

Entrepreneurial Orientation and Marketing Success of Fast-Food Firms in Port Harcourt

Chikere, P.C., (Ph.D)

Department of Marketing,
Faculty of Management Sciences,
Niger Delta University,
Bayelsa State, Nigeria

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Abstract

The study examined the relationship between Entrepreneurial Orientation and Marketing Success of fast-food firms in Port Harcourt. This investigation made use of a correlation survey methodology. The total population of 39 fast food businesses was used as the sample since the scale of the study was reasonable. Each business received three copies of the 117 surveys that were sent out. Hence, 117 people were surveyed for the research. Applying Cronbach's alpha test, we were able to verify the instrument's reliability; the resulting coefficient of 0.98 is higher than the allowed threshold of 0.70. Both descriptive and inferential statistical approaches were used to analyse the data acquired from the surveys. To assess the assumptions that were generated, the Spearman Rank Order Correlation approach was utilised. The study's results showed that among Port Harcourt's fast-food businesses, an entrepreneurial mindset was significantly associated with better marketing results. There was a robust and statistically significant correlation between marketing performance and innovativeness and risk-taking. Findings from the study indicate that an entrepreneurial mindset is a significant factor in the marketing success of local fast-food chains. The results supported the idea that fast food joints in Port Harcourt would benefit from trying something fresh in order to pique consumers' interest. Also, managers should intentionally go for business prospects, even if they're quite risky, especially if they're new to the company.

Keywords: *Entrepreneurial Orientation, Innovativeness, Risk-taking and Marketing Success.*

Introduction

In today's complicated economic climate, growth, sustainability, profitability, and maintaining a competitive edge are all essential components of a successful company. It is an indication of the company's financial stability as well as its capacity to keep customers for the long haul, adjust to changes in the market, and improve internal operations. Academics have stressed that a company's performance determines its longevity and market relevance (Sethibe & Steyn, 2023). Various sectors' performance results are shaped by strategic, structural, and behavioural issues, which organisations face as they attempt to be competitive and resilient. Firms are compelled to embrace innovative methods that support their long-term viability and financial success due to the ever-changing character of the modern business landscape, fuelled by rapid technical developments and changes in customer behaviour (Aminu & Mahmood, 2022). As a result, the literature on organisational and strategic management has consistently focused on the question of what factors contribute to a company's success.

In this light, the fast food sector in Port Harcourt has grown into a major force in the city's economy, creating many new jobs. Fast food restaurants have exploded in popularity as a result of the rising number of city dwellers who value cost, convenience, and a laid-back lifestyle. Competition is fierce in this industry since both mom-and-pop stores and larger chains are vying for customers. To survive and prosper in this dynamic and cutthroat industry, fast food companies must distinguish themselves not just in the quality of their products and services, but also in the way they position themselves strategically to meet the ever-shifting demands of their customers and the constraints of their operations. Companies operating in this sector must be aggressive and creative if they want to stay ahead of the competition and succeed in the long run, especially because the industry is always changing. Okon and Essien (2023) state that in order for companies to remain competitive in industries that are changing at a quick pace, they must prioritise being adaptable and having a flexible strategy. Consequently, there is an increasing understanding that traditional methods of doing business in these industries will not lead to long-term success; instead, strategic frameworks that encourage entrepreneurial thought and action are necessary.

