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Abstract

This study investigated the relationship between product innovation strategies and marketing performance of confectionery firms in Rivers State. The study adopted the descriptive survey research design. Target population of the study comprises 32 confectionery firms' in Rivers State. A population of 128 managers was considered for the study. Four managers from each of the firms, ranging from the general manager, sales manager, procurement manager and distributor manager are studied. The Taro Yamen sample size determination formula was used to determine the sample size of the study. The sample size of the study consisted 97 respondents from the confectionery firms'. The data for the study was collected from the primary and secondary sources. The primary data was obtained through the questionnaire. The content and face was adopted for validation of instrument. The test-retest method was used to determine the reliability of the instrument and the result stood at 0.88 which greater than the benchmark. The study employed the Spearman Rank-order Correlation with the aid of Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS). The empirical result revealed that product customization was found to be a significant predictor of marketing performance of confectionery firms' in Rivers State. Customers' service was also reported to be a significant predictor of marketing performance of confectionery firms' in Rivers State. Based on these findings, the study concluded that product innovation strategies significantly relate to marketing performance of confectionery firms' in Rivers State. The study recommends that confectionery firms' in Rivers State should regularly interact with their customers to know their needs in order to customize products that will fit their needs and those that are experiencing low rate of marketing performance should provide products that will give customers a pleasant and memorable experience as this would increase sales growth to their brand.

Keywords: Product, Innovation, Strategies, marketing performance and confectionary

Introduction

Background of the Study

Innovation is not only the organization path to success in business environment, but also an essential condition for maintaining it in a highly competitive market (Olaru et al., 2013). Improve marketing performance in such economic downturns requires a better understanding of the consumer in the market.

Understanding the consumer base and influence of values on purchasing decisions enables firms to adapt better strategies. To win through more sophisticated marketing strategies and better understanding of target consumer groups and their needs. Product and services also changes consumer expectations. Once classified, a visual map can be used to represent the various

classifications and that would make it easier to identify and also determine specific differences. Each group or cluster can have its own specific characteristics, making it almost unique (Dunbar et al., 2022).

Product innovation continuance and the persistence of any company depends on its capacities to maintain its market place and face the competition which spreads rapidly and aggressively with the globalization and the expansion of the new technologies, and while product reflects the company's image its whole success depends also on the product success through realizing (compliance) consumers' desires and needs, and developing new products. Product innovation is the development of new products, making changes in the current product design or using new techniques and means in the current production methods, in other words, it focuses on existing markets for existing products, differentiating through features and functions that current offers do not have. We can look at the product innovation from two sides; internal side where it depends on knowledge, capacities, resources and the technologies used in the company, however; from the external side product innovation focuses on the consumers' needs and the owners' expectations. Looking at the terms used in product innovation field one can conclude that there has been a change of meanings over time. Although "design" originates from the "making of a drawing" it is obvious that the meaning of design" has been enriched over time. In parallel to "design" the term "product development" has evolved describing the generation of products, processes or services.

Statement of the Problem

Confectioneries economy role in Rivers State, Nigeria will not be over

emphasis. As it were confectionery firms' can only maintain its position when appropriate strategies including product customization and customers' relationship management strategies are utilized at the right time desert a positive marketing performance. The lack of adequate sales volume and market share growth has gradually become an issue in confectionery firms. Many researchers' have investigated product innovation and firm's performance hence the need for this study. Armstrong and Greene, (2007), stated that firm whose market share is below a certain level will not be profitable and may cease operation anytime soon.

Objectives of the Study

The aim of the study is to investigate, the relationship between product innovation strategies and marketing performance of confectioneries in Rivers State; the specific objectives are to:

- i. determine extent of relationship between product customization and sales volume of confectionery firms' in Rivers State.
- ii. examine extent of relationship between product customization and market share growth of confectionery firms' in Rivers State.
- iii. investigate extent of relationship between customers' service and sales volume of confectionery firms' in Rivers State.
- iv. determine extent of relationship between customers' service and market share of confectionery firms' in Rivers State.

