

Innovations and Sustainable Competitive Advantage Among Fast Food Restaurants in Rivers State Nigeria

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Abstract

The purpose of the study is to examine the relationship between Innovation and sustainable competitive Advantage of fast Food Restaurants in Port-Harcourt cross sectional research design was adopted .The population of these study was 126 Fast Food Restaurant Managers in the university of port Harcourt Environs and around Choba axis of River State.The sampling technique used in this study was the census technique. Copies of Questionnaire were used in gathering data from respondents. The Retrieved questionnaires used for analysis were 86copies.The analysis technique used in this study was the Kendall's tau correlation coefficient. The result of the study shows that Innovation in terms of Product innovation and market innovation has a positive and significant relationship with sustainable competitive advantage. It was thus concluded that an enhancement in the quality of product and market innovation will lead to a sustainable competitive advantage of fastfood Restaurants in Rivers State. Hence, among others, it was recommended that theFast Food Restaurant Managers should be innovative in their product and Market to attain sustainable competitive Advantages.. These study contributed to knowledge through its empirical findings, theoretical and conceptual framework as regards to innovation and sustainable competitive advantage in a fast food industry.

Keywords: Product Innovation, market innovation, sustainable competitive advantage(SCA) ,Fast food Restaurant

1.1 Introduction

Competition in the business world is unavoidable. For that every effort is required to always know, understand, what is happening in the market, what customers' wants and understands the changes in the business environment so as to compete with others. For that reason, an attempt to understand what and how to manage a variety of resources owned to win the competition and create competitive advantage must always be created. Preparation of new products in the face of competition from rivals is one way to win competition through product innovation. Innovation means observing consumers to find and satisfy consumers by providing new products, creating innovation in order to have a strategic position in the market and withstand attacks from competitors with the main objective to meet the market demand. As a result it can be used as a competitive advantage for a business. Therefore, companies are required to provide new thoughts, ideas and innovative Products.

The main driving forces of innovation in food are consumers' preferences and their health. Consumers are choosing clean and sustainable foods. Active lifestyles and evolving consumer needs are creating a greater demand for innovative and customized new product development. Due to market competition and changing consumers preferences, the fast food industry is accelerating the introduction of new products to the market each year. Innovations are necessary to meet market requirement and keep companies on the market. Fast Food restaurants who have the right system and processes can react quickly to changing market demands which in turn puts them ahead of the competition. Nowadays the launch of a new product provides the company with a competitive advantage. Raw material sourcing, recipe development, optimization, targeting ,labeling and packaging are important for developing new products and reformulating existing products. Reducing the sugar contents, excluding cholesterol, salt and fat, organic products, these are many current innovative trends in fast food industry.. Competitive advantage also focuses on food safety, food compliance and food Quality Agnes .R.A (2020)

According to the Association of Fast Food and Confectioners of Nigeria (AFFCON), the Nigerian fast food industry is healthy and currently worth about N190 billion with the potential to grow bigger Vanguard, (2009). Also, the industry is considered as highly labour intensive. In Nigeria, it was identified as a leading overall employer of labour, looking at the food supply chain from farm to the table. The management and operations of Fast Food Restaurants require and attract various job opportunities and professionals, including service providers and suppliers. These ranges from farmers, caterers, horticulturists, interior decorators, technicians, food technologists to estate agents, architects, engineers, auditors, accountants etc.

Related to the marketing of fast food restaurants and its relevance and sustainability, an effort is being done by conducting a research on innovation and sustainable competitive advantage in fast food restaurants in Rivers State

STATEMENT OF PROBLEM

Amidst the current global crisis, one line of business in Nigeria that continues to promise greater returns on investment is Fast Food Restaurant. Despite the presence of economic, social and political dilemma in the country, the business continues to strive.

The concept of fast food retailing, also known as quick service restaurants evolved in Nigeria about 35 years ago by UAC, from the coffee shops of its Kingsway Departmental Stores, which later transformed into Kingsway Rendezvous, the organized fast food industry is fast emerging in the country. The industrial landscape has witnessed the influx of unprecedented numbers of fast food operators since the opening of the first fast food outlet in Nigeria, at Yaba, in 1986 by Mr. Biggs, a subsidiary of UAC Nigeria Plc (www.mrbiggsonline.com). At present, there are over 150 brand names in the country. Also, the Southwestern Nigeria alone now boast of about 500 outlets, of different sizes, which could be classified as standardized eateries, established by corporate individuals and organizations Fakokunde, (2011). All these and other developments, according to the Punch of Thursday, 12 November, 2009 revealed that one line of business that keeps going and remains sustainable amidst the current global economic meltdown is the Fast Food restaurant business.

The term “fast food” according to Ariyo, (2005) Raimi and Towobola, (2011).was first recognized by Merriam-Webster dictionary in 1951. It refers to food that can be easily prepared and served very quickly in an outlet to consumers. It can be served directly from oven to table (sit-in) or presented in form of take-out packages or containers (take-away). Common fast food menu found in outlets worldwide apart from drinks include pies, chips, fries, sandwiches, pizzas, noodles, chilis, salads, potatoes, rice, ice-cream, coffee, candies, hamburgers, fish, beef, chicken, turkey, hot dogs etc. Also, various sizes, types and kinds of outfits exist worldwide for the purpose of retailing fast foods. These range from carts, wagons, Jakle, 1(999), stands, kiosks to restaurants, and modern day fast food retail outlets, better known as Quick Service Restaurants (QSRs). Fast food ventures are located everywhere where round the clock services where applied e.g. in convenient shops, drives, filling stations, schools, cash points etc.

Mainly fast food outlets can be classified as either providing unstandardized or standardized services. The unstandardized outlets are usually the unregistered small operators, providing informal but fast casual table services to customers. In this category are the traditional food vendors, cafeterias and casual dining restaurants. On the other hand, the standardized outlets include the registered food retail outfits with formalized business names and organized structures, whose operations are usually large-scaled and certified by appropriate regulating authorities. In this category, are the single-branch eateries and chained quick service restaurants that provide minimal table service to customers. Also, unlike the former, which is considered to have existed for generations, the latter category is regarded as modern and emerging as a result of recent rapid urban developments in various countries of the world. Outlets in the organized sector are usually established by either corporate individuals or multinational organizations concentrating mainly in urban centers.