These needs have propelled entrepreneurial orientation to the forefront of management and organisational strategy literature, where it continues to garner significant interest in the context of modern company. The strategic stance of a company that shows its eagerness to innovate, take chances, and be proactive in seeking out development prospects is called its entrepreneurial orientation (Alonso-Galicia et al., 2023). Especially in unstable and cutthroat markets, it is seen as a critical factor in a company's success. The idea has been recognised as a key component that determines a company's ability to quickly adapt to changes in its environment and discover new possibilities that boost performance. Eze et al. (2022) provide research that shows how an entrepreneurial mindset may help a company come up with new ideas, take measured risks, and be the first to market with developing trends. Companies, particularly those in the fast food industry, must innovate and adapt if they want to remain relevant in the market. In addition, the innovativeness, risk-taking, and proactiveness aspects of entrepreneurial orientation show how a company is naturally inclined to try new things, invest in risky endeavours, and predict what customers will want or how the market will change. A culture of innovation, improved response to market fluctuations, and the ability to remain ahead of competition are three ways in which these traits are demonstrated to significantly influence business results (Yusuf et al., 2023). Companies in the fast food industry, in particular, have challenges related to the volatility of customer preferences and the ease with which rivals may copy their tactics. In order to stay relevant and increase their prospects of long-term success, such organisations might embrace an entrepreneurial mindset. Because it establishes a connection between organisational behaviour and strategic outcomes—which impact profitability, market expansion, and sustainability—an entrepreneurial orientation is relevant even in volatile and unpredictable times. With this context established, we can go further into the question of how an entrepreneurial mindset helps fast food companies thrive, especially in the ever-changing Port Harcourt market.

Conceptual framework

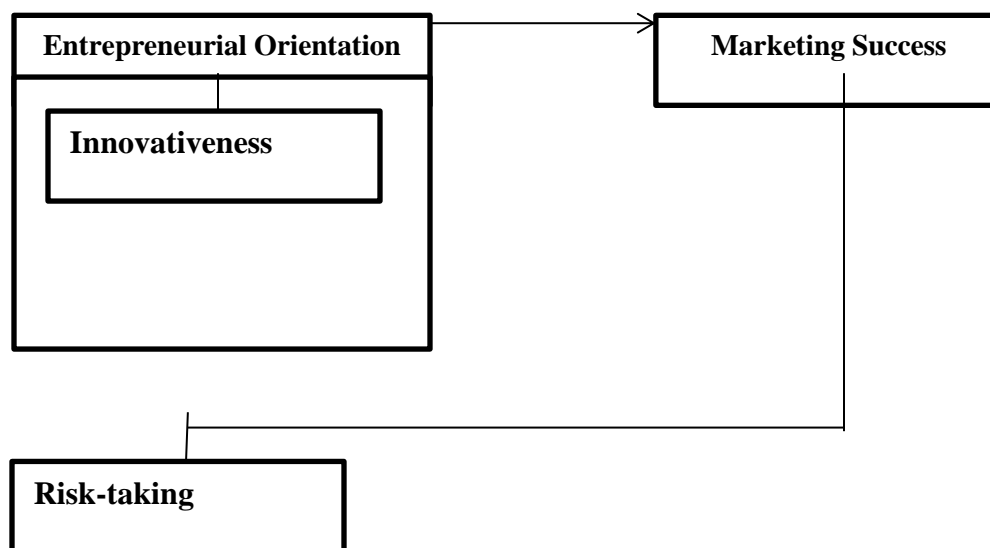


Fig. 1.1: Conceptual framework showing the relationship between entrepreneurial orientation and marketing success.

Source: Miller (1983); Covin & Slevin (1988).

Aim and Objectives of the Study

The aim of the study was to examine the relationship between entrepreneurial orientation and marketing success of fast food firms in Port Harcourt. The specific objectives are as to:

- i. examine the relationship between innovativeness and marketing success of fast food firms in Port Harcourt.
- ii. determine the relationship between risk-taking and marketing success of fast food firms in Port Harcourt.

2.0 Review of Related Literature

2.1 Theoretical Review

The study was underpinned by the Entrepreneurship Innovation Theory.

Entrepreneurship Innovation Theory

Schumpeter (1939) established this theory after identifying entrepreneurial activity as the fourth production element. The entrepreneur was regarded by him as a creative, imaginative, and futuristic thinker. He thinks that coming up with fresh combinations is where innovation and entrepreneurship really shine. Many people view entrepreneurs as game-changers because they disrupt established economic norms by discovering new markets, developing innovative products, and reorganising current markets (Mugambi & Karagu, 2017). When considering the many types of innovation, technical advancements are clearly at the forefront. Economic stability and regular patterns of economic performance are disturbed by innovations, according to Schumpeter, as they do not arise gradually but rather in abrupt jumps. To him, innovation was the slow and difficult process by which businesses broke with convention. This ebb and flow of capitalism economic growth is shown by his analysis of the business cycle. The key reasons of economic variations,

