

## GENERATIONAL BELIEFS AND ORGANIZATIONAL INNOVATIVENESS OF PLASTICS MANUFACTURING COMPANIES IN SOUTH-SOUTH REGION NIGERIA

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### ABSTRACT

This study examined the relationship between generational beliefs and organizational innovativeness of plastics manufacturing companies in South-South, Nigeria. This research investigated how generational beliefs impact administrative, market innovativeness. A quantitative research design was adopted, utilizing a structured survey questionnaire distributed to selected plastics manufacturing firms. The population comprised the thirteen (13) operational plastics manufacturing companies in South-South, Nigeria. Specifically, the sample consisted of thirteen (13) operational plastics manufacturing companies in South-South, Nigeria. However, for data collection purposes, structured copies of the questionnaire were administered to twenty-six managerial-level employees across these firms, comprising the human resources manager, general manager, and operations manager from each company. The collected data were analyzed using Spearman's rank-order correlation to assess the relationships among the study variables. The findings revealed a significant positive relationship between generational belief and organizational innovativeness, indicating that organizations fostering intergenerational collaboration and leveraging diverse perspectives enhance their innovation potential. It was therefore recommended that plastics manufacturing firms implement intergenerational mentorship programs, invest in technology-driven innovation, and create an inclusive corporate culture that minimizes hierarchical barriers and promotes adaptability.

**Keywords:** Generational beliefs, organizational innovativeness, administrative innovativeness, and market innovativeness

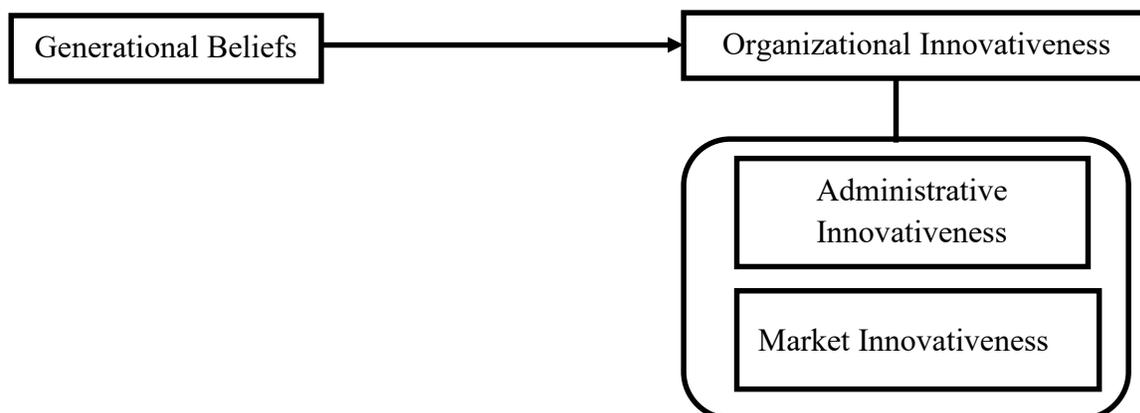
## INTRODUCTION

Organizational innovativeness is a critical determinant of business success in today's competitive and rapidly evolving environment. It refers to an organization's ability to generate, adopt, and implement new ideas, processes, and products to improve efficiency, enhance customer satisfaction, and sustain long-term growth (Damanpour & Aravind, 2012). Innovation is particularly essential for firms operating in industries that experience rapid technological advancements, shifting consumer preferences, and increasing globalization (Schumpeter, 1934). Companies that fail to innovate risk stagnation, reduced organizational innovativeness, and, ultimately, business failure. The ability of an organization to remain innovative is influenced by various internal and external factors, including leadership, organizational culture, generational belief, and workforce diversity (Carmeli, Gelbard, & Reiter-Palmon, 2010).

Firms that foster a culture of continuous learning and adaptability are more likely to sustain innovation over time (Tidd & Bessant, 2018). Organizational innovativeness enables firms to develop new business models, improve operational efficiency, and create unique products and services that offer a competitive edge (OECD, 2018). However, achieving and sustaining innovation is often challenging due to barriers such as resistance to change, lack of resources, rigid organizational structures, and ineffective knowledge management (Crossan & Apaydin, 2010). Organizations that invest in research and development (R&D), encourage cross-functional collaboration, and leverage digital transformation tend to enhance their innovation capabilities.