They do not relent in making their presence felt in such locations by adorning their imposing structures with colorful and attractive architectural designs. Also due to rapid social transformation in the country, the main menu of fast food restaurants which used to be exclusively foreign and continental cuisines like hamburgers, fried rice, jollof rice, salads, hot dogs, meat pies, coffees, chips, pizzas, ice-creams, soft drinks etc are now translating into local and traditional dishes such as ofada (white rice), iyan (pounded yam), amala (yam flour), asaro (porridge), emu (palm wine) etc. Some restaurants now offer traditional foods only. Notwithstanding, restaurants providing

specialized products/services such as ice-cream only, pizza- only, outdoor- only, Chinese-only menus are still striving in various parts of the country.

Nigerians love to eat out. On average, about 20% of our spending on food goes to meals consumed outside the house-everything from street-side snacks like Gala and plantain chips to proper meals at restaurants including fast foods. Nigerians spend about a fifth of their income eating out, which informs why the fast foods restaurants industries is worth over ₦280 billion.

Despite the large potential of the sector, many businesses have failed. Choosing the right kind of funding to sustain and expand the business is critical to providing the cash required for growth in the fast food restaurants sector. To earn significant revenue and profit, fast food Restaurants brands must combine sufficient working capital with quality product and services suitable for Nigerian customers. Basically, the business of fast food is big business. The sector was lastly publicly valued at about ₦280 billion in 2018 and has probably grown since then in direct proportion to our ever-expanding population size. The enormous growth potential of the industry is why entrepreneurs venture into the food business over and over again in Nigeria. Is also why the international restaurants chain, Burger King, expanded into the Nigerian market despite the country is still reeling from the negative demand shocks of the pandemic,

However despite the massive opportunity, not everyone who has attempted to build successful restaurants franchises in the sector has survived. We have seen the likes of Mr Biggs, Mama Cass, tantalizers, the fast foods restaurants sweet hearts of Nigerians in the 90s and early 2000s struggle to operate sustainably. More recent entrants like ; Kilimanjaro, Dominos and Chicken Republic have had their own challenges. They have also seen foreign franchises like KFC and Nandos struggle to expand and, in some cases, shut down existing branches. These and the rest call for a sustainable competitive advantage.

The achievement of sustainable competitive advantage is a major concern for strategic managers and policymakers. It occupies a central position in strategic management studies (Burden and Proctor, 2000; Barney and Clark, 2007; Liao and Hu, 2007; Barney and Hesterly, 2010). Understanding the factors and motivators of sustainable competitive advantage has led to increasing interests in the concept among scholars and practitioners (Porter, 1991; Porter & Kramer, 2006; King, 2007).

The competitiveness of a business depends on the strategies adopted by the organization to match the key success factors for operating in its market and exceeding those of its competitors Dash & Das, (2010). That is, the ability to achieve a sustainable competitive advantage over it rivals. Hana (2013) opines that in the volatile and dynamic business operating environment, the goal of every organization is to outperform its rivals and attract potential buyers to its products and services while still retaining current customers.

Sustainable Competitive advantage is achieved when an organization can offer better products or services when compared with its contemporaries Dess, Lumpkin, and Taylor, (2005), which has to do with the right innovation measures. Achieving competitive advantage helps the firm to dictate the price in its operating sector while maintaining a leadership position within the industry. It is also a very important aspect of strategic management (Dash and Das, 2010).

Notable scholars have conducted studies to determine the factors enhancing the competitive advantage of firms. These include: Barney (1991) - Firm resources and sustained competitive advantage; Saha, Jirčiková and Bialic-Davendra (2011) and Berber (2011) -Human resource

management and competitive advantage; Akhtar, Khan and Mujtaba (2013) – Organizational learning capability and competitive advantage; Mata, Fuerst, and Barney (2000), and Brezni (2012) – Information technology and competitive advantage.

Besides, Dynamic capabilities have been studied and widely acknowledged by scholars to enhance competitive advantage of fast food Restaurant Ofoegbu. W.C & Onuoha B.C (2018) .

Despite the numerous studies highlighting the role of innovation in the achievement of sustainable competitive advantage by business firms, it appears that there is dearth of literature examining the effect of innovation on firms' sustainable competitive advantage, specifically in the fast food Restaurants in the Nigerian working environment. Therefore the major contribution of this study is that it examined the relationship between innovation in terms of product innovation and market innovation and sustainable competitive advantage of fast foods restaurant in Rivers State.

However the study is similar to the study of Warranty. K.. &Wa Ode .S. (2018) who studied Achieving sustainable competitive Advantage through ,Product innovation and Market Driving of Rabbit Meat Merchants of Ngablak Magelang District Indonesia.

Thus, the specific objective of this study is to:

- 1) Investigate relationship between Product Innovation and Sustainable Competitive Advantage
- 2) Examine the relationship between Market Innovation and Sustainable Competitive Advantage

Research hypotheses

In line with the specific objectives, the following null hypotheses were formulated.

HO1: Product Innovation has no significant relationship with Sustainable Competitive Advantage.

HO2: Market Innovation has no significant relationship with Sustainable Competitive Advantage.