according to Schumpeter, are changes on the supply side caused by unequal technical advancement, even if he did not think technological uncertainty was a crucial influence. Additionally, entrepreneurial competition leads to major, revolutionary inventions, according to Schumpeter (1939). When looking at Schumpeter's work from 1934, 1939, and 1942 as a whole, two main corporate innovation processes become apparent. One such idea is "creative destruction," which occurs when new technologies shake up established industries, opening doors for risk-takers to make a killing and propel their companies forward (Mugambi & Karagu, 2017). When trying to make sense of the ways in which entrepreneurial engagement affects business competitiveness in the food and beverage sector, the entrepreneurial innovation theory comes in handy. Innovation, creativity, and strategic foresight, according to the thesis, provide businesses an advantage in the market by increasing client loyalty, contentment, and patronage. How the Theory Is Useful If you want to know how an entrepreneurial mindset affects marketing results, this theory will help a lot. It goes on to say that new ideas are the backbone of any successful entrepreneurial endeavour. Entrepreneurs are agents of change because they disrupt established norms in order to find untapped niches in the market, find cheaper or more reliable sources of inputs, and reorganise the way markets work.

2.1.2 Entrepreneurial Orientation

An entrepreneurial orientation (EO) is a crucial business strategy that shows how well a company can adapt to changing market conditions. It includes everything from procedures to decisions that bring about new market entrants or strengthen existing ones. Creativity, initiative, and boldness are hallmarks of EO, and these traits are what make an organisation competitive and flexible (Lumpkin & Dess, 1996). When a business is innovative, it encourages its employees to think outside the box and try new things, which ultimately results in better goods and services for customers. Covin and Wales (2019) define risk-taking as the readiness to devote substantial resources to endeavours with unknown results, whereas being proactive means anticipating future market trends and moving ahead of competitors to gain first-mover advantages. A high EO level is associated with improved performance and growth for firms because it allows them to better adapt to environmental uncertainty and take advantage of new possibilities (Anderson et al., 2015). Markets with intense competition, like retail and fast food, can benefit from EO's ability to support the ongoing creation of customer-centric innovations and strategic initiatives that boost brand loyalty and distinctiveness. There is evidence from empirical research that entrepreneurial organisations outperform their more conservative competitors in terms of financial and market results, suggesting a positive correlation between EO and company performance (Rauch et al., 2009). As a result, EO is still heavily discussed in books and articles about strategic entrepreneurship, with an emphasis on how it may help businesses thrive in both calm and stormy markets.

2.1.3 Innovativeness

An innovation-oriented business is one that places a premium on fostering an environment that is conducive to the generation of novel ideas, products, and processes in order to increase value and competitiveness. According to Szugaw, Simpson, and Enz (2006), it shows that the corporation values innovation and is working to create an environment where it may flourish. In order to foster creative thinking, companies with a strong innovation orientation spend a lot of money on R&D, are open to new ideas, and promote information exchange among workers. This approach improves

a company's ability to adjust to changing market circumstances and successfully fulfil the demands of customers (García-Morales, Jiménez-Barrionuevo, & Gutiérrez-Gutiérrez, 2012). Especially in highly competitive industries like manufacturing and services, empirical research reveals that an innovation mindset greatly enhances business performance, customer happiness, and long-term growth (Wang & Ahmed, 2004). Firms that prioritise innovation are better able to separate themselves from the competition and adapt quickly to changing market conditions, which leads to a lasting competitive advantage.

2.1.4 Risk-taking

Companies that are risk-takers aren't afraid to put their money where their mouth is in the hopes of making a quick buck. It shows how willing a company is to take risks, even when such risks might backfire (Lumpkin & Dess, 1996). When businesses have an entrepreneurial mindset, they are willing to take risks in order to discover new possibilities, invest in unproven industries, and launch groundbreaking goods and services (Covin & Slevin, 1989). In uncertain and ever-changing markets, organisations that aren't afraid to take risks tend to have a leg up on the competition (Wales, Gupta, & Mousa, 2013). To reduce the likelihood of negative outcomes, though, good risk management is crucial. By encouraging flexibility and perseverance in the face of ambiguity, strategic risk-taking, when paired with reliable decision-making procedures, greatly enhances the development and efficiency of organisations.