Research Questions

The following research questions were raise to address the objectives of the study:

- i. what extent does product customization relates with sales

- volume of confectionery firms' in Rivers State.
- ii. what extent does product customization relates with market share of confectionery firms' in Rivers State.
 - iii. what extent does customers' services relates with sales volume of confectionery firms' in Rivers State.
 - iv. what extent does customers' service relates with market share of confectionery firms' in Rivers State.

Research Hypotheses

The following hypotheses were used to guide the study

- H0₁: there is no relationship between product customization and sales volume of confectionery firms' in Rivers State.
- H0₂: there is no relationship between product customization and market share of confectionery firms' in Rivers State.
- H0₃: there is no relationship between customers' service and sales volume of confectionery firms' in Rivers State.
- H0₄: there is no relationship between customers' service and market share of confectionery firms' in Rivers State.

Literature Review

Concept of Product Innovation Strategies

Production innovation, involves the introduction and application of new ideas, practices, and technologies that not only improve operational efficiency but also ensure that the business can survive in the long term in an environmentally and socially friendly. Innovation does not only refer to the creation of new products but also to the improvement of operational, marketing, and management processes that can generate the efficiency and differentiation needed to survive in a dynamic market (Vasi et al., 2024; Ragazou et al., 2022). Product innovation is

the development and market introduction of a new redesigned or substantially improved goods or services. It is the introduction of a good or services that is new or significantly improved with respect to its characteristics or intended uses. Product innovation means introducing new product/services or bringing significant improvement in the existing products and services (Polder et al., 2018). Product innovation develops new product, services or improve existing ones to meet the needs of an ever-evolving market. This innovation process not only aims to improve product quality but also to create added value that can provide a competitive advantage in the market (Zhang, 2022; Avelar et al., 2024).

Product innovation means introducing the new products/services or brining significant improvement in the existing products/services. For product innovation, the product must either be a new product or significantly improved with respect to its features, intended use, software, user-friendly or components and material. The first digital camera and microprocessors are the examples of the product innovation Product innovation can only be effective when the product is either new or significantly improved with respect to its features, intended use, software, components and material. (Polder el tal., 2018). Product Innovation creates new ideas or improved products that meet customer needs and stay ahead of competitors that are in same line of products or business. It involves analysis, designing, developing, and launching new products or enhancing existing one's for competitive advantage or business growth (Agbi, 2024).

Product Customization

Product innovation is reflected by the functional performance (Olson et al., 2021).

Product innovation is one of the key factors that contribute to success of an organization. New product development and product innovation is an important strategy for increasing the market share and performance of the business. The studies showed that new product development has positive impact on the performance of the firm (Ettlie & Reza, 2023). In highly competitive environment of today, firms have to develop new products according to customer's needs (Olson et al., 2021). Product customization is concern with tailoring services or products towards meeting customer needs or preferences. It involves adjusting production processes to offer personalized products without compromising efficiency or increasing costs (Agbi, 2024).

Customers' Service

The difference between customers' expectations for service performance prior to the service encounter and their perceptions of the service received (Oliver, 2020). Service quality is antecedent to customer satisfaction (Parasuraman et al., 2022). Perceived service quality is a result of individual service encounter between the service provider and the customer, during which the customer evaluates quality and develops satisfaction or dissatisfaction (Bitner et al., 2023). The pre-purchase expectations' formed by the customers are influenced by intrinsic and extrinsic cues related to a particular experience of previous experiences and other related information sources (Gould-Williams, 2021). It is difficult to reassure the customers regarding the functional performance of the environmentally friendly products due to the past failure of many of these products (Davis, 2022). Customers' perceived service quality varies from one to another due to different aspects of service quality. Service quality is judged by the customers, and it depends on

how the customers approach the service, because the starting point of using a service is the basis of their perceptions.