2.0 LITERATURE REVIEW

Theoretical Review

Porter's five forces Theory

This study anchored on Porter's five forces model propound by Michael E. Porter. This model was to help companies assess the nature of an industry's competitiveness and develop corporate strategies accordingly. The framework allows a business to identify and analyze the important forces that determine the profitability of an industry. Porter's five forces include three forces from 'horizontal' competition: the threat of substitute products or services, the threat of established rivals, and the threat of new entrants; and two forces from 'vertical' competition: the bargaining power of suppliers and the bargaining power of customers. This theory is based on the following assumptions-that buyers, competitors and suppliers are separate entities that never interact, never collude and never influence each other directly; that

structural advantage or the creation of entry barriers is the source of value; that there is always low uncertainty, which allows participants in a market to always be able to plan ahead and counter competitor actions. Porter argues that companies need to analyse competitions that company face within the industry in order to gain sustainable competitive advantage and respond favourably to the five forces (Barney, 1991). This theory is relevant to this study because there is significant competitive rivalry in the fast food industry. This resulting competitive pressure means that prices, profits and competitive strategy would be driven by it; firms could engage in aggressive research

and development to come up with new product development with different features and value addition in order to gain competitive advantage.

Dynamic Capabilities Theory

The dynamic capabilities theory of the firm is a theoretical framework that explains how firms differ and compete, taking into account that firms have to evolve and reconfigure their operations to remain competitive (Heaton et al., 2019; Mikalef et al., 2016). This theory has been defined as a firm's formation of capacities, possession of opportunities, and avoidance of threats while simultaneously preserving its competitive advantage through the improvement, combination, protection, or rearrangement of its tangible and intangible assets (Bagheri et al., 2019; Faghih et al., 2018). The dynamic capabilities theory has advanced the understanding of innovation by building on resource creation processes that firms use to create new resources and regenerate existing resources in line with changes in the environment (Bownam, & Ambrosini, 2003; Fallon-Byrne & Harney, 2017; Teece et al., 1997). Fainshmidt et al. (2019) and Nimfa et al. (2019) realised that the relationship between dynamic capabilities and competitive advantage is contingent upon the strategic fit between organizational and environmental factors, contributing to a more rigorous and configurationally dynamic capabilities view. In this study, dynamic capability explains the relationship of innovation competitive advantage's two components (customer preference and strategic business model) with product quality, while technology adoption is considered a core dynamic capability needed by fast food Restaurants to sustain growth in the competitive manufacturing sector. Thus, based on this view, Fast food Restaurants have to keep abreast of the capabilities of their innovation competitive advantage to ensure that their product quality meets customer preferences and represents a strategic business model that is not replicable by competitors. This will allow Fast Food Restaurants to lead the market and enjoy more sustainable growth.

Conceptual Framework

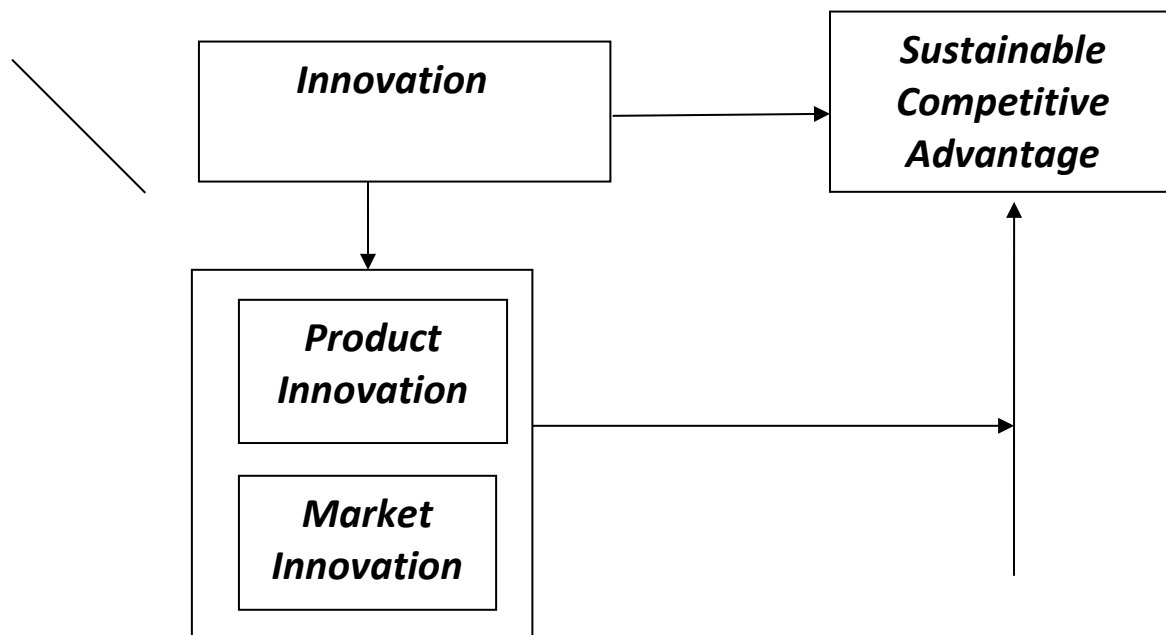


Fig1 A Conceptual Framework Show in the relationship between innovation and sustainable competition advantage in fast food Industries in Rivers State.

Source Dimensions of Innovation adapted from the work of Chinedu, S.E and Aghigbe, E.A (2022)

Concept of innovation

The definition of “innovation” has acquired various meanings and understanding from different domains and perspectives in academics and practice (Hunt and Morgan, 1995). An early pioneer of innovation, Schumpeter (1934) defined innovation as “a new way of doing things, or a unique combination of factors of production”. Observing carefully, the exposition by Schumpeter suggests a broader view of innovation such as product innovation, process innovation, management innovation, organizational innovation and marketing Innovation(Talegeta,2014).With regard to the forms of innovations espoused by Schumpeter(1934),Terziovski(2010)noted that Firms prefer some forms of innovation over others. However, Medrano and Olarte-Pascual (2016) disagreed with this assertion, arguing that it is currently difficult in any academic discourse to limit studies on innovation to any form of innovation. Further studies have shown that firms that conduct process, product or organizational innovations are likely to undertake marketing innovation too (Medrano and Olarte-Pascual,2016;Soltani et al.,2015).A study by Forés and Camisón (2016)reported that Firm managers should rather concentrate on the distinguishing feature, which is the “novelty” of the innovation outcome. Consequently, Firm achieve high performance when their strategic objectives and goals are based on their level of innovation (Rosenbusch et al., 2011). Thus, Schaltegger and Wagner (2011 as cited in Klewitz and Hansen, 2014) note that small enterprises are well positioned to innovate more radically and compete favorably than large firms, especially in a niche market. Innovation does not come from large firms alone but from dynamic Firms (Schilirò,2015).