2.1.5 Marketing Success

When a company is profitable, grows, stays in business for the long haul, and is competitive in the market, we say that we've succeeded. Revenue growth, market share, happy customers, and efficient operations are common metrics used to evaluate it (Altman et al., 2020). The hallmark of a prosperous company is its ability to respond quickly to changes in the market, seize advantageous opportunities, and reliably satisfy the needs of its stakeholders. A company's capacity to stay in business, grow, and stay ahead of the competition all depend on how well it does financially (Al Mamun et al., 2018). To improve performance and stay relevant in today's fast-paced business world, companies need to use strategies like innovation and an entrepreneurial mindset. Resilience, strategic growth, and total economic development are all bolstered by the relentless pursuit of company success. Businesses that put an emphasis on success will be better able to weather storms and seize opportunities when they arise.

2.3 Empirical Review

Using the Resource-Based View (RBV) theory as a framework, Aliyu and Rosli (2014) investigated the connection between an entrepreneur's mindset, the company's external environment, and the company's performance. Although this connection has been extensively discussed in academic journals, there has been a dearth of research that targets small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) in Nigeria. We built this model to analyse the dynamics of small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), which play a critical role in Nigeria's economic growth by contributing considerably to employment and GDP. We used a quantitative method and sent out 640 surveys to owner-managers of small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) all throughout the nation. With a response rate of 79.8 percent, 511 were correctly filled out and sent back. The findings corroborated the favourable correlation between an entrepreneurial mindset and company success, which is in line with previous studies. Having said that, there was no statistically

significant correlation between company success and external factors. For policymakers, regulatory agencies like SMEDAN (Nigerian Small and Medium Enterprises Development Agency), and business owners of small and medium enterprises (SMEs), these results provide important information that can inform future research.

Muita (2013) looked into the effect of innovation strategies on competitive advantage in the Kenyan telecom industry, which is relevant to our discussion. Senior managers from four different telecommunications companies were asked to fill out standardised questionnaires in order to gather data for a descriptive study. With the use of statistical tools such as percentages, means, and standard deviations as well as graphical representations like bar and pie charts, the data were examined in SPSS version 21.0. The results showed that these companies' innovation strategies met client demands, and that their technical advancements and research efforts greatly increased their competitiveness.

In a similar vein, Nwekeala and Opara (2022) investigated how cement firms in South-South Nigeria fared financially when their marketers had an entrepreneurial mindset. After 100 surveys were sent out, Cronbach's alpha (0.98), which is higher than the industry norm of 0.7, proved that the instrument was reliable. Descriptive and inferential statistics were employed in the data analysis process, including the use of Spearman Rank Order Correlation for hypothesis testing. Researchers found that cement companies in the area had a better chance of success when their marketing strategies leaned more towards an entrepreneurial spirit.

Lawrence and Renner (2019) assessed the effect of entrepreneurial marketing on the sold performance of SMEs in the beverage and food sector in Port Harcourt, Rivers State. The study aimed to answer four research questions and evaluate four hypotheses by using a conceptual and operational framework. The target population comprised 60 senior managers from firms including International Breweries, Nigerian Bottling Company (NBC), Dufil Prima Foods Ltd., and Palm Nectar Breweries. A five-point Likert scale questionnaire was utilized, with data analyzed through both descriptive and inferential statistics using SPSS version 21. Findings showed a significant correlation between entrepreneurial marketing and improved sales performance among the SMEs studied.