Quality of a service is achieved when a service provider satisfies or exceeds their consumers expected service, which consequently leads to customer satisfaction. Christiaan, (2022). In his model, the overall perception of service quality is presented as the final result of an evaluation process, in which the consumer compared their expectations of quality and their experiences of quality. Customer service means the ability of a service provider to satisfy customer in an efficient manner through which he can better the performance of the hospitality sector 'quality' is an important element for the success of business. It is because of the realization of its positive link with profits, brand image and customer satisfaction (Ramya et al., 2019). Customer Service support provides customers with services before, during, and after a purchase. It includes addressing disputes, resolving issues, and ensuring customer satisfaction to build retention and Loyalty (Agbi, 2024).

Concept of Marketing Performance

According to Sari et al., (2021) suggest that marketing performance includes measuring the achievement of marketing goals, such as sales growth, customer satisfaction, and customer loyalty. Based on these various views, it can be concluded that marketing performance is a crucial aspect in assessing the effectiveness and contribution of marketing strategies to company goals. This performance reflects the real results of marketing efforts and is the basis for evaluating the sustainability of business activities. Ade & Tamrin, (2021), emphasized that marketing performance is a common measuring tool used to assess the effectiveness of a company's strategy. Firms

tend to make important decisions. That reflects a trade-off between emphasizing either effectiveness or efficiency in Setting of their marketing goals and allocation of resources (Walker & Ruekert, 2020). Agustina et al., (2021) stated that marketing performance is an evaluative activity used to measure the success of products that have been produced and marketed by the company. Marketing Performance is the effectiveness of marketing initiatives in achieving business goals, such as increasing driving sales, brand awareness and enhancing customer engagement. It's often measured through metrics like return on investment (ROI), customer acquisition costs, and customer loyalty rates (Agbi, 2024).

Sales Volume

Cross, (2012), states that sales growth is a crucial competitive factor because it demonstrates to investor that the firm is doing well as against its competitors. When the investor looks at the firm, try to concentrate more on sales figure to know whether the firm's sales is growing consistently from year to year. The reason is for the investor to determine how well the firm is doing in the market particularly against its competitors. If the investor discovers that the sales of the firm are growing consistently, they may decide to buy it share and make profit through dividend. Sales volume is key indicator of market competitiveness. It indicates that the firm is doing well in the market. Sales Volume deals with quantity of products sold within a specific period. It's a key performance indicator (KPI) that measures marketing success and market demand (Agbi, 2024).

Market Share Growth

Growth particularly the revenue growth rate, are pivotal in assessing an

organization's ability to expand its operations and enhance its financial performance over time. The revenue growth rate measures the percentage increase in sales over a specific period, providing a clear indicator of the company's ability to generate additional income through its existing products and services or through the introduction of new offerings (El baki & Zammar, 2024). El baki and Zammar, (2024), suggest that Growth is more than just a financial metric; it is a reflection of the company's strategic success in meeting market demand, optimizing pricing strategies, and effectively positioning itself against competitors. A consistent increase in revenue growth suggests that the company is successfully attracting and retaining customers, enhancing its market presence, and capitalizing on emerging opportunities. Market share is the percentage of total revenues in an industry held by a single company. It represents a company's market dominance and ability to recruit and keep customers in comparison to its competitors. In the shipping sector, market share is calculated by comparing the number of passengers who choose to utilize a specific ship service to the total number of passengers.

Having a big market share indicates that the company is successful in satisfying the needs of its customers and is recognized as an industry leader. To gain market share, businesses must focus on service innovation, effective marketing techniques, enhancing service quality, and modifying competitive rates (Tias & Rusliyawati, 2023). El baki & Zammar, (2024), view that Market Share is crucial indicators that assess a company's standing and competitive performance within its industry and market. These metrics provide a clear picture of a company's influence and success by measuring the

percentage of total sales in an industry that is generated by the company. A higher market share indicates a strong position in the market, signifying that the company is not only capturing a significant portion of the market but also effectively outpacing its competitors.