Sustainable Competitive Advantage

Competitive advantage has been defined in several ways, Kay's (1993) definition of competitive advantage as "an advantage, one firm has over a competitor or group of competitors in a given market, strategic group or industry" is one of the most widely accepted definitions of competitive advantage. It has also been defined as whatever differentiates an organization or what it produces or markets from its contemporaries When competitors are able to implement these strategies, it is known as a sustained competitive advantage.

According to Berdine (2008), a company or a country's competitive advantage is defined as "a condition which enables a country or firm to operate in a more efficient or otherwise higher quality manner than its competitors, and which results in benefits accruing." Competitive advantage comes as a result of the core competence of the organization. It is the one outstanding difference between a company and its rivals. The characteristics of competitive advantage as enumerated by Porter (1998) include "customer focus, brand equity, product quality, Research, and Development focus"³.

Sustainable competitive advantage SCA has become one of the important goals of Firms across the globe (Papula and Volná, 2013). The concept of SCA received wide significance when Porter and Advantage (1985) attempted definition of SCA as strategies (cost leadership, differentiation and focus) relevant to achieving the

long-term market advantage. In furtherance to the inroads of Porter, Barney (1991) attempted a definition of SCA as a long-term benefit resulting from unique value creation processes asynchronously with potential competitors that cannot be easily copied. Noci and Verganti (1999 as cited in Klewitz and Hansen, 2014) noted that it is important to consider firms strategic sustainability behaviour from three behavioural patterns: reactive pattern, which defines how firms react to elements or stimuli from the external environment; anticipatory pattern which describes the activities of firms in achieving competitive advantage; and finally the innovation-based behavioural pattern which shows how the firm can adjust to innovations to achieve market advantage. The reactive and anticipatory sustainability strategies of a firm prove to be the highest strategies that are likely to result in innovation because they are responses to the external environmental stimuli. Marketing-based strategies are well defined within a relationship context where the customer represents an important strategic part of the innovation process. Studies have found evidence that marketing innovation remains one of the important strategies to achieving SCA (Ren et al., 2015; Camisón and Villar-López, 2011). Other studies have noted that “a company can only achieve SCA when they provide unique and valuable marketing strategies that potential and dynamic rivals cannot imitate” (Amini et al., 2012, p. 193). Studies have emphasised that a firm must accumulate both resources and capabilities in order to achieve SCA (Abdelrahman, 2012; Ren et al., 2009). To some authors, the capacity of firms to develop marketing innovation for SCA remains fundamental in the RBV (Rosenbuschetal.,2011).Marketing capability, according to Prahalad and Ramaswamy(2000 as cited in Ren et al., 2015), is the “integrative process in which a firm uses its tangible and intangible resources to understand market needs, enables products differentiation, enhances customer cooperation”. Fundamentally, resources such as brand name, trade contacts, efficient processes (Barney, 2011), technical skills, knowledge, technology, relationships (Remeikiene and Startiene, 2009), finance and materials (Saunila et al., 2014) are required to develop innovative marketing strategies for SCA (Barney, 2012).However, Barney(1991)and Genç et al. (2013) re-echoed the fact that not all firms’ resources can create SCA. In order to develop marketing innovation for SCA, internal and external resources must be rare, inimitable, valuable and non-substitutable (Barney, 1991; Ren, Au and Birtch, 2009; Ren, Xie and Krabbendam, 2009; Teece et al., 1997; Genç et al., 2013). The shift in focus from just competitive advantage to SCA re-enforces the works of Weerawardena (2003) and Weerawardena and O’Cass (2004) who noted that SCA must involve providing superior customer value and achieving relative lower cost for a long period of time and creating superior performance. The study of Ren et al. (2015, p. 649) recommended that firms “should increase their marketing capability to attain sustainable advantages by innovation and gaining deeper insights into consumer needs, wants, and trends, thus, exploiting new business opportunities

Marketing innovation

The definition of marketing innovation has taken a new paradigm because global business trends have shifted the flow of innovative ideas partially from the producer to the consumer.

Alternatively, marketing innovation is defined as the significant changes in aesthetic designs, improved product packaging, new mass media, new pricing and sales strategies (Moreira et al., 2012). Yeh-Yun Lin and Yi-Ching Chen (2007) in their study revealed that manufacturing firms adopt marketing innovation as one of the major types of innovations to transform their products

into profit(Soltani et al., 2015) and also determine the innovation focus of the firm (Woschke et al., 2017). Stošić (2007), therefore, identified four strands of marketing innovation which includes product design and packaging innovation; new pricing strategies; new promotion concept and Retail concepts.

Packaging innovation

It has become one of the innovation strands adopted by firms (Madrid-Guijarro et al., 2009 as cited in Asiedu, 2016). Product design and packaging innovation includes significant changes in product design and packaging form and/or style without any effect on the core functioning and user characteristics of the product (Stošić, 2007; Wang, 2015). In recent years, literature has emphasized on the eco-design of products as a broader strategic approach for sustainability (Klewitz and Hansen, 2014). Literature affirms that manufacturing firms that often introduce new product designs and packages create product varieties, improve products' life and enhance customer satisfaction and possess superior strength over competitors (Henderson and Clark, 1990; Wang, 2015). Consequently, the ability to sustain and improve competitive advantage requires firms to possess some amount of resources and capabilities as a catalyst to transform and modify existing strategies. Studies such as Youtie (2006), Moreira and Silva (2010), Moreira et al. (2012), Woschke et al. (2017) have noted that internal resources such as machinery, equipment and software are key to the development of innovation strategies. Other studies have argued that information from stakeholders (Resnick et al., 2016) such as customers, employees, competitors, advertisers, retailers and wholesalers are important because these supply chains actually possess relevant information for product design and packaging innovation (Mbizi et al., 2013). Manufacturing Firms that are able to change and or modify their existing products into unique product designs and package achieve sustainable competitive advantage (SCA) (Awan and Hashmi, 2014; Haq et al., 2008; Sudarmiatin and Suharto, 2016).

