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Innovation Strategies and Firm Performance: A Study of Femine Mill Nigeria, Calabar

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ABSTRACT: This paper investigates the role of innovation strategy on performance of Femine Flour Mill Calabar**.** The study employed survey research design. The target respondent is the total employees of Femine flour mill Calabar which stand at 126 staff. Self administered questionnaire was used as the instrument for data collection. The instrument was subjected to content validity and test retest statistical analysis was used to ascertain the reliability of the instrument at 0.82. The study adopted simple random sampling technique and Taro Yamane's statistical formula was used to determine the sample size at 96. Pearson Correlation was employed to establish the relationship between the two variables. Out of 96 distributed questionnaires 85 was properly filled and was used for the analysis. , the relationship between level of process innovation strategies, product innovation strategies and firm performance is positive at 0.419 and 0.419 respectively, indicating that an improvement in level of process innovation strategies and product innovation strategies will lead to increase in the firm performance on the average. The study concluded that marketability of our different segmented products and In-depth understanding of customer needs since is a critical source of competitive advantage. The study therefore, recommended that the management should conduct a comprehensive product analysis and also develop a product technology track in order to actively explore the potential market opportunities.

KEYWORDS: Innovation Strategy, Process Innovation, Product Innovation, Firm Performance

1.0 INTRODUCTION

In today's economic world, innovation has become the primary source of competitive advantage. Despite the fact that being innovative is a dangerous choice, successful businesses must take risks in order to achieve and maintain high performance (Karabulut, 2015). Proactive businesses seize market possibilities and develop new products, giving them a competitive advantage that allows them to stay on top of the market. New goods, production techniques, new sources of supplies, new markets, and new ways for firms to conduct their operations are all examples of innovation (Osuga, 2016). Hajar (2015) in Laban and Deya (2019) Posit that the ability to innovate is now considered as one of the most important sources of competitive advantage among businesses and Innovation is a very crucial part of a company's strategy hence its relevance to finding new business prospects. Despite the inherent risk and uncertainty, successful innovation can have a significant impact on a company's financial and economic performance (Laban & Deya 2019). Organizational innovation, process innovation, product innovation, and marketing innovation are the four types of strategic innovations acknowledged by The Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (2017) as being necessary for businesses to stay in business (Laban & Deya, 2019). Kariuki (2014), strategic innovation is a critical component for long-term corporate success, and innovative organizations outperform non-innovative businesses.

Firm performance, which encompasses operational and financial results, is a component of an organization's effectiveness. Firm performance in the twenty-first century is defined as how organizations use efficient resources to continually develop capabilities and abilities in order to meet the firm's objectives (Taouab & Issor, 2019). As a result, creating value simply entails making a sufficient profit while also meeting the needs of a diverse set of stakeholders (Burhan & Ramanti, 2012). The ability of a company to manage its financial and non-financial activities is critical to its long-term existence (Taouab & Issor, 2019). It is deemed to be sustainable when this is achieved at a significant level in a firm. The ability of a corporation to effectively use available resources to meet the organization's goals is measured by its performance (Taouab & Issor, 2019).

1.1 Statement of the Problem

Because of technological advancements, product life cycles have become shorter, making it more difficult for businesses to maintain a competitive advantage and Companies that are constantly inventing, on the other hand, have a better chance of surviving (Rosebush

