

Innovation and Customers Patronage in the Hospitality Industry: A Study of Selected Hotels in Anambra State

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ABSTRACT

This study examined innovation and customers patronage in the hospitality industry: A study of selected hotels in Anambra State. The study modelled variables like product innovation, process innovation, marketing innovation and organisational innovation to ascertain how they have influenced customers patronage. The study adopted a descriptive research design on a sample of 369 hotel customers. Data collected for the study were analyzed using ANOVA and regression technique of the ordinary least square. Findings showed that product innovation, process innovation, marketing innovation and organisational innovation has a significant influence on customers' patronage of hotels in Anambra state. Based on the findings of this study, the study recommends among others that hotels should develop a strategic plan and implementation strategy on product innovation, process innovation, marketing innovation and organizational innovation to enhance their patronage and also remain competitive in the market.

KEYWORDS: *Innovation, Customers Patronage, Hospitality Industry, Hotels*

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1. INTRODUCTION

The hospitality industry particularly, the hotels have in recent times attracted a lot of attention from researchers, government and stakeholders because of its growing significance in the global spectrum. The hospitality Industry as, a service provider plays an immense role in the development of an economy. Apart from its contribution to GDP, it also serves as a source of employment for many Nigerians such as cleaners, cooks, receptionists, security guards etc. (Poku, Zakari, & Soali, 2013). In addition, the hotel industry in Nigeria is one of the biggest sources of employment for its teaming youthful population and has played important role in terms of revenue generation to the owners and government and has also created employment for millions of people across the globe. (Otugo, Elumaro & Okoli, 2018).

Presently, because of its investment potential, a lot of investors have found their way into the industry for

the obvious economic benefits accruable from the business. The industry is one of the most important components of the global economy. However, there is a growing and vicious competition among operators in the industry that pits one hotel against the other in their effort to attract and retain customers. Consequently, to stand out and remain competitive in the face of an increasing number of operators in the industry, hoteliers are perceptibly becoming innovative to attract and retain customers' patronage. According to Karabulut (2015), innovative firms can improve their performances, defeat their competitors and provide value to their stakeholders. This implies that innovation is a strategic tool for firms to survive and gain competitive advantages in the global marketplace.

However, with the effect of urbanization and rapidly expanding business environment as a result of the

transformation of state capitals and their suburbs into megacities, there is a perceived influx of people into the states as tourists, business people, travellers and people who visit for one activity or the other, thus swelling the numbers of people that seek for accommodations in hotels. Again, the growing number of operators in the industry, operation cost, and increasing demand by customers for improved service delivery has put hoteliers in the hospitality industry on their toes to search for how best to attract and treat a customer for repeat patronage. Olughor (2015) contended that in such a chaotic business environment innovation becomes a driving force for a competitive scuffle. The situation becomes more vicious as the industry continues to witness the establishments of more hotels in their numbers every year. Anambra state has a good number of hotels and more fantastic hotels coming up now and then. The state has approximately over three hundred modern hotels with state of the art facilities all straggly for the patronage of the varying number of visitors that enter the State (Ministry of tourism and hospitality industry, see the appendix).

Research has shown that innovations provide firms a strategic orientation to overcome the problems they encounter while striving to achieve sustainable competitive advantage (Drucker, 1985; Njogu, 2012). As cited by Dzhandzhugazova, Blinova, Orlova and Romanova (2016), there is a wide range of factors affecting the application and development of innovation, i.e. consistent industry problems, specific mentality of consumers, cultural and national quirks of the customers enjoying hotel services, etc. Innovative trend in the hospitality industry is manifested through the ability to generate diverse innovations, which will ensure the successful development of a hotel, the large-scale application of new knowledge, as well as its combinations, generates new services, products and technologies. If a hotel is not involved in any innovation process, its performance will sooner or later diminish and its competitiveness will be lost (Zaitseva, 2013; Ilyenkova & Kuznetsov, 2009). All kinds, types of innovation and the levels of their manifestation create the innovation space. (Orlova, 2016) Innovation has been classified by scholars and researchers as product innovation, process innovation, marketing innovation, and organizational innovation. (OECD, 2005). This links innovation to performance: the ultimate reason is to improve firm performance, for example by increasing demand or reducing costs. In corroboration, extant literature has acknowledged that innovativeness has been touted as one of the fundamental instruments of growth strategies to enter

new markets, to increase the existing market share and to provide the company with a competitive edge (Nwosu, Awurum, Okoli, Mensah & Acquah, 2015). Therefore the growing importance of the hospitality industry in the country suggests the imperativeness and the need to investigate the nexus between innovation and customer patronage in the hospitality industry particularly hotels.