Pricing Innovations.

These constrained of marketing innovation is pricing innovation. Wang (2015) and Ilić et al. (2014) viewed Firms pricing innovation as a process where a firm uses new and alternative methods to vary prices. Wang (2015) and Ilić et al. (2014) noted that Firms pricing is characterized by conditions such as demand fluctuations and an introduction of a new interactive on line pricing system such as website and social network sites. Firms also operate price differential pricing system by charging different customers with different prices for the same products (Carson et al., 1998). The price differential approach is based on factors such as the nature of business relationship, awareness of the market conditions, conditions of the product and Firm. Other Firms also improve product designs and package by using new container shapes, taste, size and flavour as a means to differentiate their product prices. These strategies are normally influenced by market knowledge, managers' culture, intuition and experience over time (Carson et al., 1998). Developing innovative pricing tools require key strategic marketing resources and capabilities such as employees with right knowledge, quality information and experience. In innovative pricing, employee capabilities and all relevant primary and secondary factors are important to consider in order to fix prices that are fair and acceptable to the firm, customers, market and industry. Firm innovative pricing system aims to establish and maintain customer loyalty for business performance.

Promotion Innovation.

Innovative promotion involves significant changes in media techniques and symbols that are different from what the firm has used or existed before (Ilić et al., 2014). Salehi (2012) established that firms managers have used the conventional marketing tools to be working well and attracted consumers to purchase firms' offerings. Nevertheless, Sledzik found evidence to disagree that traditional promotion tools appear too glossy, aggressive and insincere to the specific needs of customers. These problems are evident because the power of the digital age has altered the way consumers purchase and consumer products (Ilić et al., 2014), and thus consumers are now immune to all marketing tools and strategies (Lendel and Varmus, 2013). Furthermore, in an era where physical "word of mouth" is giving way to "word of mouse" and social media (Resnick et al., 2016), firms managers have also resorted to social network sites and platforms such as WhatsApp, Facebook, Google+ and YouTube to promote their products and build relationships. These social network platforms allow firms to create internet platforms to promote their products and also allow customers to make purchase orders online. firms that do not have enough financial resources to adopt digital innovations to promote their products have resorted to use personality, personal contact, calls and text messages to customers, and good personal relationship as branding tools, which is essential for sustainable business performance (Resnick et al., 2016). Sudarmiati and Suharto (2016) noted that these innovative promotion activities such as branding, networking and internet adoption are critical to sustaining market advantage. In effect, innovative promotion tools improve brand trust, customer fulfillment, marketing image (Chuwiruch et al., 2015) and also achieve good market performance (Schaupp and Bélanger, 2013).

Retail Innovation. Wang (2015) defined innovative retail concepts as the introduction of new sales channels used to sell goods and services to customers. Innovative retail concepts may involve first-time franchising system, direct mode of selling, exclusive retailing and product licensing mechanisms to other sellers. Firm's managers normally have the desire to take full control of their product delivery chain but due to time and other resource constraints, they sometimes resort to indirect channels. Regarding the innovative direct product distribution tools, some Firms launch their own delivery vans and "showrooms" at various locations to distribute products to customers within specified geographical areas. Firms also adopt innovative discounts and other promotion tools to encourage customers to purchase directly from their factory, warehouse and distribution centres. Indirectly, manufacturing Firms also organize intermittent mass sale promotions where consumers buy from the wholesaler at vantage places. In the age of technology, manufacturers have also developed websites and other social network sites such as Instagram to provide product information and pictures and also allow customers to make orders online. Such a delivery system means that different customers receive special and preferential retail service from a firm. The nature of the innovative Firm delivery systems, which have shaped and moulded a closer relationship with customers, often creates a loyalty which is an edge to their competitors (Harrigan et al., 2011).

Product Innovation

The concept of product innovation entails using new knowledge to offer a new product or service that customers desire in the marketplace (Afuah, 2003). Danneels (2002) opined that product

innovation is the connecting of technology and competences. The author added that product innovation is mostly associated with referred novelty and meaningfulness of new products introduced to the market on time. Similarly, Un, Cuervo-Cazurra, and Asakawa, (2010) recognized product as a continuous construction of a valid product in the market place or modifying an already known product at a significant level. Mooeman and Miner (1997) identified various forms of product innovation to include incremental, customer-oriented, radical and company-related product innovation. The authors noted that customer-oriented innovation entails a new product focus on meeting customers' satisfaction using a new product than the old or former product. The incremental innovations implies little changes in the technological basis of a product, which are related to what is only a little improvement in benefits realized from consumption of the modified product (Garcia & Calantone, 2002). While Radical Innovation is an invention that destroys or supplants an existing business model. Radical Innovation blows up the existing system or process and replaces it with something entirely new. It will involve risk, resistance and Reward.

