefficient	.751**	.703**	.686**	1.000
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.001	.
	N	21	21	21	21

**Source:** Survey, 2025

Presented in table 2 is the result for the tests on the null hypotheses for the association between hindsight and the measures of organisational innovativeness. The results of the analysis reveal that hindsight significantly and positively contributes to strategic thinking of telecommunication companies in Rivers State (rho = 0.798 and P < 0.05). Hindsight also significantly and positively contributes to ideation of telecommunication companies in Rivers State (rho = 0.866 and P < 0.05). Furthermore, hindsight significantly and positively contributes to targeting of telecommunication companies in Rivers State (rho = 0.751 and P < 0.05). Based on these results the study rejects all three null hypotheses of non-significant association between the variables and affirms that hindsight to a significant and great extent is associated with the outcome of organisational innovativeness of telecommunication companies in Rivers State.

**Discussion of Findings**

The observed relationship between hindsight and the measures of organisational innovativeness (strategic thinking, ideation and targeting) is revealed in this study to be significant. This addressed the first three research questions, and demonstrates the extent of influence of hindsight on the outcomes of strategic thinking (r = 0.798 and P = 0.000), ideation (r = 0.866 and P = 0.000), and targeting (r = 0.751 and P = 0.000) with all three observed to be high in terms of influence. Building on previous literature on hindsight and its processes, Azeem et al. (2020) explain that hindsight is more than “an intellectual exercise and

acknowledges the emotional facets and concerns of undertaking hindsight and reflective thinking. They offer a structured approach to reflecting to encapsulate and harness the value of emotions in reflections. They encourage one to begin with reflecting on an experience by mentally replaying the experience and describing it in a descriptive, non-judgemental way. After this, identify the positive and negative feelings triggered by the experience and attempt to discharge negative feelings which may obstruct the reflection (Raelin, 2001).

When the emotional aspect has been expressed and acknowledged, re-evaluate the issue by associating new information to what is already known and integrating new ideas with existing knowledge. Leaders are also encouraged to validate the authenticity of the newly developed ideas, exploring inconsistencies or contradictions in line with ensuring their actual contributions to the innovativeness of their organisations (Lambin, 2007). Although Shalley and Gilson (2004) do not explain how this process of validation may be achieved, scholars are keen to develop a reflective dialogue to inject a much-needed social dimension to the process and outcome of organisational or leader hindsight (Shin & Zhou, 2003). Finally, to adopt and appropriate the new knowledge or behaviour as part of one's own practice to be applied in future circumstances, it is imperative that such dispositions are embedded in the organisations culture forms and policies.

With regards to achieving the depth of awareness and learning through hindsight, Mezirow (1990) explained, hindsight requires constantly critiquing on the assumptions on which existing beliefs and values as developed overtime. Loos (2006) and Lin et al (2008) view, to engage in hindsight and critical reflection, an issue or experience will need to be explored with the breadth and depth of practice, rather than to focus on the negative or crisis point interpretations of the term. Taking this a step further, Fook and Askeland (2006) advices to critically reflect using a clear rationale and analysis embedded in theory to draw upon a structured process for reflection.

### CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

In conclusion, this study affirms that the outcomes of strategic thinking, ideation and targeting are linked to the practices and evidence of hindsight. As revealed, the role of hindsight is such that reinforces the organisations capacity for idea generation and the channelling of such toward the achievement of organisational innovation. This is as the evidence of the study offers substantial and significant support for the association between both variables. Thus, it was concluded that the development of hindsight contributes to necessitating the required level of capacities for advancing organisational innovativeness outcomes such as strategic thinking, ideation and targeting, especially of GSM telecommunication companies in Rivers State. In accordance with the findings and conclusions of this study on the relationship between hindsight and organisational innovativeness, it was recommended that the management of the telecommunication firms focus on leveraging their previous experiences and existing data in advancing their innovative objectives and goals.

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