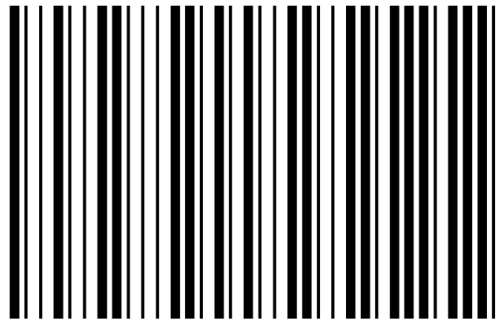


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ENTREPRENEURIAL INNOVATIVENESS AND MARKETING PERFORMANCE OF CONFECTIONERY ENTERPRISES IN SOUTH EAST, NIGERIA

Nwachukwu Chima Peter *PhD.*

Department of Marketing, Entrepreneurship & Procurement, Faculty of Management Sciences, Federal University, Otuoke, Bayelsa State

Uwaoma Ugochukwu G. A.

Department of Marketing, College of Management and Social Sciences, Rhema University, Aba, Abia State

Ahaiwe, Emmanuel O. *PhD.*

Department of Marketing, College of Management Sciences, Michael Okpara University of Agriculture, Umudike, Abia State

ABSTRACT

This study examined the effect of entrepreneurial innovativeness on marketing performance of confectionery enterprises in south east, Nigeria. The study adopted a cross-sectional unidirectional descriptive survey research design. The population of the study comprised confectionery enterprises in south east, Nigeria. Thus, the population of this study was infinite. Cochran (1975) formula was used to determine sample size of 385, while convenience sampling was used to select the sample units.. The data obtained from the field survey was presented with simple descriptive statistics such as tables, charts and percentages. All stated hypotheses in the study were tested with simple regression model using the SPSS software version 25.0. The study revealed that innovativeness in the studied confectionery enterprises in south east, Nigeria exerts statistically significant and positive effect on customer patronage. Also, innovativeness was found to be statistically significant and with a positive figure implying positive and significant evidence that proactiveness affects customer satisfaction and retention. The study recommended that the owners and managers of confectionery enterprises in south east, Nigeria should encourage innovation and creativity in their respective organizations. They should create such environments that facilitate creativity because nowadays' performance of organizations will depend on product innovation.

Keywords: *Innovativeness, customer patronage, customer satisfaction, customer retention*

INTRODUCTION

It is a widely held belief that small and medium-sized firms, sometimes referred to as SMEs, make a substantial contribution to the expansion of a nation's economy (Eniola, 2020; Hossain & Al-Sheq, 2019; Kropp, Lindsay & Shoham, 2018). The small and medium-sized

business sector is often referred to as the “engine of economic growth”. Several underdeveloped or developing countries like Nigeria make efforts to support and boost the development of the small and medium enterprise (SME) sector to achieve developmental goals and address the challenge of unemployment. In Nigeria, over 90% of businesses have been reported as SMEs, and these firms account for 48.47% of GDP and 84.02% of total employment (Nigeria Ministry of Budget & National planning, 2017; Eniola, 2020).

Innovativeness as one of the dimensions of entrepreneurial orientation is often associated with Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) than large enterprises (Zacca & Dayan, 2018). This is usually demonstrated in their quest to scout for market opportunities and utilize local raw materials to produce unique goods and services that meet broad market needs or demands. However, SMEs are often confronted with challenges of rapid change in market needs due to advancement in technology (Uchegbulam, Akinyele, & Ibidunni, 2015). This has attracted numerous scholarly interests and volumes of studies have been conducted. Covin & Miller (2014) described innovativeness as the preparedness of business organizations to come up with new ideas in terms of processes/procedures or products in the marketplace. In other words, Lomborg, Urbig, Stockmann, Marino, and Dickson (2017) referred to innovativeness as the propensity of business enterprises to inculcate the spirit of generating creative ideas or processes to introduce new products or services through experiment or feasibility study.

Strong marketing performance among SMEs can play a crucial role in boosting their competitiveness, resilience, effectiveness, sustainability and efficiency. Omhonria and Needorn (2022) posited that performance depict the degree at which a corporate entity achieves its missions as it relates to work outcomes, customers relationship, quality service and overall wellbeing. In measuring performance, several indicators have been used which includes constructs like profitability, competitiveness, employee satisfaction, operational efficiency, capacity utilization, goal achievement, increase patronage, customers satisfaction, efficiency, effectiveness and survival (Omhonria & Needorn, 2022, Chen, Jiang, Jia & Liu, 2021).

Previous researches have made attempts to investigate the relationships between entrepreneurial innovativeness and firm performance. Most of these studies have produced varying results. Moreover, relatively little research has been done on the aspects of entrepreneurial innovativeness to assess the performance of small firms like confectionery enterprises using customer patronage, customer satisfaction, and customer retention as proxies of performance (Wales, Sascha, Matthias, Christoph & Jeffrey, 2021; Putninš & Sauka, 2020; Gupta & Wales, 2017; Covin & Wales, 2012). There is therefore, the need to identify how entrepreneurial innovativeness affect the marketing performance of confectionery enterprises across the south east zone of Nigeria.