et al., 2011; Löfsten, 2014; Flood et al., 2015; in Laban & Deya 2019).Innovations have also posed many challenges to firms and blue chip companies such as Polaroid, Nokia, Sun Microsystems and Hewlett-Packard are no exemption. Innovation initiatives frequently fail, and successful innovators have a hard time sustaining their performance. A number of studies have also found that innovations have negative effects on performance indicators (Guisado-González *et al*., 2013) While other researchers also argue that the influence is sector specific. These mixed results and alternative views from different countries and writers are mainly as a result of lack of comprehensive analysis of how multiple innovations influence performance indicators which formed the basis of this study. More so, productivity is probably the most important aspect of economies in general at all levels. At the macro level, productivity is critical for the general level and growth of economic welfare. At the firm level, productivity is crucial for the competitiveness of firms and thus for their survival and growth prospects. Highly productive firms tend to have a higher output growth and a lower risk of exit, while low productivity is an indicator of probable future exit (Foster, Haltiwanger & Krizan, 1998). Hence, productivity can only be maintained if there is innovation. Consequently, the process of innovation and product innovation has also become a lacuna to firms. Process innovation is prioritized for a manufacturing plant to achieve competitiveness. Process innovation is defined as the process of undergoing technological and organizational change (Reichstein & Salter, 2006), and it entails developing a firm's manufacturing processes (Frishammar, et al., 2013).Process innovation necessitates both organizational and technological changes, and it is a significant source of increased firm productivity. This process can also help firms gain a competitive advantage by facilitating the introduction of new equipment, management practices, and changes to the manufacturing process (Reichstein & Salter, 2006). The ability of a firm to acquire, assimilate, transform, and exploit technically related resources, procedures, and knowledge for process innovation purposes is defined as process innovation capability (Frishammar, et al., 2012 in Jederstrom & Andersson, 2017). Despite the benefits of implementing process innovations in a production system, research has been quick to highlight the challenges associated with the presence of uncertainties that affect the characterization of a production system and its performance (Wheelwright, 2010; Colarelli O'Connor & Rice, 2013; Parida, et al., 2016 in Jederstrom & Andersson, 2017). As technology evolves, businesses must have a formal work process in place, as well as production specifications (Frishammar et al., 2012). (Frishammar, et al., 2013 in Jederstrom & Andersson, 2017). However, a high level of uncertainty is common in process innovation projects, and it is one of the most significant issues for manufacturing firms (Parida, et al., 2009). Furthermore, when introducing process innovation into a production system, manufacturing companies undervalue the importance of uncertainty, despite previous research indicating that a lack of agreement on uncertainty is a significant issue in this context (Schmolke, et al., 2010 in Jederstrom & Andersson., 2017).

1.2 Objective of the Study

The general objective of the study is to investigate the role of innovation strategy on performance of Femine Flour Mill Calabar**.**

i. To assess the level of process innovation strategies on the firm performance of Femine Flour mill Calabar
ii. To identify the methods of product innovation strategies used to improve firm Performance in Femine Flour mill Calabar

1.3 Research Questions

i. To what extent does process innovation strategy helped improve firm performance of Femine Flour Mill Calabar.
ii. What methods of product innovation strategies are in used to improve firm performance of Femine Flour Mill Calabar

1.4 **Hypotheses Statement**

i. HI: There is significant relationship between process innovation strategies and firm performance of Femine Flour Mill Calabar.
ii. HI: There is significant relationship between the methods of product innovation used to improve firm performance Femine Flour Mill Calabar.

2.0 LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Innovation

The terms "innovation" and "invention" are frequently confused. The word innovation comes from the Latin word innovare, which means "to create something new," (Lin, 2006). Drucker (1985) characterized innovation as an entrepreneur's instrument for exploiting change for a variety of businesses or services back in 1985. He went on to say that this innovation can be viewed as a discipline that can be studied and practiced. To put it another way, innovation is defined as "a new concept, activity, or object experienced by an individual or other unit of adoption" (Daugherty et al., 2011; Grawe, 2009; Rogers, 1995 in Nuretal., 2016). Meanwhile, Tidd, Bessant, Pavitt, and Wiley (1998) described innovation as the process of transforming an opportunity into new ideas that are widely implemented. Similarly to Bentz (1997), who believed that innovation is defined as the development of a new or improved process, service, or product for marketing purposes. Afuah (1998), Posit that innovation is defined as "the application of new technological and administrative knowledge to provide customers with a new product or service. “As a result, several authors came to the conclusion that innovation is defined as "any behaviors that are new to businesses, including equipments, goods, services, processes, policies, and projects" (Kimberly & Evanisko, 1981; Damanpour, 1991; Lin, 2007). Khazanchi, Lewis, and