Marketing innovation and SCA

Sustainable competitive advantage SCA has become one of the important goals of Firms across the globe (Papula and Volná, 2013). The concept of SCA received wide significance when Porter and Advantage (1985) attempted a definition of SCA as strategies (cost leadership, differentiation and focus) relevant to achieving the long-term market advantage. In furtherance to the inroads of Porter, Barney (1991) attempted a definition of SCA as a long-term benefit resulting from unique value creation processes asynchronously with potential competitors that cannot be easily copied. Noci and Verganti (1999 as cited in Klewitz and Hansen, 2014) noted that it is important to consider Firms strategic sustainability behaviour from three behavioural patterns: reactive pattern, which defines how firms react to elements or stimuli from the external environment; anticipatory pattern which describes the activities of firms in achieving competitive advantage; and finally the innovation-based behavioural pattern which shows how the firm can adjust to innovations to achieve market advantage. The reactive and anticipatory sustainability strategies of a Firm prove to be the highest strategies that are likely to result in innovation because they are responses to the external environmental stimuli. Marketing-based strategies are well defined within a relationship context where the customer represents an important strategic part of the innovation process. Studies have found evidence that marketing innovation remains one of the important strategies to achieving SCA (Ren et al., 2015; Camisón and Villar-López, 2011). Other studies have noted that "a company can only achieve SCA when they provide unique and valuable marketing strategies that potential and dynamic rivals cannot imitate" (Amini et al., 2012, p. 193). Studies have emphasized that a firm must accumulate both resources and capabilities in order to achieve SCA (Abdelrahman, 2012; Ren et al., 2009). To some authors, the capacity of Firms to develop marketing innovation for SCA remains fundamental in the RBV (Rosenbusch et al., 2011). Marketing capability, according to Prahalad and Ramaswamy (2000 as cited in Ren et al., 2015), is the "integrative process in which a firm uses its tangible and intangible resources to understand market needs, enables products differentiation, enhances customer cooperation". Fundamentally, resources such as brand name, trade contacts, efficient processes (Barney, 2011), technical skills, knowledge, technology, relationships (Remeikiene and Startiene,

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Product Innovation and sustainable competitive advantage

A corporate is said to have sustainable competitive advantage when the existed or potential competitors cannot duplicate or it will cost much to imitate when following strategic resources based view, corporate resources must be valuably utilizing chances/ or neutralizing threats, this must be scarce, imperfect imitable and not biased to have equal changes for sustainable human resources, Dirisu, Joy, Iyiola and Ibidunni (2013). Innovative and competitive are able to affect competitive advantage. It needs to be taken into account that corporate ability to innovate causes competitive advantage. Considering that innovation may require resources to change an organization/business into competitive corporate, besides, corporate's resources are important to make innovation. Other important factors are such as consumer behavior may be considered as strength which can affect their behavior that can finally affect innovative behavior and innovation of a corporate entirely Filova (2015)

Tighter competition and more critical consumers in selecting a product demand corporate to be more innovative in producing their products, product success will lead to its market performance, this is where a product will be considered by consumers, whether the products have something difference and competitive compared to other products of other competitors Racela & Olympia (2014). Each corporate which compete in an industry must have competitive strategy, either explicitly or implicitly. Actually competitive Strategy is based on generating general formula about how a business will take a competition, what actually becomes is its goal, and what policy is needed to achieve the goal. Competitive strategy refers to a combination between final goal and instrument (policy) where a corporate affords to get there. Zaini, Hadiwidjojo, Rohman and Maskie (2014). The types of competitive advantage includes; the entry of new competitors, The threat of substitute product substitution, power of buyers and suppliers bid, and the competition among competitors.

Competitive advantage is a position where a company controls over a business arena, they have advantage that are easily imitated, making a company can seize and maintain market as leadership position. Some indicators use to measure competitive advantage are Product uniqueness, Product Quality and competitive price. The first indicator refers to product uniqueness of accompany

which combines arts and customers desires. Product quality refers quality of design from company Quality. While competitive price ,the last indicator, is an ability of company to adjust its product price to general price in the market, Dirizu et al (2013). In Long term competitive advantage, companies acquire sustainable competitive advantage through their ability in developing a set of main competence so that they can serve their targeted customers better than their competitors . The main competence refers to a set of unique competence which is developed in accompan in its main field such as quality, customer service, team coaching innovation, flexibility ,Responsiveness so that it can surpass its competitors, Srivastva ,Franklin & Martinette (2013). The existence of innovation or product Innovation is basically to fulfill market Request so that Innovative product is one of. things which can be used as competitive advantage for Companies. Product Innovation is a way to improve value as a concordance of Business corporate which can bring Companies to achieve competitive advantage and market leader ,Schreiber, Ermer, Figuerido,& Zeni (2016). The findings of the study showed that the sisher new product innovation ,the higher sustainable advantage which means that new product Innovation really has an effect on sustainable advantage of an organization, because it is not easily imitated. Then this is a competitive strategy to support the success of avendor for a long period of time, Kuntjoroadi & Safitry (2014)

Empirical Review

Perpetua S. W et al investigated the influence of technological innovation on competitive advantage in Kenya's telecommunication industry. The study applied the positivism philosophy and adopted the descriptive cross-sectional survey design. The target population comprised all 83 large licensed telecommunications service providers where census method was used. Both descriptive and inferential statistics were utilized in the analysis of data. Descriptive statistics comprised of frequencies, percentages, means, and standard deviations while inferential statistics used linear regression analysis which was employed in testing the hypothesis. Findings reveal a significant and positive influence of technological innovation on competitive advantage. Technological innovation explained the variations in competitive advantage. It is deduced from the findings that more technologically innovative telecommunication firms are likely to produce better products and services and consequently able to acquire more customers earning competitive advantage compared to less innovative telecommunication firms. The study presented notable implications on the policy framework, the strategic management practice, and theory implications in the telecommunication industry and beyond. At policy level, the Government of Kenya would benefit from the study by ensuring that policy makers and regulatory authorities in the telecommunication sector formulate policies that would promote technological innovation for enhancing competitive advantage. Managerial practitioners may consider institutionalizing innovation by creating the requisite direction and controls that enable the emergence of innovation and value creation for sustainable competitive advantage. The study findings' implications further extended, supported, and added value on the theory adopted by the study.