Objectives of the Study

The main objective of this study was to examine the effect of entrepreneurial innovativeness on marketing performance of confectionery enterprises in south east, Nigeria. Specifically, the aims were to;

- i. ascertain the effect of entrepreneurial innovativeness on customer patronage of confectionery enterprises in south east, Nigeria;

- ii. determine the effect of entrepreneurial innovativeness on customer satisfaction of confectionery enterprises in south east, Nigeria;
- iii. investigate the effect of entrepreneurial innovativeness on customer retention of confectionery enterprises in south east, Nigeria

Hypotheses Formulation

The following hypotheses were formulated and tested in the study

HO₁: There is no significant effect of entrepreneurial innovativeness on customer patronage of confectionery enterprises in south east, Nigeria

HO₂: Entrepreneurial innovativeness does not have any significant effect on customer satisfaction of confectionery enterprises in south east, Nigeria

HO₃: There is no significant effect of entrepreneurial innovativeness on customer retention of confectionery enterprises in south east, Nigeria.

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

Conceptual Review

Innovativeness

Innovativeness is about the willingness of firms to appease imaginative ideas to improve or provide a new product or service and to invest in new technology as well as research and development that can lead to new processes (Adeiza, Malek & Ismail, 2017). Innovativeness reflects innovation in the product market or technological innovation. Innovativeness can also lead to strategic renovations or improving the existing products, processes or systems (Adisa, Adeoye & Okunbanjo, 2016).

Short, Zachary, & Ketchen (2018) highlighted that innovation is often described as the cornerstone of entrepreneurship. It represents research and innovation to launch new products, services, technologies, and processes and develop a new system (Anlesinya, Eshun, & Bonuedi, 2015; Al-Homoud, 2018). Innovation represents a substantial force behind two of the most important entrepreneurial functions of businesses, namely strategic innovation and business investment. Thus, innovation is the decisive dimension of entrepreneurial orientation (Yildiz, 2014; Arshi, 2016).

Innovativeness has a vital role in a firm's success and in achieving improved performance because markets change at a fast pace. Innovativeness can be a key to these changes because it can be a source of progress and growth for the company (Dess & Lumpkin, 2005). Innovation enhances future development because of its vital role in developing the product, technical expertise and transferring and sharing of knowledge (Amin, 2015).

SMEs' Performance

Different firm performance estimations have been connected in earlier business research. In any case, the lion's share of these examinations did not give any support to the choice of measures utilized (Murphy, Trailer & Hill, 1996). Performance is an organization's capacity to handle all four systemic processes (inputs, outputs, transformations, and feedback) in order to achieve their goals (Alzuod, 2014). Measuring business performance is pivotal for business management, and it is usually associated with the average rate of return maintained over a period of years (Barney, 2002; Mackey, Jackey & Barney, 2007).

Customer Patronage

In the context of marketing, patronage is an exchange process where one receives a service or goods in exchange for money or other considerations. Customer patronage represents the degree to which buying units concentrate purchases over time to a given product or brand based on positive reinforcement and expressed through repetitive buying behaviour (Nyakwebwa, Wesonga, & Bosire, 2015). Customer patronage is therefore, the purchase of goods and service from a vendor by a customer or a business. Firms that crave sustained patronage in today's highly competitive business environment are required to have the satisfaction of their customers as a primary focus.

Behavioural scientists propose that customer patronage results from a trial that gets reinforced through satisfaction, and leads to repeat purchase; while cognitive psychologists contend that customer patronage builds through mental processes, based on the belief that consumers engage in extensive problem-solving behaviour involving services (Nyakwebwa, Wesonga & Bosire, 2015). Hence, marketers strive to determine customers' preference with a view to adapt or generate value that elicits customer patronage (Njite, Njoroge, Parsa, Parsa & van der Rest, 2015).

Customer Satisfaction

The word of satisfaction means the satisfaction that a customer feels after a communication with a company. As a result, satisfaction is a determinant for customer loyalty. According to Jones and Sasser (1995), customer satisfaction does not often lead to customer loyalty. It is assumed that the amount of customer satisfaction is not as same as customer loyalty and satisfaction just covers 37% of loyalty. Although each successful marketer attempts to make their customers satisfied, it is not the only goal.

Companies cannot ignore other goal such as competitive advantage. Customer satisfaction has a lot of advantages and high level of customer satisfaction leads to more loyalty of customers. Long term benefit depends on having good customers and not just only attracting new customers. Satisfied customers try to distribute positive oral advertisement which can reduce the cost of attracting new customers.

