

MARKET CULTURE AND EMPLOYEE INNOVATIVENESS OF TELECOMMUNICATION FIRMS IN PORT HARCOURT, RIVERS STATE

Aishat, A.

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

ABSTRACT

This study examined the relationship between market culture and employee innovativeness of telecommunication firms in Port Harcourt, Rivers State. The objective of the study was to determine the relationship between market culture and measures of employee innovativeness of telecommunication firms in Port Harcourt, Rivers State. The study was anchored on the Edgar Schein's theory and resource-based view theory. The study adopted a cross-sectional survey design. The target population of the study comprised of 198 employees from the respective state head offices of the four (4) telecommunication firms in Port Harcourt, Rivers State, Nigeria, while a sample size of 132 employees was studied using Taro Yamene formular. Data for the study was generated through primary source. 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 Rank Order Correlation Coefficient. The findings revealed amongst others that there is a positive and significant relationship between market culture and measures of employee innovativeness (individual creativity, proactiveness) of telecommunication firms in Port Harcourt, Rivers State. It was concluded that market culture drive innovation by emphasizing competitiveness and a drive to outperform the competition. Based on the findings and conclusion, it was recommended that management of telecommunication firms in Port Harcourt, Rivers State should foster open communication by encouraging employees to share ideas, concerns, and feedback openly. This will promote transparency and innovative work behavior among employees in the workplace.

Keywords: Market culture, Employee innovativeness, Individual creativity, Proactiveness.

INTRODUCTION

Change in consumers taste, globalization and rapid technological developments have contributed to the turbulence, unpredictability, hostility, complexity and uncertainties which characterized today's business environment (Felix & Hamilton, 2019). Therefore, to survive, companies are forced to do things different by developing innovative and high-quality products and services, and renew their way of operation. Innovation is the introduction of new things, ideas or ways of doing something to produce a good and greater result. Employee innovativeness can be defined as an engagement in creative behaviour, which includes behaviours related to the innovation process, i.e.

idea generation, idea promotion and idea realization with the aim of producing innovations (Ramamoorthy, Flood, Slattery & Sardesai 2015).

The results of previous studies have revealed several important variables such as work environment, better compensation, open communication, inclusive leadership, advancement, etc, that determine employee innovativeness (Jankelova *et al.*, 2021; Khan *et al.*, 2020; Lukoto & Chan, 2017; Faraz *et al.*, 2017; Eskiler *et al.*, 2016; Stoffers *et al.*, 2015; Hartmann, 2006; Li *et al.*, 2017). One concept that has gained enormous popularity in both business research and practice to improve employee innovativeness is market culture (Odumeru, 2013). Market culture has been defined Cameron and Quinn (2006: 54) as a “result oriented workplace, focusing on gaining market share and penetration, focusing on external continuance with the need for steadiness and power”. In this type of culture, the organization is focused on increasing its competitive position, and the major task of management is to drive the organization toward productivity (Joseph & Kibera, 2019).

Market culture prioritizes on productivity, competitiveness, results and market leadership. Market culture has a high degree of control and is externally focused. According to Cameron and Quinn (2016), market culture is externally oriented as it focuses on its relationship between suppliers, customers and regulators. Market cultures are results oriented, with a focus on competition, achievement, and getting the job done. The management of this culture drives the organization towards maximum output and profits. In this culture, plans are not implemented if they do not directly improve productivity and profits. Order, rational production, external interaction and goal accomplishment are the most significant factors of the market culture. Members have a clear instruction and are rewarded for their performance (Rameezdeen & Gunarathna, 2016).

There are lots of researchers who have investigated the impact of market orientation on organizational performance. According to Fernandes *et al.* (2020) market orientation has a positive effect on international performance. Han *et al.* (2018) found that a market-oriented firm facilitates innovation which leads to superior performance. Further, Gallagher and Brown (2008) suggested that market culture is a critical factor for organizations to achieve superior financial performance. Moreover, in this logical culture, an organization as a market seeks through openness and external focus to make various transactions to achieve a competitive edge and productivity (Allameh *et al.*, 2011; Gomezelj *et al.*, 2011). This study assessed the relationship between market culture and employee innovativeness of telecommunication firms in Port Harcourt, Rivers State.

Purpose and Objectives of the Study

The purpose of this study was to examine the relationship between market culture and employee innovativeness of telecommunication firms in Port Harcourt, Rivers State. Specific objectives include:

- i. Examine the relationship between market culture and individual creativity of telecommunication firms in Port Harcourt, Rivers State.
- ii. Determine the relationship between market culture and proactiveness of telecommunication firms in Port Harcourt, Rivers State.