Boyer (2007) they also went on to say that innovation is important for businesses because it may generate additional revenue from new products or services, as well as save money and improve the quality of existing processes. However, in order to be innovative, the management team or any responsible individuals need to have innovativeness. For long-term competitive advantage, innovation is increasingly becoming a critical competency factor and source of strategic change (Lin & Chen, 2007; Sheu, 2007). As a result, there is more pressure than ever on all firms to continue to innovate by inventing and introducing new products and services (Kiraka, Kobia & Katwalo, 2013). In Firms with limited resources, innovation is a critical source of competitiveness (Dibrell, Davis, & Craig, 2008; Varis & Littunen, 2010). Businesses that are inventive can create new products and practices that will put them ahead of the competition (Griffith et al., 2009). In a competitive globalised economy, innovation is a critical practice for a company's existence and competitiveness (Sheu, 2007; Kiraka, Kobia & Katwalo, 2013; Lin & Chen, 2007 in Kiveu, 2019).Innovation, as a critical instrument for business strategy, allows companies to achieve long-term profitability and growth, get access to new markets, and increase market share, allowing them to compete more effectively (Ulusoy, Kilic & Alpkan, 2011). As a result, in the pursuit of business competitiveness and, eventually, national competitiveness, innovation has become critical to corporate strategy and government programs. Many businesses and national authorities still view innovation as a viable competitiveness aim, and it is at the heart of many businesses' competitiveness (Cantwell, 2003; Gray, 2006; Aikeli, 2007 in Kiveu, 2019).

2.2 Innovation Strategies

How items are made is heavily influenced by innovation. A company's innovation strategy is a plan for encouraging technological or service breakthroughs, usually by investing money in research and development efforts. Companies that seek to obtain a competitive advantage must have an innovation strategy (Sean, 2019). A successful innovation strategy should be motivating and add value to the product or service being produced. As a business, you want to boost the value of an existing product or create something completely new that will entice customers. Innovation should push the envelope and be unconventional. It's impossible not to think about Apple while discussing innovation. With remarkable success, Apple has created and continues to create distinctive goods. The iPhone, iPad, and iWatch are all cutting-edge devices. Although smaller businesses may not enjoy the same worldwide success as Apple, the beauty of invention is that you never know what will happen with a product or how successful it will be to a firm (Sean, 2019).

2.3 Firm Performance

Successful firms are an important component for developing countries. In determining their economic, social, and political evolution, many economists compare countries to an engine. To thrive in a competitive business climate, every firm should function under performance-based conditions. Firm performance has recently become a popular topic in strategic management research, and it is regularly employed as a dependent variable. Despite the fact that it is a widely held concept in academia, there is little agreement on how to define and quantify it. However, because there is no operational definition of firm performance that the majority of experts agree on, different interpretations will naturally be proposed by different persons based on their personal opinions. This concept's definitions can be abstract, general, or narrowly defined. In the 1950s, firm performance was equated to organizational efficiency, which refers to how well an organization, as a social structure with limited resources and means, achieves its objectives without requiring excessive effort from its members. Productivity, adaptability, and inter-organizational tensions were utilized to evaluate performance at the time (Georgopoulos & Tannenbaum, 1957 in Omar and Issor, 2019).Organizations began to experiment with new approaches to evaluate their performance later in the 1960s and 1970s. Performance was characterized at the time as an organization's capacity to exploit its environment in order to access and use the limited resources available (Yuchtman & Seashore, 1967). Price (1968), as cited by Omar and Issor (2019), views performance to be synonymous with organizational effectiveness, and specifies productivity, conformity, and institutionalization as appreciation criteria. Moh (1972) also consider that Productivity, flexibility, and adaptation are the criteria for measuring performance. Performance, according to Harrison (1974), is the result of assessing effort. In comparison to other scholars during the same time period, Lupton (1977) treated the concept of organizational performance with the utmost care and clarity. Hence, Lupton (1974), in Omar and Issor, (2019) noted that an effective organization, the productivity rate and levels of motivation and satisfaction of its members while turnover, costs, and labor unrest are all high, turnover, costs, and labor unrest are all minimal or non-existent.Because firm performance is the single most important driver of a company's success, it indicates the company's ability to implement plans that meet institutional goals (Almatrooshi et al., 2016). Firm performance is defined by Tomal and Jones (2015) as an organization's actual results or outputs as compared to its expected outputs. Effective performance metrics enable management to assess how well they are performing in terms of fulfilling set goals, customer satisfaction, process control, and what needs to be improved, allowing managers to make more knowledgeable decisions. Effective business models and organizational leadership, as shown in the interaction between a manager and his or her subordinates, as well as managers' abilities, are critical to a company's success. Leadership has an impact on how strategies are implemented, which has an impact on company performance.The essence of leadership, according to Silva (2014), is a conditional relationship between a boss and his or her subordinates. In order to reach corporate goals, effective leadership must be flexible enough to tolerate change and overcome obstacles. The efficiency of each of an organization's individual employees, which is a function of the organization's leadership, is also a major determinant of its effectiveness (Mastrangelo et al., 2014.)