Customer Retention

Customer retention can be defined as how small businesses or organizations are able to sustain their existing customers based on creating cordial relations with those who patronize the company's product, (Kotler, 2008). Customer retention is a strategically driven approach based on customer behaviour. Customer retention signifies customer's inclinations, identification, commitment, trust and willingness to stick with a brand, (Rather, Tehseen, Itoo & Hussain, 2019). It also implies a continuing commitment on the part of customers to maintain a long-lasting relationship with a brand, (Cook, 2002).

Customer retention is very fundamental because the cost of acquiring new customers can be five times tedious than that of retaining existing and current ones; also, retained customers pay less attention to the frolics of competing brands, they are less price-sensitive and spread favourable word-of-mouth, (Ama, 2019). It is easier and less expensive to retain customers than to acquire them. The probability of selling to an existing customer is at least 40% more likely than converting someone who has never bought from you before. The probability of selling to an existing customer is 60% - 70% while the probability of selling to a new prospect is 5%-20% (Patel, 2018).

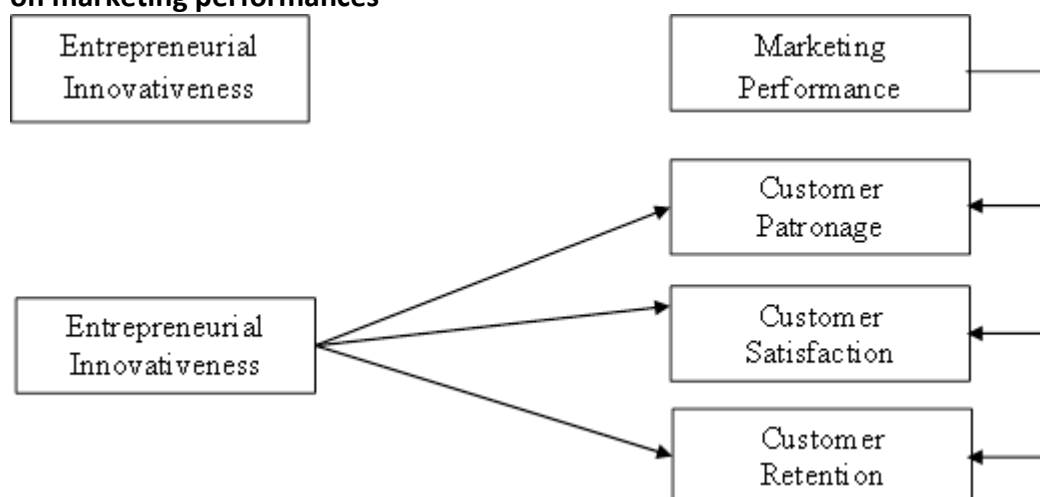
Entrepreneurial Innovativeness and SMEs' Performance

Innovativeness is a central component of entrepreneurial orientation (Deakins & Freel, 2012). Lumpkin and Dess (1996) credited Schumpeter with being amongst the first to emphasize the role of innovation in the entrepreneurial process, in the form of a process of creative destruction, by which wealth was created when existing market structures were disrupted by the introduction of new goods or services, reallocating resources from existing firms to new firms and growth.

Authors such as Al-Swidi and Hossain (2012), Zehir, Can and Karaboga (2015), and Falahat, Tehseen and van Horne (2018) examined the relationship between entrepreneurial innovativeness and SME' performance. Their findings reveal that entrepreneurial innovativeness plays a significant role in attaining SMEs' performance. Furthermore, Agyapong et al. (2017) supported the stance that entrepreneurial innovativeness. Supporting these stances, Avlonitis and Salavou (2007) conclude that innovativeness pertaining to reduction in customers' waiting time, effort, and purchasing risk significantly contributes to SMEs' performance.

Further findings from Avlonitis and Salavou (2007) claimed a non-significant relationship between innovativeness (new product development) and SMEs' performance but limited to performance as regards customers' purchase intention. In a similar view, Kmiecik, Michna and Meczynska (2012) concluded a significant positive relationship between innovativeness and SMEs' performance indicators such as innovation activities, innovation investments, and internal communications. Innovativeness has a positive impact on organizational performance in the service sector (Lechner & Gudmundsson, 2014).

Fig 1: Operational Conceptual framework of the effect of entrepreneurial innovativeness on marketing performances



Theoretical Framework

Schumpeter's Innovation Theory

Schumpeter (1942) through his innovation theory has highlighted the role of innovation in entrepreneurial process. Schumpeter (1942) described a process of "creative destruction" where wealth creation occurs through disruption of existing market structures due to the introduction of new goods and/or services that cause resources to move away from existing firms to new ones thus allowing the growth of the new firms. Accordingly, Schumpeter called innovation the specific tool of entrepreneurs, the means by which

entrepreneurs exploit change as an opportunity for a different business or a different service.