Conceptual Framework

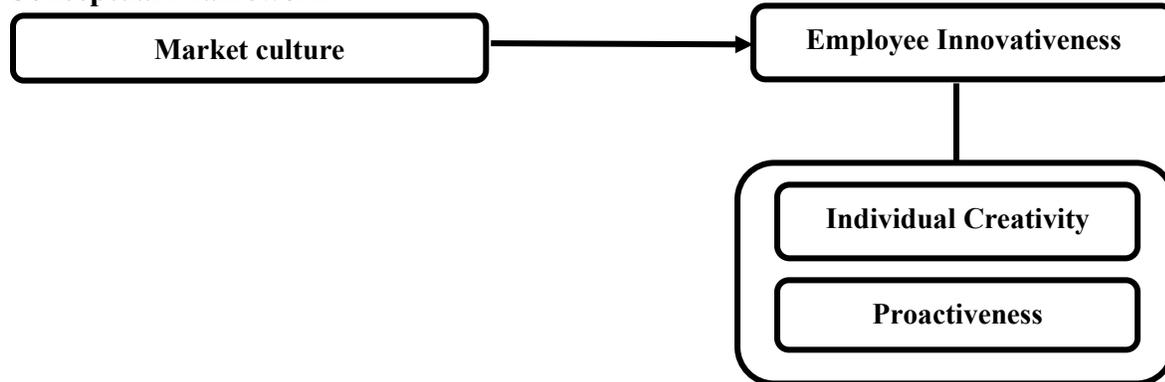


Figure 1: A conceptual framework of market culture and employee innovativeness

Source: Desk Research (2025), with measures of employee innovativeness adapted from the work of Pradan and Jena (2017).

Research Questions

Based on the research objectives, the following research questions were posed:

- i. What is the relationship between market culture and individual creativity of telecommunication firms in Port Harcourt, Rivers State?
- ii. What is the relationship between market culture and proactiveness of telecommunication firms in Port Harcourt, Rivers State?

Statement of Hypotheses

From the conceptual framework, the study hypothesized thus:

- Ho:1** There is no significant relationship between market culture and individual creativity of telecommunication firms in Port Harcourt, Rivers State.
- Ho:2** There is no significant relationship between market culture and proactiveness of telecommunication firms in Port Harcourt, Rivers State.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Theoretical Foundation

This study was anchored on the Edgar Schein's theory of organizational culture and resource-based view theory.

Edgar Schein's Model of Organizational Culture

This theory was proposed by Edgar Schein, a former professor of management studies at MIT. The model of market culture as postulated by Edgar Schein states that values, beliefs, and culture of an organization are not in a single day; rather the culture originates from the everyday experience

of employees, structural changes in the organization, and influence from the external environment (Schein, 2018).

The model posits that there are three main levels that lead to a defined market culture namely, artifacts, values, and assumed values. The first level called artifacts depict the attributes that can be easily viewed or felt such as; the dress code, facilities, and behaviors of employees (Schein, 2019). This level, sometimes referred to as “cultural forms”, includes the tangible behavior patterns that are repeatedly seen within a market and the visible artifacts that serve as widely-recognized manifestations of the cultural values and norms of the organization: structure, facilities, the physical layout of work spaces. The second level called values entails the thought processes and attitudes of employees. This level includes things such as organizational slogans and other visible expressions of organizational mission, vision and internal and personal values (e.g., identifiable norms and formal guidelines).

This model is relevant to the present study because it guides the management to make gradual changes to the market culture by modifying the artifacts, values, and assumed values until the desirable culture is attained. Culture is important in setting key values, long term goals as well as the company’s mission and vision. This means that organizations must consider cultural factors in their major operations to increase and promote their optimal performance.

Resource Based–View Theory

The resources based-view theory was postulated by Barney (1986). The resource-based view (RBV) argues that firms possess resources, a subset of which enables them to achieve competitive advantage, and a subset of those that lead to superior long-term performance. Resources that are valuable and rare can lead to the creation of competitive advantage. Resources based-view theory contends that the possession of strategic resources provides an organization with a golden opportunity to develop competitive advantages over its rivals. Barney stated that for resources to hold potential as sources of sustainable competitive advantage, they should be valuable, rare, imperfectly imitable and not substitutable. The resource-based view suggests that organizations must develop unique, firm-specific core competencies that will allow them to outperform competitors by doing things differently.