Statement of the Problem

This study was informed by the perceived fierce competition ravaging the hospitality industry in Nigeria and Anambra State in particular. It has been in recent times faced with the problem of striving for a sustainable competitive advantage. Consequently, in a business environment characterized by rapid and disruptive changes, a variety of customer requirements and international competition, organizations have to acquire new technological capabilities and explore new business processes in order to stay profitable in the long run. The study of innovation has therefore become a topical issue as firms are perceived to be more competitive with innovation. Therefore, an innovation that can meet customer requirements and introduce products or processes has become one of the most important issues for firms. It is often linked with creating a sustainable market around the introduction of a new and superior product or process. Presently, studies on innovation and customer's patronage are wild with varying literal perspectives. A large empirical literature, mainly data on Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) countries, documents a robust positive relationship between firm-level innovation and productivity (Cirera & Muzi, 2016). Yet very little is known about the extent and impact of firm-level innovation in developing countries like Nigeria and Anambra State in particular.

Furthermore, There is inconsistency in the extant literature reviewed, many researchers found positive effect between innovation and customers patronage (Nhepera, 2017; Zwingaina & Opusunjo, 2017; Karabulut, 2015). Despite the positive effect, some studies found a negative view (Dauda & Akingbade, 2011; Karlsson & Tavassal 2016); Ndesautwa & Kikula 2016). Though the outcome from the prior studies is inconclusive, none of this study on Hotel industry has been conducted in Anambra State; hence this has created a gap in the study. In order to address the deficiency in the hospitality industry literature, this study was aimed at investigating the relationship between innovation and customer's patronage in Anambra State.

Objectives of the Study

The main objective of this study was to examine the effect of innovation on customers' patronage in the hospitality industry. Specifically, the study sought to:

1. Ascertain the effect of product innovation on customers' patronage of hotels in Anambra State.
2. Investigate the influence of process innovation on customers' patronage of hotels in Anambra State.
3. Determine the influence of marketing innovation on customers' patronage of hotels in Anambra State.
4. Ascertain the effect of organizational innovation on customers' patronage of hotels in Anambra State.

Research Questions

The following research questions are formulated for the study and they are stated as follows:

1. To what extent has product innovation influenced customers' patronage of hotels in Anambra State?
2. To what extent has process innovation influenced customers' patronage of hotels in Anambra State?
3. To what extent has marketing innovation influenced customers' patronage of hotels in Anambra State?
4. To what extent has organizational innovation influenced customers' patronage of hotels in Anambra State?

Hypotheses of the Study

The following hypotheses are formulated and stated in their null form:

Hypothesis One

Ho₁: Product innovation has no significant influence on customers' patronage of hotels in Anambra State.

Hypothesis Two

Ho₂: Process innovation has no significant influence on customers' patronage of hotels in Anambra State.

Hypothesis Three

Ho₃: Marketing innovation has no significant influence on customers' patronage of hotels in Anambra State.

Hypothesis Four

Ho₄: Organizational innovation has no significant influence on customers' patronage of hotels in Anambra State.

2. METHODOLOGY

Research Design

This study adopted a descriptive survey research design that involves asking questions to respondents and the recording responses; the aim of this is to elicit answers to the questions needed to address the objective of the study (Okeke, Olise & Eze, 2010)

Population of the Study

The population of the study means the units of analyses in which research is interested in investigating or the aggregate of individual persons, objects or material for investigation (Okeke, Olise and Eze, 2008). The population of this study comprises customers of the selected hotels in Anambra State. Thus the population of this study is infinite (unknown) since the researcher cannot determine the exact number of customers' in the area of the study.