The indicators or dimensions contained in the Market Share variable include: 1) Sales: overall sales generated by the company in relation to overall sales in the industry; 2) Number of clients: The number of clients using the service in relation to the total possible customers in the market; 3) Market Growth: The percentage of growth in firm sales in comparison to the entire industry growth; 4) New Product Acceptance: The pace and extent to which new products or services are accepted by customers; and 5) Competitor Analysis: A comparison of the company's market share, innovation, and marketing approach to those of significant competitors (Setyowati et al., 2019). Market Share Growth increase in a company's portion of total sales or revenue over time. It indicates a company's competitive position and success in expanding its customer base (Agbi, 2024).

Theoretical Review

The study anchored on product innovation theory. The product innovation theory was developed by Rogers, (2003), states that diffusion of Innovations theory was based on how new products and ideas are adopted and spread through a population. The theory suggests that a new product or idea goes through five stages as it is adopted by a market: knowledge, persuasion, decision, implementation, and confirmation. Understanding these stages can help marketers to better understand how to bring new products to market and make them successful.

Relevance of the Theory

The innovation diffusion theory supports the fact that Confectionery firms can use technology to innovate their products. The theory explains that modern technology enables confectionery firms to initiate a series of product innovations which will improve their market competitiveness. With these innovative products, the firms can satisfy their customers, retain them for a longer term and attract new customers to the firm.

Empirical Review

Tamunomiebi, (2019), examined product innovation and organizational performance of insurance companies in Port Harcourt Nigeria. The study adopted survey research design, with a population of 55 Insurance companies registered with National Insurance Commission of Nigeria. Since the population was relatively small hence the entire population was used as a census. Primary data were collected using self-administered questionnaire distributed to the insurance companies. The data generated from the questionnaire were subjected to statistical analysis and the hypotheses were tested using the Spearman Rank Order Correlation Coefficient with the aid of Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS). The findings revealed that there is a positive association between product innovation and each of the measures of organizational performance (increased profitability and increased market share) of the studied companies. Hence, the study concluded that a statistically significant and positive association exists between product innovation and organizational performance of insurance firms in Rivers State. Hence the study recommended that strong policies on product innovation should put in place so as

to enhance the quality of service delivery in improving organizational performance.

Jimoh, Kee and Odebunmi (2020), examined whether service quality is impacted by talent management. 275 workers at the National Institute for Labour Studies made up the study's population. However, the study purposefully sent 250 questionnaires with the goal of analyzing the data gathered using structural equation modeling analysis. The analysis's findings supported the following: (1) Service quality is impacted by talent attraction; (2) service quality is impacted by talent retention; (3) service quality is impacted by reward strategy; (4) the relationship between service quality and talent attraction is mediated by reward strategy; and (5) the relationship between service quality and reward strategy is mediated by reward strategy. The findings suggest that attracting and keeping talent results to high service quality, and that an incentive plan can improve a weak correlation between the variables.

Hamilton-Ibama, (2021), examined Product Innovation as it relates with Sales Performance of Consumers' Goods Manufacturing Firms in Rivers State. Product Innovation represents the independent variable and its dimensions are incremental innovation and radical innovation. Sales growth and repeat purchase were used as measures of Sales Performance. 316 copies of the questionnaire were retrieved and subjected to data analysis. Hypotheses were tested using the Spearman Rank Order Correlation Coefficient with the aid of SPSS Version 21. The results revealed that there is a strong positive relationship between product innovation and sales performance. It was concluded that there exists a strong significant positive relationship between product innovation and sales performance.

The study recommends that consumer goods manufacturing firms in Rivers State should prioritize product innovation to attract more customers' in order to increase and improve their sales performance.

Sadek, (2022), examines the connection between employee engagement and talent management strategies at five-star hotels in Sharm El-Sheikh, one of Egypt's most popular tourist destinations. 299 out of the 384 employees in the human resource departments who completed the questionnaires that were distributed were eligible to participate in the field study. The data was analyzed using multiple linear regression and correlation using SPSS software (version 22). The results of this study demonstrated a strong and positive relationships between employee engagement and talent management. Talent management strategies also have an impact on guest satisfaction and loyalty, which can only be attained by hotels with highly skilled and talented staff members whose abilities are evident in the services they offer.