Schumpeter (1942) stressed the role of entrepreneurs as primary agents effecting creative destruction, and emphasized to the entrepreneurs the need to search purposefully for the sources of innovation, the changes and their symptoms that indicate opportunities for successful innovation; as well as their need to know and to apply the principles of successful innovation. This Schumpeterian manner of thinking has been carried forward by successive scholars and researchers (Drucker 1985; Lumpkin & Dess, 1996; Shane, Covered & Westhead, 1991).

Resource-Based View Theory

The resource-based view (RBV) theory propounded by Barney (1991) looks at how a firm's resources can be used to sustain the firm in light of competitive advantages. RBV identifies firms' resources like tangible, such as physical assets, and intangible resources, such as knowledge, skills, and competencies; the latter are also the attributes that drive profitability, growth, and ultimately, the firm's survival (Agyapong & Attram, 2019).

Firms' managers are expected to analyse resources, select strategies and resources, and then appraise capabilities to achieve competitive advantages against other firms. EO in RBV entails the activities, processes, behaviours, and decision-making styles that have become critical elements in achieving the sustainable competitive advantages of SMEs (Kraus et al., 2011); this has implications for the selection, usage, management, and disposition of firms' financial assets (Nunooandoh & Darfor, 2015).

Empirical Studies

Abshar and Septrizola (2023) studied the Influence of entrepreneurial orientation and market orientation on SMEs business performance in Padang. The population of the study consisted solely of Padang-based SMEs. 100 samples of SMEs in Padang City were collected. Using a standardized questionnaire, respondents were asked to rate their entrepreneurial orientation and market orientation in an effort to enhance the success of their firm. Data were analysed using SPSS version 21 and multiple regression analysis. The findings revealed that entrepreneurial orientation has a significant positive influence on business performance variables.

Adibe, Akam and Onuorah (2023) examined the effect of entrepreneurial orientation on performance of selected small and medium scale enterprises (SMEs) in Southeast Nigeria. The study was anchored on Resources Based View theory and Entrepreneurial Orientation Theory. A descriptive survey design was carried out using the sampled managers and business owners in the selected SMEs. The study population was 2093 while the sample size was 404 arrived at using Borg and Gall (1973) formula. Data were collected using self-administered questionnaire. Descriptive statistics (distribution tables, mean and standard deviation) and inferential statistics (Pearson correlation co-efficient and regression analysis) were used in the study. The study revealed that there is a significant positive relationship between entrepreneurial orientation dimensions (entrepreneurial risk-taking, entrepreneurial proactiveness, entrepreneurial competitive aggressiveness, entrepreneurial innovation, entrepreneurial autonomy on SMEs performance in Southeast, Nigeria.

Sorama and Joensuu-Salo (2023) tested how different dimensions of entrepreneurial orientation (EO) affect the growth and performance of SMEs. In addition, a scale for

measuring EO was tested in the SME context. The data ($n = 260$) was gathered from Finnish SMEs, and analyzed with structural equation modelling. The results showed that EO has two dimensions in SMEs: innovativeness and risk-taking. Results show that innovativeness has a significant and positive effect on SME performance.

Nwachukwu and Onuoha (2022) examined the relationship between entrepreneurial orientation and corporate performance of small and medium enterprises (SMEs) in Lagos State, Nigeria. A cross-sectional survey was used and a population of 2596 SMEs in Lagos State was covered. A sample size of 310 was drawn from the population and the simple random sampling was adopted. Data were gathered using copies of questionnaire. The Spearman Rank Order Correlation was used in testing the hypotheses so as to ascertain the relationship between entrepreneurial orientation and corporate performance. The result indicated a significant relationship between the dimensions of entrepreneurial orientation (innovativeness and risk-taking) with the measures of corporate performance (profitability and operational efficiency).

Oghenevwegba and Iwegbue (2022) evaluated the impact of entrepreneurial orientation in the performance of small and medium enterprises (SMEs) in Asaba, Delta State. Entrepreneurial Orientation was measured with Proactiveness (PRO), Innovations (INVT), Risk Taking Propensity (RTP) and Competitive Aggressiveness (CA) in relation to the PSME in Nigeria. A total of 100 copies of the questionnaire were administered but 87 were returned and properly filled. Descriptive statistics, correlation matrix and multiple regression analysis were used in the study with the aid of SPSS version 23. Findings obtained from the analysis, revealed that PRO, INVT, RTP and CA have significant relationship with PSME in Nigeria.

Ologbenla (2022) carried out a study on the topic “Entrepreneurial orientation and performance control attributes among SMEs in Osun State Nigeria”. It investigated the relationship between performance control attributes and the entrepreneurial orientation of SME owners in Osun State. A sample of 340 SMEs was selected across the states using both multistage and random sampling techniques. Copies of the questionnaire were used to collect data from the respondents and were analysed using quantitative analysis. Descriptive and inferential statistics results showed that ordinal regression and spearman rank correlation results were more suitable for the analysis. The result showed that all the three variables of entrepreneurial orientation namely innovativeness, proactiveness, and risk-taking were very important for an SME owner to develop a good performance control attribute.