2.4 Process Innovation

Asakawa (2015) process innovation refers to the new techniques and processes introduced into operations that help to promote efficiency or effectiveness, and lower the costs of production and delivery. Process innovation is frequently a complicated and dangerous endeavor that necessitates the participation of experienced staff as well as access to tacit knowledge. Employees can learn skills and expertise from foreign competitors when organizations obtain technical information and support and exploit imported innovative technologies. This can considerably boost process innovation and lead to long-term competitive advantages (Shu et al., 2015). Employees are prone to defending old processes, practices, and routines that aided their earlier development, despite the fact that they are expected to be on the cutting edge of strategic process innovation. Rosenbusch et al., (2011) underline the necessity for process innovation to be understood and accepted by the entire organization, which necessitates social impetus and coordinated effort from functional groups, posing a challenge to link the processes of the organization's parts to the whole.As a result, the company encourages process innovation in order to modify its present structure and implement strategic creative practices that lead to improved business performance.

2.5 Product Innovation Strategies

Many businesses, particularly market leaders, rely on innovation to survive. A meaningful and lasting competitive advantage is not generated by a first mover advantage or a pricing advantage for many of these businesses. It is fueled by these firms' capacity to amaze and surprise customers with new and/or better-performing products that improve the quality of their lives by addressing critical challenges and filling unmet requirements. But, if defining a product innovation strategy is so simple, why are so many firms, including Fortune 50 corporations and market leaders, struggling to drive innovation and failing to meet their innovation objectives (El-khouryetal, 2021)? The approach to Product Innovation Strategy is anchored in the business strategy itself. As a strategy firm, it is believed that a good growth strategy and a good understanding of how to increase profitability and grow market share; for instance, are critical to drive a robust innovation strategy. The most obvious advantages are in assisting senior management in providing the appropriate and necessary resources to innovation and, more crucially, in engaging product and technology development leadership in a deeper understanding of what product or service is required and why (El-khouryetal, 2021). El-khouryetal, (2021) further consider the following difficulties after an analysis of what works and what doesn't when it comes to creating a good and productive Product Innovation Strategy and maximizing innovation efforts:

1. **The innovation mix is out of whack**: A typical innovation plan would include a mix of sustaining, disruptive, and commercial innovation, with each contributing a set percentage to growth goals and using a proportionate amount of resources. 65 percent, 20 percent, and 15 percent, respectively, would be a normal blend.This balance, on the other hand, may change depending on the business category, growth requirements, competitive hurdles, geographic location, and other considerations. Because it is largely about supporting the existing firm, maintaining innovation usually takes the lion's share of cash, resources, and emphasis. This is where things have the potential to spiral out of control. The innovation process is hijacked by short-term and less significant deliverables that are, at best, incremental, driven by the need to provide "market news." However, this is sufficient to exhaust available resources and divert attention away from the most important tasks. Working on little tweaks will leave you with insufficient time to work on the huge new stuff.
2. **A lack of in-depth knowledge of the target market:** This is the chosen consumer for whom the brand's Points of Difference and product benefits have the most resonance and significance. This is due to the fact that consumer needs are more fragmented than ever before, making a "mass" marketing approach less effective. In order to create effective goods, powerful brands, and a strong business, it is necessary to have a comprehensive understanding of diverse consumer segments, as well as consumer and customer insights.
3. **In driving an inherently chaotic process, there is a lack of discipline:** This is due to the fact that the approach to product innovation should be free of organizational impediments that could hinder learning and experimentation. After all, wasting money, effort, and scientific expertise on a modest upgrade – a modified formula, a freshened aroma, or a marginally enhanced product that falls short of being a game changer – is unproductive. (Valen Group, 2020)