Organizational innovativeness is essential for firms to maintain organizational innovativeness and sustain growth in dynamic business environments (Damanpour & Aravind, 2012). However, many plastics manufacturing companies in South-South Nigeria struggle with poor administrative innovativeness, market innovativeness, and product innovativeness, which hinder their ability to adapt to industry trends and customer demands. Despite the potential benefits of a generationally diverse workforce, such as enhanced creativity and knowledgesharing (Parry & Urwin, 2011), firms in this sector often fail to leverage generational diversity effectively to drive innovation. Thus, the purpose of this study was to examine the relationship between generational beliefs and organizational innovativeness of plastic manufacturing companies in the South-South region of Nigeria,

## Conceptual Framework



**Figure 1:** Tthe relationship between Generational Beliefs and Oroganizational Innovativeness  
**Source:** Desk Research (2025)

### Research Questions

The following research questions were advanced in line with addressing the role of generational beliefs in the outcomes of organizational innovativeness:

1. What is the relationship between generational beliefs and administrative innovativeness of plastics manufacturing companies in South-South, Nigeria?
2. What is the relationship between generational beliefs and market innovativeness of plastics manufacturing companies in South-South, Nigeria?

## LITERATURE REVIEW

### Theoretical Review

Creswell (2014) defines a theoretical framework as a lens through which researchers can interpret their findings and understand the relationships between variables. It provides the foundation for developing research questions. The current study is grounded on resource dependency theory, and the theory served as the theoretical foundation, providing a comprehensive framework for unravelling the complex interplay among the variables under investigation.

**Resource Dependency Theory (RDT)**, developed by Pfeffer and Salancik (1978), posits that organizations rely on both external and internal resources to survive and maintain a competitive advantage. The theory emphasizes that organizations must effectively acquire, manage, and adapt to critical resources, including their workforce, technology, and external partnerships. In the context of generational diversity and organizational innovativeness, RDT offers a valuable framework for understanding how a multi-generational workforce serves as a strategic resource that influences innovation and organizational innovativeness.

Generational diversity within organizations involves employees from different age groups Baby Boomers, Generation X, Millennials, and Generation Z collaborating in the workplace, each bringing distinct skills, experiences, and problem-solving approaches (Parry & Urwin, 18 2011). According to RDT, organizations that effectively harness these diverse generational resources are more likely to foster creativity and innovation. Older employees contribute industry knowledge, expertise, and stability, while younger employees introduce fresh perspectives, digital skills, and adaptability to emerging trends. This dynamic mix enhances an organization's capacity for product innovation, administrative efficiency, and market adaptability. A generationally diverse workforce thus serves as a strategic asset, enabling firms to adapt to new market demands, develop innovative products, and optimize decision-making processes. Plastics manufacturing companies in South-South Nigeria operate in a dynamic and competitive industrial environment, requiring continuous innovation to maintain relevance.

### Concept of Generational Beliefs

Generational beliefs refer to the core values, attitudes, and perspectives shaped by historical, social, and cultural experiences unique to each generation. These beliefs significantly influence decision-making, workplace dynamics, and interpersonal relationships (Kupperschmidt, 2000). Each generational cohort such as Baby Boomers, Generation X, Millennials, and Generation Z develops distinct worldviews based on the economic, technological, and political contexts that

defined their formative years (Lyons & Kuron, 2014). Understanding these generational beliefs is crucial for fostering intergenerational harmony in workplaces, communities, and society at large. Baby Boomers (born 1946–1964) were raised in a post-war era characterized by economic prosperity, industrial expansion, and traditional family values. As a result, they emphasize hard work, perseverance, and long-term commitment to organizations (Twenge & Campbell, 2008). Baby Boomers value hierarchical structures, stability, and loyalty, often demonstrating deep respect for authority and organizational leadership (Lyons, 2004). Their belief system is rooted in the idea that success is achieved through dedication, experience, and gradual career progression (Jurkiewicz, 2000). Additionally, they prioritize financial security and structured work environments where seniority dictates career advancement (Kupperschmidt, 2000). However, their preference for job security often contrasts with younger generations, who prioritize flexibility and career mobility (Twenge, 2010).

Generation X (born 1965–1980) grew up during a period of rapid technological change, economic recessions, and shifting family dynamics, including the rise of dual-income households and single-parent families (Lyons & Kuron, 2014). Consequently, they developed beliefs centered on independence, self-reliance, and adaptability (Smola & Sutton, 2002). Unlike Baby Boomers, Generation X tends to be skeptical of hierarchical structures and places a strong emphasis on merit-based achievements. They value work-life balance and reject the notion of career-long loyalty to a single employer. Instead, they prioritize job satisfaction, professional development, and personal well-being (Lyons, 2004). Generation X also embraces a pragmatic approach to work, valuing efficiency, technological integration, and skill diversification.