Kuta, Abdulwaheed and Enesi (2022) investigated the effects of entrepreneurial orientation and customer orientation on bakeries’ performance. Stratified sampling technique was employed to study a total of 105 out of 130 SMEs that specialized in baking of bread and other flour products. The owner-manager 5-point likert scale questionnaire was designed and served both online and offline to address the survey questions. Partial least squares structural equation modeling (PLS-SEM) technique was employed to assess the measurement and structural models indicators. The results of the study showed that entrepreneurial orientation dimensions (innovativeness, proactiveness, risk taking, autonomy and competitive aggressiveness) have significant effect on bakery performance.

Meekaewkunchorn, Szczepańska-Woszczyna, Muangmee, Kassakorn, and Khalid (2021) studied entrepreneurial orientation and SME performance: The mediating role of

learning orientation. The study was based on a survey, utilizing a sample of 379 SMEs managers in the manufacturing sector of Thailand. The data collected were analyzed using the partial least square structural equation modeling (PLS-SEM) technique. The results of the proposed model proved that innovativeness, proactiveness, and risk-taking ability of SMEs have a significant positive influence on the learning orientation and business strategy of firms.

METHODOLOGY

Research Design

The study adopted a descriptive survey research design. The researcher applied this design to evaluate the effect of entrepreneurial orientation on performance of confectionery enterprises in south east of Nigeria. A survey approach was appropriate because the population of the study was scattered in different states of the south east region of Nigeria.

Population and Sample size of the Study

The population of this study comprised confectionery enterprises in south east, Nigeria. The population of this study was infinite.

Due to the constraints that are associated with in studying unknown population, samples were taken using applicable sampling techniques. The sample size of the study was calculated according to Cochran (1975) formula which is used in social sciences in determining the sample size, calculated as follows:

$$n = \frac{Z^2 \frac{pq}{d^2}}$$

Where, n = sample size

z = the value of standard variate at a given confidence level and to be worked out from table showing area under normal curve.

p = sample proportion

d = given precision rate or acceptable error

Where $z = 1.96$ (i.e. at 95% confidence interval, value obtained of standard normal table)

p = 0.5 (sample proportion)

q = $1-p = 1-0.5 = 0.5$

d = 5% or 0.05 (precision rate or acceptable error)

z = 1.96 (desired confidence level is 95% and value obtained from table)

p = 0.5 (sample proportion).

Q = 0.5 {(1-0.5) i.e. 1-p}

d = 5% or 0.05 (precision rate or acceptable error)

$$n = \frac{(1.96)^2 \cdot (0.5) \cdot (0.5)}{(0.05)^2}$$

$$n = \frac{0.9604}{0.0025}$$

$$n = 385 \text{ Respondents}$$

The study further applied stratified random sampling (nh) with equal allocation for the five (5) south east States of Nigeria.

$$n = \frac{385}{5}$$

$$n = 77 \text{ respondents for each state}$$

Sampling Procedure

Convenience sampling which is a non-probability sampling method was used in this study. Convenience sampling was employed because it offered the researcher the opportunity to select and interview those who were willing to provide the relevant information needed for the study. The researcher approached these respondents in their enterprises where copies of the questionnaire were administered to them and retrieved after completion. The researcher used six (6) research assistants in the questionnaire administration process in order to cover the research area. 77 respondents were purposively selected from each of the five (5) States of the south east region of Nigeria. This was to ensure uniformity in the sample size across the states studied. Based on a total sample size of 385, copies of the questionnaire were administered.

Sources of Data and Method of Collection

Data for this study were obtained basically from the primary sources of data. Primary data are sourced through survey. For this study, it involved mainly the use of the questionnaire. A structured questionnaire served as the major instrument of data collection in the study. The questionnaire contained both open and close-ended questions and 5 point Likert scale ratings ranging from Strongly agree (SA) 5 points, Agree (A) 4 points, Neutral (N) 3 points, Strongly disagree (SD) 2 points, Disagree (D) 1 point. Care was taken in constructing the questionnaire and the researcher ensured that the questionnaire captured all the aspects of the study variables.

The questionnaire contained questions that elicited information on the socio-economic characteristics of the respondents like age, sex, marital status, education background, etc. It further contained questions on entrepreneurial innovativeness which was used in the study and marketing performance which were developed to answer the study's research questions on a five-point Likert scale and for the test of the hypotheses. All the questionnaire statement items were operationalized from existing body of literature.

Validity and Reliability of Research Instrument

The researcher used content validity to test research instrument's validity which was ascertained through experts' reviews (that is, experts in the field of entrepreneurship including the research supervisor and a statistician) to ensure that the set questions were enough to collect the intended responses.