Valen Group (2020) noted that approach to driving a Product Innovation Strategy that meets objectives begins with three key steps to address and prevent these potential issues. A thorough understanding of the company’s vision, the growth goals, the business strategy, and the business issues at hand. An evaluation of the company, the innovation process, and the environment in which innovation occurs. We use some of the most cutting-edge creativity and problem-solving applied theory to investigate not only individual abilities, but also organizational culture, decision-making procedures, and tools/processes in order to find strategies to increase innovation outcomes. To assess if the innovation process is genuinely effective, measures for innovation must be established. This aided in the establishment of clear expectations, the successful management of the "what" rather than the "how," and the timely reporting of progress to stakeholders.

2.6 Product Innovation and Firm Performance

A product innovation is defined as the usage of a good or service that has had its features significantly improved, such as considerable advances in practical requirements elements and materials, integrated software, user friendliness, or other functional characteristics

(Oslo manual, 2005).Market acceptance ultimately determines the success of a new product.Firms may gain confidence in their beneficial ideas, but technological superiority does not guarantee market success. Whether a technological innovation can win customers is mostly determined by whether it rewards customers with considerable revenues or distinguishes the focus company from its competitors (Yongchuan et. al, 2011). Furthermore, a unique product feature can set a new product apart from the competition and help it gain a competitive advantage in the market (Im & Workman 2004). Finally, product innovation has been shown to have a favorable impact on new product profitability and market success using several instruments (Yongchuan et. al, 2011). Gunday et al. (2011) determined product invention by examining changes in product quality, changes in manufacturing product pricing, and the rate at which new goods are developed, all of which lead to customer ease of use to measure product innovation, new products with a variety of useful features, as well as products with parts and materials that differ from present products, can be developed (Gunday et.al, 2011).

2.7 Theoretical Framework

2.7.1 Diffusion Theory

Everett Rogers (1995) created this theory, also known as the diffusion of innovations theory, which deals with the dissemination of inventions, concepts, and technology through culture. Many academics have studied the theory extensively. It states that different people have different attributes that cause them to accept or reject an innovation. There are also different characteristics of innovations that can cause people to accept or reject them freely. The process of adopting an innovation, according to this notion, involves five stages. The first stage is information, in which a person is aware of an innovation but is unaware of its details. Persuasion is the next phase, in which the person is really interested in learning more about the idea. In the third phase, the person weighs the benefits and drawbacks of the invention before deciding whether or not to embrace it. After the decision has been made, the person must put it into action by adopting and using it.The final step is confirmation. Finally, based on their experience, the person decides whether or not to continue using the invention. These stages affect groups of people as well as other people to varied degrees. This theory is pertinent to this research since ease of use is always a key aspect in the adoption of new technologies, which is in line with the theory. People will be hesitant to adopt an innovation, no matter how amazing it is, if it is difficult to use and learn. The most crucial factor, however, is observable outcomes.Individuals will find it difficult to resist adopting innovations once they recognize the benefits of doing so. To diffusion theory, these characteristics of innovation are of the utmost importance. It is concerned with the speed with which new ideas emerge. Some people adopt the innovation right away, while others take their time and continue to use old methods.Adoption rates are influenced by a number of factors. If diverse people have negative opinions on innovation, others are more likely to reject it or be hesitant to adopt it.