Ibukun, (2023), study Influence of Strategic Product Innovation on Performance of Women-Owned SMEs in Port Harcourt, Nigeria. The study was to explore the influence of strategic product innovation on the performance of women-owned SMEs in Port Harcourt, Nigeria. Descriptive research design was utilized in this study. The target population consisted of 200 women-owned SMEs operating in Port Harcourt, Nigeria. A stratified random sampling technique was used to select a sample of 100 SMEs. Data was collected through semi structured questionnaires and analyzed using SPSS version 27. Pearson correlation and linear regression analyses were conducted to determine the relationship between strategic product innovation and SME performance.

The results indicated that strategic product innovation had a positive and significant influence on the performance of women-owned SMEs in Port Harcourt. The null hypothesis was rejected, suggesting that there was a significant relationship between strategic product innovation and SME performance. Based on the study findings, it was recommended that SMEs should allocate resources to conduct thorough market research and analyses customer needs and preferences. This will enable them to identify gaps in the market, tailor their products and services to specific customer segments, and ultimately enhance their performance. SMEs should also embrace a proactive approach to product development and innovation, constantly seeking new opportunities and refining their offerings based on customer feedback and market trends.

Gap in Empirical Review

The empirical studies reviewed three gaps were noted. It was observed that numerous of studies have been investigated on product innovation in sales volume but none of these studies relates to the concept of marketing performance, predictor variables and unit of analysis.

Base on the empirical literature review, it has showed that there is no linking product innovation and marketing performance. Hence: confectionery firms'

Therefore, there is a literature gap the researcher investigated the influence of product innovation strategies and marketing performance of confectionery firms in Rivers State.

Methodology

This study adopted the descriptive survey research design. Target population of the study comprises 32 confectioneries firms' in Rivers State. A population of 128 managers was considered for the study. Four managers

from each of the firms', ranging from the general manager, sales manager, procurement manager and distributor manager are studied. The Taro Yamen sample size determination formula was used to determine the sample size of the study. The sample size of the study consisted 97 respondents from the confectioneries firms'. The data for the study was collected from the primary and secondary sources. The primary data was obtained through the questionnaires to the respondents (managers') of confectionery firms' while the secondary data was collected from published materials, articles, journals and others relevant materials.

The instrument used for data collection for the study was structured questionnaire. The questionnaire was designed for data collection for the study variables such as product innovation strategies (customers' service, product customization) and measures of marketing performance (sales volume, market share growth) the section consisted of 12 items of the item 1-3 sought information on customers' service; item 4-6 information on product customization; item 7-9 information on sales volume; item 10-12 information on market share growth. The questionnaire items constructs were structured on 5 liker scale, which range from strongly agreed, Agreed and disagreed, strongly disagreed and Neutral. The content and face was adopted for validation of instrument. The test-retest method was used to determine the reliability of the instrument and the result stood at 0.88 which greater than the benchmark. The study employed the Spearman Rank-order Correlation Coefficient and regression analysis for testing the various hypotheses formulated for the study with the aid of the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) Version 23.0.