Daniel .Qand Isaac. M (2018) studied the relationship between market Innovation and Sustainable competitive advantages of manufacturing SME,s in Ghana. The purpose of the study was to establish how small- and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs)in water, beverage, soap, detergent, metal fabrication, wood and furniture manufacturing industries can sustain or improve their competitive advantage by integrating specific resource sand capabilities. The paper seeks to offer

an alternative framework “resource capability-based view (RCBV)” that provides a strategic marketing direction for SMEs regarding how innovative marketing practices and dynamic marketing capabilities integrate to create sustainable market advantage. Design/methodology/approach – This current paper employed a quantitative survey design with a positivist methodological research paradigm. The paper used a multi-stage stratified and simple random sampling technique to collect data from 591 manufacturing SMEs in Ghana. SMEs in water, beverage, soap, detergent, metal fabrication, wood and furniture manufacturing industries were sampled for the study. A structural equation model was employed to test the study hypotheses to arrive at the findings. Findings – The study found that product design and packaging innovations, promotion innovations, retail innovations and pricing innovations provide sustainable market advantage for water, beverage, detergent and metal fabrication SMEs. The paper also found that new product designs and packages are the major drivers of sustainable market advantage followed by innovative retail outlets. The paper further originated that integrating marketing competence (marketing resources and marketing capabilities) and innovative marketing activities provides a marginal improvement in competitive advantage. Physical resources may result in market advantage but integrating physical resources with dynamic marketing capabilities provides sufficient competitive sustainability in a competitive market. Practical implications – SMEs in water, beverage, soap, detergent, metal fabrication, wood and furniture manufacturing industries should priorities their key marketing resources and capabilities in product designs, promotion, pricing and retailing innovations in order to sustain market advantage. Old products should not be faded from the market but rather SME managers should employ innovative retail strategies such as eco-friendly advertising, product, re-branding and digital platforms (social network sites and websites), which are important to sustaining market performance. Government must develop targeted policies to bridge the information gap between SMEs and research institutions such as universities through regular subsidized entrepreneurial training and creation of semi-annual industry-academic fairs.

Nuryakin, U and Muhammadu, y (2018) examined the relationship between competitive advantage and product innovation. Key success of Batik SME’s marketing performance in Indonesia. The aims of this research was to contribute to literature and the conceptual model of the influence of marketing capabilities on competitive advantage and marketing performance, the relationship between market orientation on product innovation and marketing performance and providing empirical evidences on the importance of competitive advantage and product innovation to enhancing on superior marketing performance. The sample of this research was Batik SMEs in Central Java province. The analysis of the unit study was managers or owners of Batik SMEs. The number of samples examined was 200 samples. The purposive sampling technique was used to the data collection methods. The results of this study showed that marketing capability had insignificant effect on marketing performance. Marketing capability significantly effect on competitive advantage; market orientation had significant effect on marketing performance. Market orientation also gave significant effect on product innovation. Product innovation significantly effect on competitive advantage. Competitive advantage had significant effect on marketing performance.

Chinedu S.E Aghibe E.A (2016) examined the relationship between workforce diversity and organizational innovativeness of small and medium scale enterprises in Rivers state, Nigeria. The

survey design was adopted. A total population of four hundred and seventy-eight (478) owner managers were covered and a sample size of 217 was drawn from the population. The simple random sampling technique was adopted in this study. Copies of questionnaire were used in gathering data from respondents. The retrieved data was analyzed using the Pearson product moment correlation. It was observed from the analysis that diversity in terms of professional diversity and experience diversity have a significant and positive relationship with product innovation and market innovation. It was thus concluded that an enhancement in the level of professional and experience diversity will ultimately lead to increased level of product and market innovation in the organization. Hence, among others, it was recommended that the owners of the SMEs should be very conscious in employing workers from different professional background as this will help enhance the firm's innovativeness in the industry.

Ofoegbu W.C & Onuoha B.C (2014) studied on the relationship between dynamic capabilities and competitive advantage of fast foods restaurants in Rivers State, Nigeria. A cross-sectional survey research design was adopted, while primary data was collected via the administration of a structured questionnaire. Three hypotheses were formulated that, the dimensions of dynamic capabilities do not significantly correlate with the competitive advantage of the firms. However, the result of the analysis disproved the null hypotheses, meaning that dynamic capabilities of the firms significantly influence their levels of competitive advantage. It was recommended that managers of the firms should encourage quick response to environmental changes, by enhancing their employees' capability to detect, monitor and respond to competition. Also, employees should be exposed to current trends, technologies and business applications in the sector to enhance their competencies which will, in turn, improve the competitive advantage of the firm

Afolarin. M e t al (2019) investigated the relationship between new product development and competitive advantage in the food and beverages industry. Survey research design was adopted for the study. Sample size of 364 was selected. A structured questionnaire was used. Data generated were analysed using correlation analysis. Result revealed a significant relationship between new product development and competitive advantage. Study recommended that food and beverages companies marketing managers should introduce satisfactory new products to achieve competitive advantage.

Wuuryanti K.& Suriani, W.O, in his work on ;achieving sustainable competitive advantage through product innovation and market Driving .The population of merchant trader in Rabbit market his study 110traders in the district of Ngablak Magelang, Indonesia used a questionnaire as a source of data collection .In his analysis of data he used the structural equation model with partial least Square PLS program. The result of the study show that the effect of product Innovation on sustainable competitive advantage is positive significant, the effect of product innovation on market driving is positive significant, the effect off market driving on sustainable competitive advantage is positive significant. The implication of These study found that product innovation market driving significantly affect sustainable competitive advantage.

3.0 METHODOLOGY

This study adopts a cross-sectional design in that data on the two variables collected at a single point in time. This procedure ensures that cost is minimized and the right data generated for the study (Creswell, 2003; Levin, 2006). A structured questionnaire comprises 31 statement items was

developed to elicit a response from respondents. The respondents were asked to rank their organization's innovation, while they were asked to rank competitive advantage concerning how their organization has achieved an advantage over its competitors. According to Malhorta (2004) Likert scales "require respondents to indicate a degree of agreement or disagreement with each series of statements about specific attributes," and it "forces respondents to discriminate among the selected items." All items are ranked on a five-point Likert scale.