Sampling Procedure

This study utilized quota sampling techniques. The aim of using quota sampling is to ensure that respondents from various demographic characteristics are included in the sampling. Quota sampling involves the selection of potential respondents according to pre-specified quotas for either demographic features or specific behaviours through disproportionately (Okeke, Olise & Eze, 2012)

Sample Size Determinations

Since the population of this study was unknown, a pilot survey was conducted among twenty (20) respondents (customers from the selected hotels in three economic hubs) out of the twenty customers, twelve (12) responded positive (success rate) while eight (8) not agreeing with the variable of the interest (failure rate) i.e. (1-p). Thus, Cochran formulas for sample size determinations was adopted in this study

Which are stated below:
$$n = \frac{Z^2 \times P \times Q}{e^2}$$

Where: n = sample size to be determined

Z = standard normal deviation of which is 95% level of confidence level is 1.96

P = proportion of success rate which is 0.6 or 60%

Q = proportion of failure rate

Q = 1 – P which is 1 - 0.6 = 0.4 or 40%

E = error margin which is 5% or 0.05

$$n = \frac{1.96^2 \times 0.6 \times 0.4}{0.05^2} = 368.7$$

$$n = 369$$

Sources of Data

The researcher explores both Secondary and Primary sources of data. Secondary data were sourced from the published materials such as: journals, articles, seminar papers, discussion papers, annual reports, government publication/bulletins, internet materials and unpublished write-ups, etc. on the other hands primary data were sourced using questionnaire.

Research Instrument

structured questionnaire was the major instrument for data collection the questionnaire (instrument) comprises section A and section B. Section A sought information on demographic profile of the respondents while Section B consists of the constructs under the innovation components namely products, process, marketing and organisational innovation. A five (5) point likert summative scale, ranging from Strongly Agree (SA); Agree (A); Undecided (U); Disagree (D); and strongly Disagree (SD) was used in designing the questions. All the variables have number of questions on the questionnaire items.

Method of Data Analysis

Data collected were analyzed using linear regression model. The linear regression model of the Ordinary Least Square (OLS) approach was used to analyze the objectives to ascertain the influence and also determine the relationship between the independent variables and the dependent variable in the conceptualized model of the study. The use of Ordinary Least Square (OLS) is informed by the fact that under normality assumption for α_i , the Ordinary Least Square (OLS) estimator is normally distributed and is said to be the best, unbiased linear estimator (Gujarati and Porter, 2008). All the analyses were done using SPSS version 23.

Thus, the model of this study is stated as follows: The functional form of the model is

The model is implicitly specified as follows;

$$Y=f(x_1, x_2, x_3, \dots, x_n + e_i) \quad (1)$$

The model is explicitly specified as follows;

$$Y = \alpha + \beta_1 X_1 + \beta_2 X_2 + \beta_3 X_3 + \dots + \beta_k X_k + \varepsilon \quad (2)$$

Where:

α = intercept

Y = customers patronage towards patronizing the hotels (frequency of patronizing the hotels).

$$Y = \alpha + \beta_1 X_1 + \beta_2 X_2 + \beta_3 X_3 + \beta_4 X_4 + \varepsilon \quad (4)$$

The included variables X_1 - X_4 represent product innovation, process innovation, marketing innovation, and organizational innovation, $\beta_1 - \beta_4$ is the slope coefficients of the regressors, α represents the vertical intercept and ε the stochastic residual term designed to capture the effects of unspecified variables in the model, which is normally distributed with a mean value of zero.

Data Presentation

This analysis was employed to understand which among the explanatory variables are related to the dependent variable, and to explore the forms of these relationships. The equation is as follows: $Y = \alpha + \beta_1 X_1 + \beta_2 X_2 + \beta_3 X_3 + \beta_4 X_4 + \varepsilon$

Where

Y is consumer's patronage

α is the intercept term

X_1 - X_4 represent product innovation, process innovation, marketing innovation and organizational innovation

β_1 - β_4 represents the regression coefficients which indicate the amount of change in consumers' patronage towards patronizing the hotels given a unit change in the explanatory variables of the model

Below is the summary of the regression result which follows the procedure: summary of the model, ANOVA result and the coefficients.

3. PRESENTATION OF EMPIRICAL

Table 1: Analysis of Variance (ANOVA^a)

	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Regression	102.005	21	4.857	15.842	.000
Residual	251.995	333	.757		
Total	354.000	354			

a. Dependent Variable: Customer Patronage

b. Predictors : (Constant), Product, Process, Marketing and Organizational Innovation ANOVA as part of regression output provides the statistical test for the overall model fit in terms of the *F* ratio (Hair, Black, Babin and Anderson, 2010). Tabachnick and Fidell (2013) state that the overall inferential analysis in linear regression model of ordinary least square is to ascertain whether the sample of scores is drawn from a population in which the multiple R is zero. This is equivalent to the null hypotheses which stated that all correlations between dependent variable and explanatory variables are zero. From our ANOVA result, our *F* ratio is 15.842 which is significant at 5% level of significance because the sig value (.000) is less than 0.05, hence the null hypothesis Multiple R and the coefficients are zero is rejected. Based on this we proceed to interpret the coefficients and use them to validate the hypotheses.