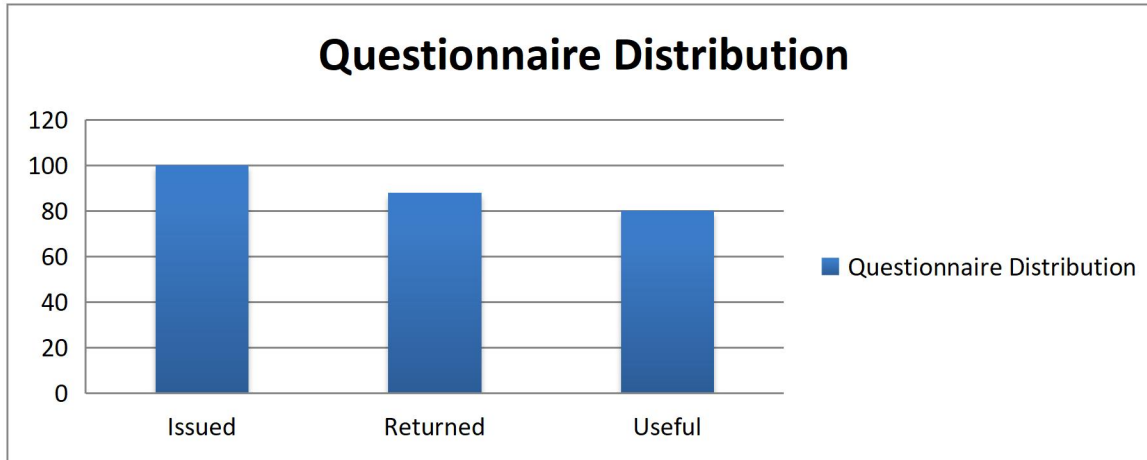


Results and Analysis

Questionnaire Distribution and Retrieval

No. of Questionnaire Issued	No. Questionnaire Returned	Useful Questionnaire	%
97	88	80	88

Source; survey Data, 2024.



The table and the figure above show the questionnaire distribution and retrieval. The researcher issued 100 copies of questionnaire and from consistent visit, retrieved 88, 80 copies were useful. This represent 88% response rate and it was considered significant for the study.

Demographic Analyses

The demographic variables of the respondents were presented and analyzed in this section. The demographic variables include age and gender of the respondents.

Gender	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent
Valid MALE	57	71	71
FEMALE	23	29	29
Total	80	100.0	100.0

Source: field survey, 2024.

The table above shows the gender distribution of the respondents used for the study. 57 respondents which represent 71 % of the population were male while the

remaining 23 respondents which represent 29 % of the population were female.

Bivariate Analyses

Here, the variables were analyzed using Spearman Rank-order Correlation Coefficient.

Hypotheses 1

H0₁: there is no relationship between product customization and sales volume of confectionery firms' in Rivers State.

product customization sales volume

Spearman (rho)	product customization	Correlation Coefficient	1.000	.633**
		Sig. (2 tailed)	.	.001
		N	80	80
	sales volume	Correlation Coefficient	.633**	1.000
		Sig. (2 tailed)	.001	.
		N	80	80

**Correlation is significant at 0.01 levels (2 tailed)

*Correlation is significant at 0.05 levels (2 tailed)

Source: SPSS-Generated Output

Table 1.1 presents the result of bivariate analyses carried out between product customization and sales volume of confectionery firms' in Rivers State. The result shows that product customization has a strong positive correlation with sales volume of confectionery (rho = .633**) and this correlation is significant at 0.01 level as

indicated by the symbol **. As a result of this, we then reject the null hypotheses (Ho₁) and accept the alternate hypothesis which states that there is strong positive and significant relationship between product customization and sales volume of confectionery firms' in Rivers State.

Hypotheses 2

H0₂: there is no relationship between product customization and market share of confectionery firms' in Rivers State.

			product customization	market share growth
Spearman (rho)	product customization	Correlation Coefficient	1.000	.681**
		Sig. (2 tailed)	.	.001
		N	80	80
	market share growth	Correlation Coefficient	.681**	1.000
		Sig. (2 tailed)	.001	.
		N	80	80

**Correlation is significant at 0.01 levels (2 tailed)

*Correlation is significant at 0.05 levels (2 tailed)

Source: SPSS-Generated Output

The result of bivariate analyses carried out between product customization and market share growth of confectionery firms' in Rivers State. The result indicates that product customization is strongly and positively correlated to market share growth of confectionery (rho = .681**) and the symbol ** signifies that this correlation is significant

at 0.01 level. Based on this result, the null hypotheses (Ho₂) is rejected and the alternate hypothesis is accepted. This means that we then accept that there is strong positive and significant relationship between product customization and market share growth of confectionery firms in Rivers State.