The participants of this study were drawn from fast food restaurants which are located within the University of Port Harcourt complex, and the adjoining Choba town. A total of 126 copies of the questionnaire were distributed to the Managers of the different restaurants. However, 40 were not returned. The 86 copies that were returned served as the sample size for this study .Innovations were operationalized using fifteen statement items describing its two dimensions (product innovation and market innovation). Product innovation was measured using five items, for example; we have the capabilities to effectively develop new knowledge or insights that have the potential to influence product development." .Five statement items was used to market innovation with such items as "New customers and need are often determined "All the items were taken from the work of Chinedu S.E & Aghigbe E,A (2016) and adapted. To measure the dependent variable – competitive advantage, five statement items were adopted from Porter (1998) with such item as "Our products and services are superior to the competition."

Content and face validity confirmed the validity of the measuring instrument. To ascertain the content validity of the instrument, all the items were sourced from extant literature. Specifically from the works of Porter (1998), and MacInerney-May (2012), in these studies the items were confirmed adequate and valid to describe the variables. Further steps were taken to ensure the validity of the instrument in the Nigerian working environment by seeking the opinion of scholars in the field. The instrument was reported reliable in the studies they were adopted from. Albeit, the reliability was further confirmed via the Cronbach Alpha values obtained from the analysis as shown in table 1 below. All the measures returned Cronbach alpha values which are above .7 as prescribed by Nunnaly and Bernstein (1994).

Table1: Reliability analysis of innovation and sustainable competitive advantage

<i>Construct</i>	<i>Number of items</i>	<i>Dimension</i>	<i>Cronbach alpha</i>
<i>Innovation</i>	<i>5</i>	<i>Product Innovation</i>	<i>.78</i>
	<i>5</i>	<i>Market Innovation</i>	<i>.78</i>
<i>Sustainable Competitive advantage</i>	<i>5</i>	<i>Sustainable Competitive advantage</i>	<i>.78</i>

4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

Data generated from the respondents were analyzed using the Kendall (1955) correlation coefficient statistical technique through the Statistical package for social sciences (SPSS) version 22. The Kendall's tau correlation coefficient is an effective technique used in the measuring of association between two variables. As noted by Hauke and Kossowski (2011) the most significant difference between Kendall's tau correlation coefficient is that its distribution has slightly better statistical properties, and that there is a direct interpretation of this statistics regarding probabilities of observing concordant and discordant pairs." The results obtained are shown in table 2 below:

Table2: Correlations between innovation and sustainable competitive advantage

		<i>Sustainable Competitive Advantage</i>
<i>Product Innovation</i>	<i>Correlation Coefficient</i>	<i>.814''</i>
	<i>Sig.(2-tailed)</i>	<i>.001 .</i>
	<i>N</i>	<i>86</i>
<i>Market Innovation</i>	<i>Correlation coefficient</i>	<i>.799''</i>
	<i>Sig.(2-tailed)</i>	<i>.000</i>
	<i>N</i>	<i>86</i>

The result showed that all the dimensions of innovation (product, market innovation) have a positive and significant correlation with Sustainable competitive advantage of the fast food restaurants, with product innovation tau of .814, $p = .001$, market innovation having .799, with $p = .000$.

Based on the results obtained above, the formulated hypotheses 1-2, which stated that the dimensions of innovation (product and market innovation) have a positive and significant relationship with the Sustainable competitive advantage of the firms were accepted.

Discussions

The study was concerned with the relationship between innovation and Sustainable competitive advantage of fast food Restaurants in Rivers State. Hypotheses were developed that, the dimensions of innovation positively correlate with a Sustainable competitive advantage of the firms. However, the result of the analysis affirmed the null. This means that the innovation of the firms significantly influence their level of Sustainable competitive advantage. This is in accordance with several studies (e.g. Barney, 1991; Aguirre, 2001; Ogunkoya, Hassan, & Shobayo, 2014). Barney (1991) studied the relationship between an organizational resource and competitive, and conclude that innovative capability as of a firm resource is positively correlated with the level of competitiveness of firms. Similarly, in a study of the Nigerian banking sector, Ogunkoya et al. (2014) found that competitiveness of banks in Nigeria relies upon their level of technological innovation capabilities. Hou and Chien (2010) asserted that "innovation as the ultimate source of competitive advantage is at the forefront of strategy research." Likewise, Wu (2010) [novation positively affect competitive advantage.

Despite the seemingly great significant role played by innovation in the enhancement of the Sustainable competitive advantage of firms, there have been conflicting reports regarding the effect of innovation on other organizational outcomes (Zahra et al., 2006; Barreto, 2010). Drnevich and Kriauciunas (2011) reported that innovation have an inverse relationship with firm performance.

Conclusion

This study concentrated on the relationship between innovation and sustainable competitive advantage, focusing on the fast foods Restaurants of the food industry. The analysis revealed that the dimensions of innovation are positively correlated with the sustainable competitive advantage of the firms. This finding was from several previous studies and has confirmed the strategic position of Sustainable competitive advantage in the strategic management literature. Based on these findings, the following conclusions were made: That, product innovation helps enhance firms' competitive advantage through the early detection of competition. Also, market innovation strengthened in an organization will be able to identify and acquire needed knowledge both internally and externally which will ultimately lead to sustainable competitive advantage. And drives the firm's competitive advantage by recognizing and transforming existing knowledge into new resources

Recommendations

The following recommendations are therefore put forward: The fast-food restaurants' managers should Managers should be innovative in their product and Market to attain sustainable competitive Advantages.

Old products should not be faded from the market but rather Fast food restaurant managers should employ innovative retail strategies such as eco-friendly advertising, product, re-branding and digital platforms (social network sites and websites), which are important to sustaining market performance

The Study also recommended that fast food restaurant managers should introduce satisfactory new products to achieve competitive advantage.\

Contribution to Knowledge

This study contributed to knowledge through its empirical findings, theoretical and conceptual framework as regards to innovation and sustainable competitive advantage in a fast food industry.

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