Table 2: Model Summary^b

Multiple R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Apparent Prediction Error
.793	.781	.748	.412

a. Predictors (Constant), Product ,Process, Marketing and Organizational innovation

b. Dependent Variable: Customer Patronage

The table above shows the summary of our model and from this we see that Multiple R that is coefficient of multiple correlation is .793 which is a good fit. The coefficient of determination (R Square) is .781 while the Adjusted R Square is .748. This means that 74.8% of variations in customer patronage are accounted for by the explanatory variables. The next information is the ANOVA.

Table 3: Coefficients^a

	Standardized Coefficients		Df	T	Sig.
	Beta	Bootstrap (1000) Estimate of Std. Error			
(Constant)	.561	.158	4	3.488	.011
Product	.605	.114	5	12.592	.000
Process	.579	.175	4	8.511	.000
Marketing	.338	.164	4	5.127	.000
Organizational	.267	.125	5	4.993	.001
Dependent Variable: Customer Patronage					

Evaluation of Research Hypotheses

The hypotheses of our study were evaluated with the aid of the statistical tool of analysis such as t-statistics, f-statistics, R-squared, Adjusted R-squared.

T-statistics

This is the test for individual significance of variables and a variable is said to be significant when the t-statistics is greater than the $t_{0.05}$ critical value at 5% level of significance. Using 95% confidence interval and 21 degrees of freedom (22-1) will give you the value 2.080 from the statistical table. Since the t-statistics of product innovation (12.592), process innovation (8.511), marketing innovation (5.127) and organizational innovation (4.993) are higher than the one from the table (2.080), it can be concluded that product innovation, process innovation, marketing innovation and organizational innovation are significant in describing variations in enhancing customer patronage in hospitality industries.

F-statistics

This is the test for overall significance of variables and the measure of goodness of fit of the model. Using 95% confidence interval and 4, 21 degree of freedom gives the figure 2.82 from the statistical table. Since the f-statistics from our result is 15.842, which is higher than that from the table, we reject the null hypothesis and conclude that the joint influence of all included independent variables is significant and therefore cannot be ignored in policy options pertaining explaining variations in enhancing customer patronage in hospitality industries.

Cumulative correlation

The cumulative correlation between dependent variable and independent variables and all the independent variables is 0.793 indicating that the relationship between customer patronage and the explanatory variables used in the study is approximately 79% which is positive, strong and statistically significant. This implies that innovation have directly affected customer patronage of hospitality industry in the region.

R-squared

This is the explanatory power of the variables modelled. The coefficient of determination (R^2) from our result is 0.781. This implies that 78.1% of the variations in promoting customer patronage of hospitality industry are accounted for by the included explanatory variables of product innovation, process innovation, marketing innovation and organizational innovation.

Adjusted R-squared

This is the explanatory power of the insensitive number of variables modelled. The adjusted coefficient of determination (Adjusted R^2) is given as 0.748. This means that approximately 75% of the variations in promoting customer patronage are accounted for by the included variables, after the coefficient of determination have been adjusted to make it insensitive to the number of included variables.

Testing of Hypotheses

H₀₁: Product innovation has no significant influence on customers' patronage of hotels in Anambra state.

The product innovation variable has a positive coefficient of .605 and 't' value of 12.592 which is statistically significant at .000 below the .05 margin of error hence the null hypothesis one is rejected meaning that product innovation has a significant influence on customers' patronage of hotels in Anambra state.

H₀₂: Process innovation has no significant influence on customers' patronage of hotels in Anambra state.

Process innovation variable has a positive coefficient of .579 and 't' value of 8.511 which is statistically significant at .005 well below the .05 margin of error hence the null hypothesis two is rejected with the conclusion that process innovation has a significant influence on customers' patronage of hotels in Anambra state.

H₀₃: Marketing innovation has no significant influence on customers' patronage of hotels in Anambra state.

Marketing innovation variable also has a positive coefficient of .338 and 't' value of 5.127 which is statistically significant at .000 which is well below the .05 margin of error hence the null hypothesis three is also rejected and the conclusion is that marketing innovation has a significant influence on customers' patronage of hotels in Anambra state.