Hypotheses 3

H0₃: there is no relationship between customers’ service and sales volume of confectionery in Rivers State.

			customers’ service	sales volume
Spearman (rho)	customers’ service	Correlation Coefficient	1.000	.838**
		Sig. (2 tailed)	.	.001
		N	80	80
	sales volume	Correlation Coefficient	.838**	1.000
		Sig. (2 tailed)	.001	.
		N	80	80

**Correlation is significant at 0.01 levels (2 tailed)

*Correlation is significant at 0.05 levels (2 tailed)

Source: SPSS-Generated Output

The result of bivariate analyses carried out between customers’ service and sales volume of confectionery firms’ in Rivers State. The result shows a very strong and positive relationship between customers’ service and sales volume of confectionery (rho = .838**) and this correlation is significant at 0.01 level

as indicated by the symbol **. Consequently, the null hypotheses (H0₃) is rejected and the alternate hypothesis is accepted. This means that we then accept that there is a very strong positive and significant relationship between customers’ service and sales volume of confectionery firms’ in Rivers State.

Hypotheses 4

H0₄: there is no relationship between customer’s service and market share of confectionery in firms’ Rivers State.

			customers’ service	market share growth
Spearman (rho)	customers’ service	Correlation Coefficient	1.000	.811**
		Sig. (2 tailed)	.	.001
		N	80	80
	market share growth	Correlation Coefficient	.811**	1.000
		Sig. (2 tailed)	.001	.
		N	80	80

**Correlation is significant at 0.01 levels (2 tailed)

*Correlation is significant at 0.05 levels (2 tailed)

Source: SPSS-Generated Output

The result of bivariate analyses carried out between customers’ service and market share growth of confectionery firms’ in Rivers State. The result shows a very strong and positive correlation between customers’ service and market share growth of confectionery (rho = .811**) and the symbol ** indicates that this correlation is significant

at 0.01 level. Based on this result, the null hypotheses (H0₄) is rejected and the alternate hypotheses is accepted. This means that we then accept that there is a very strong positive and significant relationship between customers’ service and market share growth of confectionery firms’ in Rivers State.

Summary of Findings

- i. There is a relationship between product customization and sales volume of confectionery firms in Rivers State.
- ii. There is a relationship between product customization and market share of confectionery firms in Rivers State.
- iii. There is a relationship between customers' service and sales volume of confectionery firms' in Rivers State.
- iv. There is a relationship between customer's service and market share of confectionery firms in Rivers State.

Discussion of Findings

There is a relationship between product customization and marketing performance of confectionery firms in Rivers State. This finding is tandem with the study of Ali et al. (2018) who stated that customized services improve performance by progressively meeting diverse customer needs. Additionally, Imhoffet., al., (2001) consider customized services as a firm's ability to identify and treat its consumers through personal information, targeted banner advertisements, bill specials, or other personal transactions. Also, the analysis revealed that there is a relationship between customers' service and marketing performance of confectionery firms in Rivers State. This finding is tandem with the study of Srivastava et., al., (2001) proposed that high customer satisfaction contributes to cash flow acceleration, an improvement in cash flow levels, and a decrease in the risk of cash flow. Gruca and Rego (2005), increased customer service leads to increased cash flow and a reduction in the risk associated with such cash flows.

Conclusion

From the foregoing analysis, it is evident that product innovation strategies showed a significant relationship with marketing performance of confectionery firms' in Rivers State. The empirical results of this study confirmed this as product customization was found to be a significant predictor of marketing performance of confectionery firms' in Rivers State. Customers' service was also reported to be a significant predictor of marketing performance of confectionery firms' in Rivers State. Based on these findings, the study concluded that product innovation strategies significantly relate to marketing performance of confectionery firms' in Rivers State.

Recommendations

The following recommendations are provided for the study:

1. That, confectionery firms' in Rivers State should regularly interact with their customers to know their needs in order to customize products that will fit their needs.
2. That, confectionery firms' in Rivers State particularly those that are experiencing low rate of marketing performance should provide products that will give customers a pleasant and memorable experience as this would increase sales growth to their brand.
3. That, confectionery firms' in Rivers State especially those whose customers have switched to other competing brands should innovate their products as this would give customers a sensory experience and repeatedly purchase their brand.

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