2.7.2 Theory of the Innovative Firm

To explain exceptional performance in the face of imperfect markets, economist William Lazonick proposed this idea. The function of a firm, according to the notion, is to convert productive resources into marketable goods and services. This can be done by a company engaged in innovative activities.As a result, innovative businesses produce higher-quality products at cheaper costs, resulting in improved economic performance (Lazonick, 2013). Innovative businesses have the potential to turn productive resources into higher-quality, lower-cost goods and services, which benefits customers and other economic actors (Lazonick, 2009). According to the thesis, a company can gain ways through innovation, which leads to distinctiveness and greater firm competitiveness in inventive companies (Porter, 1988; Lazonick, 2006). This theory was helpful in describing the role of innovation and how it contributes to company competitiveness by producing superior products and services in the market. Differentiation is a key aspect in competitiveness since it leads to new, distinct goods, processes, markets, and organizational approaches. This aids businesses in dealing with competition. The notion backs up the importance of innovation in a company's competitiveness.

2.7.3 Resource-Based Theory

“A collection of productive resources, where the option of diverse uses of these resources throughout time is governed by administrative decision,” according to the resource based theory (RBT) (Warnier et al, 2013). The notion focuses on how a company's unique resources and competencies can help it achieve long-term superior performance. Employees, according to Juma et al (2014), require sufficient resources to be creative and to foster an environment of innovation. Appropriate access to funding, supplies, facilities, knowledge, information, enough time to generate original work in the topic, and the availability of training are all examples of resources. It's also critical to have enough resources to solve problems in novel ways. The resources available to an organization have a significant impact on the processes it uses and, as a result, on its process innovation initiatives. Although all resources (productive and administrative) are considered in the firm's growth, not all resources provide the opportunity to establish a sustainable competitive advantage and performance. For a resource to provide strategic innovation success that improves organizational performance, it must be valued, unique, inimitable, and non-substitutable. A strategic resource is a scarce resource on the market that is usually regarded as high-performing, i.e., with a productivity expectation that exceeds its cost (acquisition or development).A resource like this is thought to be a possible source of rentals. Malen (2015), underutilized firm resources constitute a challenge to firm management in terms of figuring out how to make better use of them. The cost of acquiring resources is borne by the company. As a result, executives are under pressure to devise innovative ways, procedures, and activities capable of extracting

greater value from resources that aren't being utilized to their full potential.The search for innovation is fueled by the features of slack resources. Excess resources can provide value to a company at near-zero marginal cost if the company can find creative ways to utilize them. In other words, unused resources make it easier to introduce new resource combinations that boost innovation.