H₀₄: Organizational innovation has no significant influence on customers' patronage of hotels in Anambra state.

Organizational innovation has a positive coefficient of .267 and 't' value of 4.993 which is statistically significant at .000 well below the .05 margin of error hence the null hypothesis four is rejected with the conclusion that organizational innovation has a significant influence on customers' patronage of hotels in Anambra ,State.

Discussion of Findings

The main objective of the study is to examine the effect of innovation on customers' patronage in the hospitality industry: A study of selected hotels in Anambra, State. The study makes use of descriptive and inferential analysis to observe the significance relationship between innovation factors and customer patronage .The questionnaire was used in the descriptive approach and regression of ordinary least square analysis was use in the inferential approach. Regressions of ordinary least square models were adopted to identify the relationship between the dependent variable and the explanatory variables.

The study found that product innovation has positive and significant influence on promoting customer patronage in hospitality industry. This means that a

unit increase in product innovation would bring about an improved on customer patronage. This is in line with work of Egbetokun, Olamade, Siyanbola, Adeniyi and Irefin (2010) and Nwosu, Awurum, and Okoli (2015). Who revealed that Process innovation, Product innovation, organizational structure, employee development significantly affects the firm's performance. The study also observed that process innovation has positive and significant influence on promoting customer patronage in hospitality industry. This implies that a unit increase in process innovation will on average have impact in the hospitality industry. This is in consonance with the findings of Nwosu, Awurum, and Okoli (2015). Whose work revealed that Process innovation, Product innovation, organizational structure; employee development significantly affects the firm's performance.

The study also showed that marketing innovation has positive and significant influence on promoting customer patronage. This implies that a unit increase in innovation marketing of selected hotels in Anambra state will increase the chance of improved customer patronage in the region. This is inconsistency with the work of Dzhandzhugazova, Blinova, Orlova, and Romanova (2016) .Who found that the most common aspect of this marketing type is the impact on the guests through sounds or smells. The study also found that organizational innovation has positive and significant influence on enhancing customer patronage in hospitality industry. This means that units increase in organizational innovation will bring about more customer patronage in the hospitality industry. In the views of Mahmoud, Hinson, and Anim (2017). Unveiled that a service firm's ability to achieve customer's service is dependent on how telecommunication operators harness and deploy their service innovation activities.

According to, Nwosu, Awurum, and Okoli (2015) and Twaliwi and Isaac (2017) whose work shows that there is a significant relationship between product innovation, process innovation, marketing innovation and performance (sales volume) of SMEs in Gwagwalada, Abuja. The study also assert that the most significant innovation factor that influences customer patronage in hospitality industries are the product innovation and process innovation which are depicted by the high t-value (12.592) and (8.511) respectively. This is true of the findings of Nhepera, (2017).The study also discern that this is followed by marketing innovation (5.127) and organizational innovation (4.993). It is in line with the work of Twaliwi and Isaac (2017) and Juan and Maria-Jesus (2013). Among the other findings which showed that F-statistics of 15.842 shows overall significance of

the variables included in the model with the sig-value of statistically zero (0.000000). The R-square (0.781) depicts a good fit of the regression model. Thus, this is a good reflection of the true position that customer patronages in hospitality industry were explained and attained by product, process, marketing and organizational innovation.

4. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the analysis from the data collected, the following findings were drawn;

1. The study revealed that Product innovation has a significant influence on customers 'patronage of hotels in Anambra state.
2. The study revealed that process innovation has a significant influence on customers 'patronage of hotels in Anambra state.
3. The result shows that marketing innovation has a significant influence on customers 'patronage of hotels in Anambra state.
4. Finally the findings also revealed that organizational innovation has a significant influence on customers 'patronage of hotels in Anambra state.

The study recommends that:

1. Management of hotels industry should adopt new practices of innovation, proactive in developing something new in undertaking their businesses and also engage operators or managers that are innovative; this will enable the hotel industry to remain competitive in the face other fascinating hotels coming up.
2. Hotels industry should develop a strategic plan and implementation strategy on product innovation, process innovation, marketing innovation and organizational innovation to enhance the volume their patronages and also remain competitive in the market.
3. Organisation should focus on customers' needs by paying attention to the quality of products and services provides for the customers.
4. Industry should understand that customer's needs and expectations are not just limited to improving the quality. It should be known that pre-purchase and post-purchase processes influences customers' patronage with the received products or services.

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