For reliability, firstly, test-retest was done on the research instrument after which, the Cronbach's coefficient alpha was used to determine the internal reliability of the research instrument. This was done by subjecting the statement items to internal consistency technique to assess their reliability. Collected pre-testing data were entered into SPSS version 25.0 data analysis software to generate instruments internal consistency data. Cronbach's alpha that is greater than 0.7 was considered adequate and reliable for a given data collection instrument, according to Nunnally (1978).

Table 1: Reliability Analysis of the Variables

S/N	Variables	Number of Items	Cronbach Alpha Score
1.	Innovativeness	5	0.942
2.	Customer Patronage	5	0.927
3.	Customer Satisfaction	5	0.898
4.	Customer Retention	5	0.944

Source: SPSS Output (2024)

Data Analysis Techniques

The data obtained from the field survey were presented with simple descriptive statistics such as tables, charts and percentages. All stated hypotheses in the study were tested with simple regression model using the SPSS software version 25.0. This depended on the normality of the distribution.

DATA PRESENTATION AND ANALYSES

Presentation of Data

Data Allocation

The table below shows the allocation of questionnaire and response rate gathered.

Table 2: Distribution and retrieval of questionnaire shared among respondents of the studied confectionery enterprises in south east of Nigeria

S/N	State	Copies of Questionnaire Shared	Copies of Retrieved Questionnaire	Copies of Unretrieved Questionnaire
1	Abia State	77	74	3
2	Imo State	77	75	2
3	Enugu State	77	73	4
4	Ebonyi State	77	73	4
5	Anambra State	77	75	2
Total		385	370	15

Source: Field Survey, 2024.

The table above shows that a total of 385 (three hundred and eighty-five) copies of questionnaire were administered to the management and staff of the studied confectionery enterprises in south east of Nigeria. Out of this number, three hundred and seventy (370) copies were retrieved and the remaining fifteen (15) copies were not returned.

Entrepreneurial Innovativeness

Table 3: Entrepreneurial innovativeness

Item Statistics					
	<u>Statement items</u>	<u>Mean</u>	<u>S.D</u>	<u>N</u>	<u>Remark</u>
INN1	The firm gives special attention to research and development	4.55	.499	370	Accepted
INN2	The firm tries out new and creative ways in the methods of business operation	4.37	.678	370	Accepted
INN3	Employees are free to spark new ideas	4.32	.727	370	Accepted
INN4	Employees are not punished even if their new ideas do not work	4.33	.799	370	Accepted
INN5	Importance is given to innovative ideas regarding products and services	3.94	1.006	370	Accepted
	Grand Mean	21.51			

Source: Field Survey (2024)

Table 3 shows the mean scores and standard deviations of the responses of the studied confectionery enterprises in south east of Nigeria on entrepreneurial innovativeness. The criterion for mean score acceptance was 3.0. The table above showed that INN1 had a mean score of 4.55, INN2 had a mean score of 4.37. Also, INN3 had a mean score of 4.32, INN4 had a mean score of 4.33 while INN5 had a mean score of 3.94. Based on the criteria for mean acceptance, the above statement items were positively correlated to entrepreneurial innovativeness and further shows that innovativeness exists in the studied confectionery enterprises in south east of Nigeria.

Customer Patronage

Table 4: Customer Patronage

Item Statistics					
	<u>Statement item</u>	<u>Mean</u>	<u>S.D</u>	<u>N</u>	<u>Remark</u>
PAT1	The firm experiences increased customer patronage by being proactive	4.30	.680	370	Accepted
PAT2	The firm often cuts prices in order to increase patronage	3.57	1.184	370	Accepted
PAT3	The firm lays strong emphasis on innovation in order to achieve better patronage	3.83	1.230	370	Accepted
PAT4	Introduction of new products by the firm enhances customer patronage	4.41	.493	370	Accepted
PAT5	The firm enjoys constant patronage from customers from new products offered to market.	3.80	1.024	370	Accepted
Grand Mean		19.91			

Source: Field Survey (2024)

Table 4 shows the mean scores and standard deviations of the responses of the studied confectionery enterprises in south east of Nigeria on customer patronage. The criterion for mean score acceptance was 3.0. The table above showed that PAT1 had a mean score of 4.30, PAT2 had a mean score of 3.57. Also, PAT3 had a mean score of 3.83, PAT4 had a mean score of 4.41 while PAT5 had a mean score of 3.80. Based on the criteria for mean acceptance, the above statement items were positively correlated to customer patronage and further shows that customer patronage is positive in the studied confectionery enterprises in south east of Nigeria.