### **Concept of Organizational Innovativeness**

The term innovativeness is often used interchangeably with innovation (Signaw, Simpson, & Enz, 2006). However, scholars argue that these concepts, while related, are distinct. Innovativeness refers to an organization's strategic orientation and ability to innovate, whereas innovation represents the tangible outcome of that capability, such as new products, processes, or business models (Hult, Hurley, & Knight, 2004). This distinction suggests that innovativeness serves as the input, shaping a firm's willingness and capacity to embrace change, while innovation is the output, manifesting as the competitive advantage derived from such efforts. Midgley and Dowling (1978) reinforce this perspective, noting that many studies fail to recognize innovativeness as a separate construct and erroneously conflate it with innovation. Cooper and Kleinschmidt (1995) further argue that innovativeness should be conceptualized at the firm level rather than being restricted to specific innovation projects. By viewing innovativeness as an organization-wide characteristic, researchers can better understand how firms cultivate a culture of continuous improvement and adaptability. Scholars have proposed various definitions and dimensions of innovativeness. Hurt, Joseph, and Cook (1977) define innovativeness as an organization's willingness to embrace change and develop new solutions. Avlonitis, Kouremenos, and Tzokas (1994) expand this definition by distinguishing between technological and behavioral aspects of innovativeness. According to their view, a firm's innovativeness is reflected not only in its technological capabilities but also in its commitment to fostering an innovation-driven mindset among employees.

### **Concept of Administrative Innovativeness**

Administrative innovativeness refers to the strategic implementation of novel processes, systems, and approaches within an organization's administrative functions. Its primary objective is to optimize efficiency, enhance productivity, streamline operations, and enable organizations to

adapt to dynamic business environments while fostering a culture of continuous improvement and adaptability (Mothe & Nguyen-Thi, 2021). This concept involves integrating technological advancements, reengineering traditional administrative practices, encouraging cross-departmental collaboration, and adopting flexible organizational structures. These measures help improve decision-making processes, reduce bureaucratic bottlenecks, and facilitate the development of an agile and responsive administrative framework aligned with evolving business needs and objectives. Moreover, administrative innovativeness necessitates a data-driven approach by leveraging analytics, digital tools, and automation to improve efficiency.

### **Concept of Market Innovativeness**

Market innovation has been explored from multiple perspectives in both policy and academic literature. Policymakers, including international organizations and government agencies, often include marketing innovation within their reports, drawing from definitions outlined in the Oslo Manual (OECD/Eurostat, 2018). These reports conceptualize marketing innovation as either a standalone concept or as part of a broader innovation framework. However, academic literature presents a more varied understanding of market innovation. Different scholars have provided diverse definitions, with some focusing on specific aspects of customer management, while others take a broader view that incorporates overall marketing practices.

The predominant approach defines marketing innovation as the introduction of new marketing methods that involve significant changes to the four Ps of marketing product, price, place, and promotion or a combination of these elements (Gupta, Malhotra, Czinkota, & Foroudi, 2016). Weerawardena (2003) expands this definition to include entering new markets. However, the most commonly cited definition follows the Oslo Manual (2005), which describes marketing innovation as the implementation of new marketing practices that result in significant changes in product design, packaging, distribution, promotion, or pricing.

### **METHODOLOGY**

For this study, a cross-sectional survey design was adopted, classified as a type of quasiexperimental research. The population comprised the thirteen (13) operational plastics manufacturing companies in South-South, Nigeria, officially registered with the Manufacturers Association of Nigeria (MAN, 2023). Given the organizational level of analysis, the focus was on employees within the managerial cadre of these companies. Specifically, two managers were selected from each of the thirteen firms, including the human resources manager and general manager resulting in a total of twenty-six senior managers. In this study, the entire population was adopted as the sample, meaning that the study was conducted as a census rather than relying on a sampling technique. Given that the population size was less than 50 ( $n < 50$ ), the census method was deemed appropriate, as it allows for the inclusion of all population elements in the study (Babbie, 2009). Specifically, the sample consisted of thirteen (13) operational plastics manufacturing companies in South-South, Nigeria. For data collection purposes, structured copies of questionnaire were administered to twenty-six managerial-level elements across these firms, comprising the human resources manager and general manager from each company. Bivariate analysis adopted Spearman's rank order correlation statistical tool.

### DATA ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

The study adopts a criterion and significance value of 0.05, corresponding to a 95% confidence level.