This theory is considered relevant to the study in that in the context of the Resource-Based View (RBV), market culture has been considered as valuable, rare and imperfectly imitable. Therefore, it can serve as a potential resource for creating sustainable advantage. This leads to further arguments that market culture is one of the key determinants of organizational performance. The key tenet of this study is that organizations have different strategic directions in terms of competitive performance and, therefore, managers need to understand which specific culture (i.e. content) will support the achievement of improved employee performance.

Conceptual Review

Market Culture

Market culture has been defined Cameron and Quinn (2006: 54) as a “result oriented workplace, focusing on gaining market share and penetration, focusing on external continuance with the need for steadiness and power”. In this type of culture, the organization is focused on increasing its competitive position, and the major task of management is to drive the organization toward productivity (Joseph & Kibera, 2019). Market culture prioritizes on productivity, competitiveness,

results and market leadership. Market culture has a high degree of control and is externally focused. According to Cameron and Quinn (2016), market culture is externally oriented as it focuses on its relationship between suppliers, customers and regulators. Market cultures are results oriented, with a focus on competition, achievement, and getting the job done. Market culture is oriented to compete within the external focus to get the largest market share and greater profits (Cameron et al., 2006). The market culture emphasizes productivity, goal fulfillment, performance, and achievement values. The purpose of firms that emphasize the market culture is to pursue and fulfill well-defined goals such as financial success (Yu & Wu, 2009).

Staying close to one's customer can result in timely market information, joint product development activities, and intense brand loyalties, leading to better financial performance (Peters & Waterman, 2012). Organizational culture can also affect performance provided that they are able to adapt to its environment (relevant to its industry and business conditions) (Kim et al., 2004). Han et al., (2018) argued that market-oriented corporate culture has been increasingly considered a key element of superior corporate performance. In their study, they found that market-oriented corporate culture facilitates organizational innovativeness, which in turn affect firm performance. In an empirical study, Fekete and Boreskei (2011) found the positive effect of market culture on firm financial performance. These researchers argued that market culture emphasize outer surroundings and focuses on effectiveness, efficiency and competitiveness, which in turn improve the performance outcomes.

Employee Innovativeness

Innovation is the introduction of new things, ideas or ways of doing something to produce a good and greater result. According to Lin, (2006), the word innovation is originated from Latin word, *innovare* which means “to make something new”. Innovativeness, is a key capability which provides competitive advantage in banking sector and in many other industry. Employee innovativeness can be defined as an engagement in innovative behaviours, which includes behaviours related to the innovation process, i.e. idea generation, idea promotion and idea realization with the aim of producing innovations (Ramamoorthy, Flood, Slattery & Sardesai 2005).

Employee innovativeness is shown by paying attention to actions that are more than routines that are important in dynamic business life, namely as employee behavior that aims to realize the initiation of ideas, processes, products, or procedures related to their work (Pandiangan et al., 2018). Innovation is different from creativity, though often confused; creativity is about introducing fresh ideas or the uniqueness of generating ideas, while innovation encompasses much more than that. It includes the socio-psychological process involved with the realization and execution of those ideas (Anderson, Potočnik, & Zhou, 2014). According to research, employee innovativeness is the intention to create, apply new ideas to improve organizational performance and achieve organizational goals (West & Farr, 2020). Innovation is not a simple step process but a multistage process, and different researchers have come up with different stages or dimensions such as idea exploration, idea generation, promotion of ideas, and idea realization (de Jong & den Hartog, 2010). These activities are psychologically and cognitively demanding (Janssen, 2004).

Individual Creativity

Creativity means the production of novel and useful ideas in any domain. Creativity refers to the generation of novel, useful idea, and employees' ability to create new practical ideas. It is the start

point of innovation. Creativity can be defined as the creation of something new which is in turn manifested in the act of starting up and running an enterprise (Lackéus et al. 2015). Creativity is therefore central to entrepreneurial process. It is that capability of an entrepreneur to venture into new business, to bring new products into the market, open new offices, branches, test new technology and venture into new markets. Creativity has been viewed as the construction of ideas or products which are new and potentially useful. These ideas can be internally or externally located, although the entrepreneur will tend to search and identify potential solutions shaped in part by internal competencies (Fillis & Rentschler, 2010).