Customer Satisfaction

Table 5: Frequency distribution showing responses on customer satisfaction

Item Statistics					
	<u>Statement item</u>	<u>Mean</u>	<u>S.D</u>	<u>N</u>	<u>Remark</u>
SAT1	The firm continually monitors customers to find ways to satisfy them	4.61	.582	370	Accepted
SAT2	The firm's strategy for customer satisfaction is based on its entrepreneurial orientation	4.21	.611	370	Accepted
SAT3	The implementation of innovative ideas helps the firm to achieve customer satisfaction	4.44	.502	370	Accepted
SAT4	The firm constantly introduces new products in order to satisfy its customers and also to retain them	4.27	.623	370	Accepted
SAT5	The firm's objective of increased marketing performance is driven primarily by customer satisfaction	4.36	.569	370	Accepted
Grand Mean		21.89			

Source: Field Survey (2024)

Table 5 shows the mean scores and standard deviations of the responses of the studied confectionery enterprises in south east of Nigeria on customer satisfaction. The criterion for mean score acceptance was 3.0. The table above showed that SAT1 had a mean score of 4.61, SAT2 had a mean score of 4.21. Also, SAT3 had a mean score of 4.44, SAT4 had a mean score of 4.27 while SAT5 had a mean score of 4.36. Based on the criteria for mean acceptance, the above statement items were positively correlated to customer satisfaction and further shows that customer satisfaction is positive in the studied confectionery enterprises in south east of Nigeria.

Customer Retention

Table 6: Customer Retention

		Item Statistics			
	Statement items	Mean	S.D	N	Remark
RET1	All our entrepreneurial activities are geared towards customer satisfaction and retention	4.59	.493	370	Accepted
RET2	Our entrepreneurial orientation has given our firm competitive advantage and increased customer retention	3.14	1.491	370	Accepted
RET3	The enterprise lays strong emphasis on entrepreneurial orientation in order to retain and attract customers	3.51	1.435	370	Accepted
RET4	Introduction of new features to our products enhances customer retention	3.83	1.503	370	Accepted
RET5	The enterprise continually handles customers' complaints in order to retain them	3.67	1.448	370	Accepted
Grand Mean		18.74			

Source: Field Survey (2024)

Table 6 shows the mean scores and standard deviations of the responses of the studied confectionery enterprises in south east of Nigeria on customer retention. The criterion for mean score acceptance was 3.0. The table above showed that RET1 had a mean score of 4.59, RET2 had a mean score of 4.14. Also, RET3 had a mean score of 3.51, RET4 had a mean score of 3.83 while RET5 had a mean score of 3.67. Based on the criteria for mean acceptance, the above statement items were positively correlated to customer retention and further shows that customer retention is positively pursued in the studied confectionery enterprises in south east of Nigeria.

Test of Hypotheses

HO₁: There is no significant effect of entrepreneurial innovativeness on customer patronage of confectionery enterprises in south east, Nigeria

Table 7: Regression analysis showing the effect of entrepreneurial innovativeness on customer patronage of confectionery enterprises in south east, Nigeria

Coefficients ^a					
		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	
<u>Model</u>		<u>B</u>	<u>Std. Error</u>	<u>Beta</u>	<u>t</u> <u>Sig.</u>
1	(Constant)	.577	.233		2.474 .014
	Innovativeness	1.086	.051	.743	21.319 .000
	R	.743			
	R ²	.553			
	Adjusted R ²	.551			
	F-Statistics	454.480			

Dependent Variable: Customer Patronage

Source: Field Survey, 2024

Table 7 shows the effect of effect of entrepreneurial innovativeness on customer patronage of confectionery enterprises in south east, Nigeria. From the simple regression analysis table, entrepreneurial innovativeness was found to be statistically significant at 1% and with a positive figure. This implies that an increase in entrepreneurial innovativeness will result to an increase in customer patronage of the studied confectionery enterprises in south east, Nigeria. The R square value of 0.553 shows that 55% of the variation observed in customer patronage of the studied confectionery enterprises in south east, Nigeria was accounted for by entrepreneurial innovativeness. The other 45% were due to some other factors that were not included in the model. Similarly, the f-statistics value of 454.480 indicates that the model specification was correct while significant at 1%. Therefore, the null hypothesis (H_{01}) which states that there is no effect of entrepreneurial innovativeness on customer patronage of confectionery enterprises in south east, Nigeria is hereby rejected and the alternate hypothesis accepted. It can thus be concluded that there is significant effect of entrepreneurial innovativeness on customer patronage of confectionery enterprises in south east, Nigeria.

HO₂: Entrepreneurial innovativeness does not have any significant effect on customer satisfaction of confectionery enterprises in south east, Nigeria

Table 8: Simple regression analysis showing the effect of entrepreneurial innovativeness on customer satisfaction of confectionery enterprises in south east, Nigeria

Coefficients ^a					
		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	
Model		B	Std. Error	Beta	T
1	(Constant)	2.149	.342		6.283
	Innovativeness	1.341	.075	.683	17.944
	R	.683			
	R ²	.467			
	Adjusted R ²	.465			
	F-Statistics	321.981			