**Table 1: Correlation Matrix for Generational Belief and Measures of Organizational Innovativeness**

		Gen_Belief	Admin_Innovat	Market_Innovat	Product_Innovat
Spearman's Gen_Belief Rho	Correlation	1.000	.466*	.365	.389
	Coefficient				
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.	.044	.125	.100
	N	19	19	19	19
Admin_Innovat	Correlation	.466*	1.000	.663*	.835*
	Coefficient				
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.044	.	.002	.000
	N	19	19	19	19
Market_Innovat	Correlation	.365	.663*	1.000	.718*
	Coefficient				
	t Sig. (2-tailed)	.125	.002	.	.001
	N	19	19	19	19

Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

**Source:** SPSS Version 25.0 Output (2024)

Research Question 1, which examines the nature and direction of the relationship between generational belief and administrative innovativeness. The Spearman Rank Order Correlation Coefficient (rho) was found to be 0.466, indicating a moderate positive relationship between these variables. This suggests that as generational belief practices increase, there is a corresponding increase in administrative innovativeness. The positive direction of the correlation implies that initiatives and values rooted in generational belief are linked to enhanced administrative innovation within organizations. Specifically, of Plastics Manufacturing Companies in South-South Nigeria, these findings highlight that fostering generational belief may moderately enhance the organization's capacity to adopt innovative administrative practices, ultimately contributing to improved performance and efficiency.

**RQ 2:** What is the relationship between generational belief and market innovativeness of Plastics Manufacturing Companies in South-South, Nigeria?

Table 1. further reveals a Spearman Rank Order Correlation Coefficient (rho) of 0.365 for the relationship between generational belief and market innovativeness. This value reflects a weak positive relationship between the two variables, indicating that while there is an association, the strength of this relationship is relatively low. The positive correlation

implies that an increase in the practice of generational belief is linked to some level of enhancement in market innovativeness. In practical terms, this suggests that although generational belief practices contribute to market innovativeness, the impact is not particularly strong within Plastics Manufacturing Companies in South-South Nigeria. This highlights the need for further exploration into other factors that may more significantly drive market innovativeness in these organizations.

**HO1:** There is no significant relationship between generational belief and administrative innovativeness of Plastics Manufacturing Companies in South-South, Nigeria.

Table 1 displays the results of the statistical significance test (p-value), which provides the basis for generalizing the study's findings to the broader population. The analysis reveals that the relationship between generational belief and administrative innovativeness of Plastics Manufacturing Companies in South-South, Nigeria is statistically significant ( $p = 0.044$ , which is less than the threshold of 0.05). Given this outcome, the null hypothesis is rejected. Consequently, we conclude that there is a significant relationship between generational belief and administrative innovativeness in these companies. This implies that generational belief practices within the organizational culture meaningfully influence the development and adoption of innovative administrative processes.

**HO2:** There is no significant relationship between generational belief and market innovativeness of Plastics Manufacturing Companies in South-South, Nigeria.

Similarly, Table 1 presents the results of the statistical significance test (p-value), enabling the generalization of our findings to the study population. The analysis indicates that the relationship between generational belief and market innovativeness of Plastics Manufacturing Companies in South-South, Nigeria is not statistically significant ( $p = 0.125$ , which is greater than the threshold of 0.05). Consequently, the null hypothesis is accepted. Therefore, it is concluded that there is no significant relationship between generational belief and market innovativeness in these companies. This suggests that generational belief practices do not have a meaningful influence on the development or implementation of market-related innovations in the organizational context of these firms.

### **Discussion of Findings**

The findings of the current study demonstrate a positive and statistically significant relationship between generational belief and organizational innovativeness, encompassing administrative innovativeness, market innovativeness, and product innovativeness in plastics manufacturing companies in South-South, Nigeria. This suggests that generational belief practices embedded within an organization's culture can meaningfully influence the development and adoption of innovative processes. Specifically, fostering generational belief may moderately enhance an organization's capacity to implement innovative administrative strategies, ultimately leading to improved efficiency, organizational innovativeness, and overall business performance. These findings align with the study by Sarikaya, Uzunbacak, and Akçakanat (2024), which examined the general attitudes and beliefs of Generation X, Y, and Z. Their research revealed significant generational differences in factors such as demand for fairness, need for achievement, and comfort-seeking behavior.

### CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This study examined the relationship between generational belief and organizational innovativeness in plastics manufacturing companies in South-South, Nigeria. The findings revealed a positive and significant relationship between generational belief and the different measures of organizational innovativeness, including administrative, and market innovativeness

Based on the study's findings and conclusion, the following recommendations were made:

- i. Plastics manufacturing companies should recognize and value generational beliefs by integrating policies that accommodate diverse work ethics, leadership expectations, and career motivations across different age groups.
- ii. Plastics manufacturing companies should conduct regular training programs to bridge generational gaps in technology adoption, ensuring that all employees, regardless of age, can effectively use new digital tools.

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