According to Amabile (2016), creativity is the production of novel and useful ideas in any domain. She went further to state that in order to be considered creative, a product or an idea must be different from what has been done before but the product or idea cannot be merely different for difference's sake, it must also be appropriate to the goal at hand, correct, valuable, or expressive of meaning. Creativity refers to original and novel work, emphasizing the generation of new and original ideas (Madjar, 2011). Amabile (2013) defined creativity as the process of idea generation or problem solving and the actual idea or solution. Creativity has vital impact on organizational performance and when it is the case of service firms, the creativity of frontline employees becomes more crucial. Firms need creative competition especially after the challenging capital employees to initiate organizational innovation.

Proactiveness

Proactiveness refers to the propensity of human agents to take action in the face of external constraints. In so doing, they are likely to affect and may change the environment in which they operate. Proactive entrepreneurs are action-oriented entrepreneurs. Once they have discovered a business opportunity, they may gloss over the limitations of the resource base which they control. Proactiveness can be described as "taking initiative by anticipating and pursuing new opportunities related to future demand and by participating in emerging markets" (Lumpkin & Dess, 2005). Being a proactive firm is demonstrated by a firm's awareness and responsiveness to market signals (Hughes & Morgan, 2007). Lumpkin and Dess, (2001), and Covin and Miller (2014) explained pro-activeness as taking advantage by expecting and searching for new opportunities and entering into a new market which is related with entrepreneurship. He further explained pro-activeness as the process by which firm relates to the market opportunities in the process of new entry in front of the opposition and acting in foresight of future interest (Rauch, et`al, 2009), deliberate wipe-out of operations which are in the mature or declining phases of life cycle (Kreiser & Davis, 2010).

Empirical Review

Du Plessis and Grobler (2018) conducted a study titled "market culture and employee innovativeness in south African technology firms" using a quantitative research design. The study population consisted of employees from selected technology firms in Cape Town and Johannesburg, South Africa, with a sample size of 350 employees selected using a stratified random sampling technique. Data collection involved the use of self-administered questionnaires that measured market culture, employee innovativeness, and organizational culture, as well as follow-up surveys to track changes in employee innovativeness over time. The findings of the study revealed that market culture was positively and significantly related to employee innovativeness in South African technology firms, with a stronger market culture being associated with higher levels of employee innovativeness. The study also found that market culture had a

positive and indirect relationship with employee innovativeness through its impact on organizational support for risk-taking, suggesting that a market culture that encourages risk-taking can enhance employee innovativeness in technology firms.

Uys and Botha (2020) conducted a study titled "the impact of market culture on employee engagement and innovativeness in South African Financial Firms" using a mixed methods research design. The study population consisted of employees from selected financial firms in Cape Town and Durban, South Africa, with a sample size of 350 employees selected using a stratified random sampling technique. Data collection involved the use of self-administered questionnaires for quantitative data collection, as well as focus group discussions and case studies for qualitative data collection. The findings of the study revealed a significant positive relationship between market culture and employee engagement, with a stronger market culture being associated with higher levels of employee engagement. Furthermore, the study found that employee engagement mediated the relationship between market culture and employee innovativeness, suggesting that engaged employees are more likely to be innovative in organizations with a market culture. The study also identified organizational support for innovation as a significant mediator in the relationship between market culture and employee innovativeness, suggesting that organizations that support innovation can enhance employee innovativeness in a market culture.

Teklehaimanot and Gebrehiwot (2020) conducted a study titled "The Impact of Market Culture on Employee Innovativeness and Organizational Performance in Ethiopian Manufacturing Firms" using a quantitative research design. The study population consisted of employees from selected manufacturing firms in Addis Ababa and Dire Dawa, Ethiopia, with a sample size of 300 employees selected using a stratified random sampling technique. Data collection involved the use of self-administered questionnaires that measured market culture, employee innovativeness, organizational performance, and organizational support for innovation. The findings of the study revealed a significant positive relationship between market culture and employee innovativeness, suggesting that a strong market culture fosters employee innovativeness in Ethiopian manufacturing firms. Furthermore, the study found a significant positive relationship between employee innovativeness and organizational performance, suggesting that employee innovativeness contributes to organizational success in Ethiopian manufacturing firms. The study also identified organizational support for innovation as a significant mediator in the relationship between market culture and employee innovativeness, suggesting that organizations that support innovation can enhance employee innovativeness and organizational performance in a market culture.