3.0 Methodology

A correlational survey research design was utilised in the investigation. The 39 fast food joints chosen at random from the database of www.businesslist.com.ng made up the study's target demographic. Because the population was modest and manageable, we decided to use the full population as our sample size. Three copies were sent to each of the 39 fast food chains, for a total of 117 surveys. Consequently, the study's participants were 117 responses. A Cronbach's alpha test was performed to determine the research instrument's reliability. The results showed a coefficient of 0.98, which is higher than the acceptable threshold of 0.7. A combination of descriptive and inferential statistics were used to examine the data gathered from the survey. A Spearman Rank Order Correlation analysis was carried out to verify the study's hypotheses.

4.0 Data analysis and results

Test 1

H0₁: there is no significant relationship between innovativeness and marketing success of fast food firms in Port Harcourt.

Correlations

		innovativeness	marketing success
Spearman's rho	Correlation Coefficient	1.000	.738*
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.	.037
	N	90	90
	Correlation Coefficient	.738*	1.000
marketing success	Sig. (2-tailed)	.037	.
	N	90	90

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

Source: Survey Data, 2025.

With a correlation coefficient of 0.738, the table shows that there is a substantial positive association between innovativeness and marketing success according to Spearman's Rank Order Correlation. According to this value, the marketing success of the companies investigated tends to rise sharply in correlation with their level of innovativeness. The association is statistically significant, since the p-value (Sig. 2-tailed) is 0.037, which is lower than the 0.05 significance criterion. Put simply, there is ample proof that being inventive is strongly linked to successful marketing campaigns. The dependability of the statistical outcome was further reinforced by the sample size of 90 respondents for this investigation. Therefore, the results suggest that innovation plays a significant role in improving marketing results in the researched setting.

Test Two 2

H0₂: there is no significant relationship between risk-taking and marketing success of fast food firms in Port Harcourt.

Correlations

		risk-taking	marketing success
Spearman's rho	Correlation Coefficient	1.000	.857**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.	.007
	N	90	90
	Correlation Coefficient	.857**	1.000
marketing success	Sig. (2-tailed)	.007	.
	N	90	90

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

Source: Survey Data 2025.

The table displays the result of the Spearman's Rank Order Correlation, which shows a very significant positive link ($r=0.857$) between taking risks and being successful in marketing. This suggests that among the companies surveyed, a higher degree of risk-taking was substantially linked to a higher degree of marketing success. The p-value of 0.007, which is much lower than the 0.01 threshold, indicates that the connection is statistically significant at the 0.01 level. Companies with a greater propensity to take measured risks in their marketing strategies are more likely to see increased success, according to this robust and statistically significant correlation. The results are more convincing because they were based on an examination of 90 respondents. So, taking risks appears to be an important component of an entrepreneurial approach that has a favourable effect on marketing performance in the given setting, according to the results.

4.1 Discussion of Findings

The results showed that fast food companies in Port Harcourt with an entrepreneurial mindset had a far better chance of succeeding in the marketing department. Results showed that innovativeness and risk-taking both showed a strong and meaningful association with marketing performance among these organisations. They were also favourably and substantially connected to one another. Muita (2013) looked at the link between innovation strategies and competitive advantage in Kenya's telecom industry; these results are in line with her findings. Researchers found that telecom companies were much more competitive after investing in R&D and innovation. cement enterprises in South-South Nigeria was also investigated by Nwekeala and Opara (2022), who came to the same conclusion. This provides more evidence that entrepreneurial traits like creativity and boldness are critical to the success of marketing campaigns and companies as a whole.

4.2 Conclusion

The marketing success of fast food firms in Port Harcourt was investigated in this research, specifically looking at the relationship between entrepreneurial orientation and that success. The study discovered a robust and statistically significant correlation between innovativeness, risk-taking, and entrepreneurial attitude and marketing performance. The study found that fast food companies in Port Harcourt that have an entrepreneurial mindset are more likely to have successful marketing campaigns.

5.1 Recommendations

In line with the findings and conclusion, the study recommends that:

- i. It is highly recommended that fast food chains in Port Harcourt take a proactive approach to innovation by launching exciting new goods that will captivate customers.
- ii. Port Harcourt fast food restaurant managers should strategically seize possibilities, even if they are very unpredictable because they are new to the company.

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