Dependent Variable: Customer Satisfaction

Source: Field Survey, 2024

Simple regression result in Table 8 shows the effect of entrepreneurial innovativeness on customer satisfaction of confectionery enterprises in south east, Nigeria. From the simple regression analysis table, entrepreneurial innovativeness was found to be statistically significant at the 1% probability level with P-Value = 0.000 and with a positive figure. This implies that an increase in entrepreneurial innovativeness in the studied confectionery enterprises in south east, Nigeria will result to an increase in customer satisfaction. The coefficient of determination (r^2) value of 0.467 shows that 47% of the variation in customer satisfaction of the studied confectionery enterprises in south east, Nigeria was accounted for by entrepreneurial innovativeness. The other 53% were due to some other factors that were not included in the model. Similarly, the f-statistics value of 321.981 indicates that the model specification was correct while significant at 1%. The estimated regression line shows that customer satisfaction of confectionery enterprises in south east, Nigeria is a linear function of entrepreneurial innovativeness. This assertion is at the 99% confidence level. Therefore, the null hypothesis (H_{02}) which states that entrepreneurial innovativeness does not have any significant effect on customer satisfaction of confectionery enterprises in south east, Nigeria is rejected and the alternate hypothesis accepted. Thus, it can be

concluded that entrepreneurial innovativeness has significant and positive effect on customer satisfaction of confectionery enterprises in south east, Nigeria.

HO₃: There is no significant effect of entrepreneurial innovativeness on customer retention of confectionery enterprises in south east, Nigeria.

Table 9: Simple regression analysis showing the effect of entrepreneurial innovativeness on customer retention of confectionery enterprises in south east, Nigeria

Coefficients ^a					
		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	
Model		B	Std. Error	Beta	t
1	(Constant)	.997	.135		7.366
	Innovativeness	.796	.030	.814	26.908
	R	.814			
	R ²	.663			
	Adjusted R ²	.662			
	F-Statistics	724.017			

Dependent Variable: Customer Retention

Source: Field Survey, 2024

Simple regression result in Table 9 shows the effect of entrepreneurial innovativeness on customer retention of confectionery enterprises in south east, Nigeria. From the simple regression analysis table, entrepreneurial innovativeness was found to be statistically significant at the 1% probability level with P-Value = 0.000 and with a positive figure. This implies that an increase in entrepreneurial innovativeness by the studied confectionery enterprises in south east, Nigeria will result to an increase in customer retention. The coefficient of determination (r^2) value of 0.663 shows that 66% of the variation observed in customer retention of the studied confectionery enterprises in south east, Nigeria was accounted for by entrepreneurial innovativeness. The other 34% were due to some other factors that were not included in the model. Similarly, the f-statistics value of 724.017 indicates that the model specification was correct while significant at 1%. The estimated regression line shows that customer retention of confectionery enterprises in south east, Nigeria is a linear function of entrepreneurial innovativeness. This assertion is at the 99% confidence level. Therefore, the null hypothesis (HO₃) which states that there is no significant effect of entrepreneurial innovativeness on customer retention of confectionery enterprises in south east, Nigeria is rejected and the alternate hypothesis accepted. Thus, it can be concluded that there is significant and positive effect of entrepreneurial innovativeness on customer retention of confectionery enterprises in south east, Nigeria.

DISCUSSION OF RESULTS

The essence of the study was to evaluate and examine entrepreneurial innovativeness and its effect on the marketing performance of confectionery enterprises in south east, Nigeria. The study revealed that entrepreneurial innovativeness was positive and a significant factor that affects customer patronage, satisfaction and retention of the studied confectionery enterprises in south east, Nigeria. Previous empirical works agree with the above findings. Ibrahim and Abu (2020) looked at the influence of entrepreneurial orientation on firms' performance and revealed that innovativeness is positively and significantly influences patronage. Similarly, Rezaei and Ortt (2018) while studying how EO influences firm performance indicated that innovativeness and performance are positively related. Olowofeso and Ale (2019) investigated the effect of entrepreneurial orientation-

dimensions which includes innovativeness on performance. Their findings amongst others revealed that innovativeness was positively and significantly related to the performance of the hospitality industry. Kosa *et al.* (2018) found that innovativeness positively influences ventures performance. Arisi-Nwugballa *et al.* (2016) also agreed to the finding as their study found that innovativeness was relevant to, at least, customer satisfaction of MSMEs in Ebonyi State.

CONCLUSION

This study assessed the effect of entrepreneurial innovativeness on the marketing performance of confectionery enterprises in south east, Nigeria. The results obtained in this empirical research allow us to conclude that the higher the entrepreneurial innovativeness of the studied confectionery enterprises in south east, Nigeria, the higher the level of performance they will have in terms customer patronage, customer satisfaction and customer retention.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings of this study, the following recommendations were made;

- i. Owners and managers of confectionery enterprises in south east, Nigeria should encourage innovation and creativity in their respective organizations. They should create such environments that facilitate creativity because nowadays' performance of organizations will depend on product innovation.
- ii. Confectionery enterprises in south east, Nigeria should allocate the majority of their time to weighing up and studying the creative ideas of employees, discussing the ideas that are innovative and initiating actions for their implementation.

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