Alemu and Mengistu (2020) conducted a study titled "the relationship between market culture and employee innovativeness in Ethiopian Private Banks" using a quantitative research design. The study population consisted of employees from selected private banks in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, with a sample size of 200 employees selected using a simple random sampling technique. Data collection involved the use of self-administered questionnaires that assessed market culture, employee innovativeness, and organizational support for innovation. The findings of the study revealed a significant positive relationship between market culture and employee innovativeness, suggesting that a strong market culture fosters employee innovativeness in Ethiopian private banks. The study also identified organizational support for innovation as a significant mediator in the relationship between market culture and employee innovativeness, suggesting that providing

the right support structures for innovation enhances employee innovativeness in a market culture. Furthermore, the study revealed that employee innovativeness was positively associated with job satisfaction and organizational commitment, suggesting that fostering employee innovativeness in a market culture can lead to improved employee attitudes and behaviors.

METHODOLOGY

This study adopted the cross-sectional survey design. The population of this study consisted of all the four licensed telecommunication firms in Nigeria operating in Rivers State. However, the study elements consist of 198 employees from the respective state head offices of the four (4) telecommunication firms in Port Harcourt, Rivers State, Nigeria. The research data for this study was collected mainly from the primary source. The questionnaire was adopted as the primary data collection instrument for this research. The study adopted both content and face-validity. The reliability for the study was determined using the Cronbach alpha coefficient. Spearman Rank Order Correlation Coefficient was used to test the stated hypotheses formulated for the study.

DATA ANALYSIS AND FINDINGS

Bi-variate Analysis

This section focused on the analysis and discussion of the findings for the empirical assessment of the relationship between market culture and the measures of employee innovativeness.

Table 1: Test for Correlation between market culture and individual creativity

			Market Culture	Individual Creativity
Spearman's rho	Market Culture	Correlation Coefficient	1.000	.867**
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.	.000
		N	91	91
	Individual Creativity	Correlation Coefficient	.867**	1.000
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.
		N	91	91

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

Source: SPSS Output, 2025

Table 1 shows the result of Spearman’s Rank Order Correlation on the relationship between market culture and individual creativity of telecommunication firms in Port Harcourt, Rivers State. The result showed that there is a very strong positive significant relationship between market culture and individual creativity of telecommunication firms in Port Harcourt, Rivers State ($\rho = 0.867$, at $P-v = 0.000 < 0.05\%$). Based on this result the null hypothesis is therefore “Rejected” and “Alternate Accepted”. It is therefore concluded that there is a significant relationship between market culture and individual creativity of telecommunication firms in Port Harcourt, Rivers State.

Table 2: Test for Correlation between market culture and proactiveness

		Market Culture	Proactiveness
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Spearman's rho	Market Culture	Correlation Coefficient	1.000	.477**
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.	.000
		N	91	91
	Proactiveness	Correlation Coefficient	.477**	1.000
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.
		N	91	91

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

Source: SPSS Output, 2025

Table 2 shows the result of Spearman's Rank Order Correlation on the relationship between market culture and proactiveness of telecommunication firms in Port Harcourt, Rivers State. The result showed that there is a moderate positive significant relationship between market culture and proactiveness of telecommunication firms in Port Harcourt, Rivers State ($\rho = 0.477$, at $P-v = 0.000 < 0.05\%$). Based on this result the null hypothesis is therefore "Rejected" and "Alternate Accepted". It is therefore concluded that there is a significant relationship between market culture and proactiveness of telecommunication firms in Port Harcourt, Rivers State.

Discussion of Findings

The result showed that there is a very strong positive significant relationship between market culture and individual creativity of telecommunication firms in Port Harcourt, Rivers State ($\rho = 0.867$, at $P-v = 0.000 < 0.05\%$). On the other hand, the result showed that there is a moderate positive significant relationship between market culture and proactiveness of telecommunication firms in Port Harcourt, Rivers State ($\rho = 0.477$, at $P-v = 0.000 < 0.05\%$). The finding is in accordance with the work of Nieuwenhuizen and Rossouw (2019) who conducted a study titled "the impact of market culture on employee innovativeness and organizational performance in South African retail firms" using a quantitative research design. The findings of the study revealed a significant positive relationship between market culture and employee innovativeness, with a stronger market culture being associated with higher levels of employee innovativeness. The study also found that employee innovativeness mediated the relationship between market culture and organizational performance, with higher levels of employee innovativeness being associated with higher levels of organizational performance.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the results of this study, it was concluded that market culture drive innovation by emphasizing competitiveness and a drive to outperform the competition. It is established that proper market culture is significant in promoting employee innovativeness in the workplace.

It is therefore recommended that management of telecommunication firms in Port Harcourt, Rivers State should foster open communication by encouraging employees to share ideas, concerns, and feedback openly. This will promote transparency and innovative work behavior among employees in the workplace.

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