2.8 Empirical Review

Mustafa and Yaakub (2018); Prange and Pinho (2017); Rosli and Sidek (2013); Ullah (2020); Wang (2016), evaluate the impact of firm size on the relationship between firm performance and innovation. The study identifies innovation as a critical factor in firm performance. The study also examines the direct impact of innovation on firm performance; however, little is known about the mechanisms underlying firm-level innovation.There is also conflicting evidence regarding whether firm size affects firm performance (Andries & Faems 2013; Benfratello et al. 2008; Dooley et al. 2016). Similarly, there is still value in further research into whether or not the size of a firm affects the performance of innovative firms. Rosli and Sidek (2013) the study evaluates the impact of various innovation dimensions on the performance of firms. A total of 284 samples were gathered from firms across Malaysia in the food and beverage, textiles and clothing, and wood-based sub-industries. A hierarchical regression analysis was used to examine the data.The data validated the assumptions that product and process innovation had a significant impact on company performance, with the former having a bigger impact than the latter. The findings not only confirm the relevance of innovation in explaining variations in business performance, but they also inform firms and policymakers that innovation is a vital component in today's entrepreneurial activities. More research should be done on how SMEs may analyze the cost-benefit ratio of innovation and choose between internal and external sources of innovation before embarking on actual innovation. Löfsten (2014) looked at the link between product innovation processes and company performance, with a particular focus on Swedish medium-sized technology-based industrial enterprises that conduct R&D. Because sales are generally driven by employment, the findings revealed that creative procedures lead to sales and possibly even employment in the firms.Because of their smaller size and greater persistence, SMEs have a distinct advantage over huge corporations when it comes to serving appealing niches with new products. All of these advantages attributed to innovation enable firms to compete successfully against well-established incumbents that have access to a far greater resource base than their smaller rivals. By offering highly innovative products, Price competition can be avoided by businesses. Furthermore, novel items may generate new demand, allowing for company expansion (Rosenbusch et al., 2011).When a business has solid and comprehensive product development processes in place, it is easier to stick to planned expenditures, save unnecessary costs, and collaborate with other departments. This improves the organization's overall performance and strengthens innovative tactics (Guisado-González et al., 2013). Other research, such as Gunday, Ulusoy, Kilic, and Alpkan (2011), which looked at the effects of process, marketing, organization, and product innovation on several areas of company performance in Turkey, concluded that innovation had a beneficial impact.Furthermore, there is considerable empirical evidence that the benefits of product development strategy contribute to a company's profitability (Schumpeter, 1934; Clark & Fuji Moto, 1991).For example, according to Schumpeter (1934), breakthrough new products face limited direct competition when they are first released, allowing sponsoring corporations to make comparatively substantial profits.Imitations and competition erode high earnings over time, but companies that continually developing inventive new goods can maintain high profitability in terms of rising sales for a long time. Haeussler, Patzelt, and Zahra (2012) found that new product development is critical for a new firm's success, but they also acknowledge that producing new products is costly and time-consuming.

Rubera and Kirca (2012) agree that process innovation contributes to an organization's final performance outcomes, such as financial position and company value, in their study on the relationship between organizations' innovativeness, strategic orientations, and performance. When combined with strategic creative processes, the pursuit of efficiency, operational excellence, cost advantage in raw material procurement, and economies of scale are essential factors in a firm's performance. Consumers will choose items and services that are processed using advanced technical breakthroughs, according to them. They come to the conclusion that internally oriented firms seek efficiency in all phases of their value chain activities, such as low cost or cost leadership strategy, in order to improve the firm's performance. According to Omerzel (2016), process innovations are typically backstage initiatives aimed at increasing efficiency and productivity; technology investments are the key factors in a firm's performance. Strong process innovation strategies are credited with the service industry's dynamism and growth since they are a critical source of competitive advantage and, as a result, performance.

Almatrooshi et al., (2016), as quoted by Laban and Daye (2019), a firm's success is determined by its organizational performance, which displays its capacity to effectively implement strategies to meet institutional goals. As a result, managers must assess the extent to which the use of organizational resources affects business performance in order to improve organizational processes and identify any associated issues. Results on firm performance from 2014 to 2017 were measured in a table. All of the performance metrics examined indicated moderate growth in the time under evaluation, with the exception of Return on Asset (ROA), which showed a decrease. According to Al-Matari and Al-Swidi (2014), the application of ROA aims to measure the firm's operating and financial success. A greater ROA implies that assets are being used effectively to benefit shareholders, as well as a reflection of the company's capacity to utilise its assets to benefit its shareholders' economic interests.

Goll et al., (2007) employed time series statistics with fixed effects, as cited by Broni (2016), to examine the link between knowledge competency, strategy shift, and business performance. According to the findings, knowledge competency is linked to strategy shift and has a favorable impact on a company's performance. They also discovered that the environment influences strategic change and business performance.

3.0 METHODOLOGY

The study employed survey research design. The target respondent is the total employees of Femine flour mill Calabar which stand at 126 staff. Self administered questionnaire was used as the instrument for data collection. The instrument was subjected to content validity and test retest statistical analysis was used to ascertain the reliability of the instrument at 0.82. The study adopted simple random sampling technique and Taro Yamane's statistical formula was used to determine the sample size at 96. Pearson Correlation was employed to establish the relationship between the two variables. Out of 96 distributed questionnaires 85 was properly filled and was used for the analysis.

Table 1. Evaluation of Level of Process Innovation Strategies

S/N	Statement	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
1	New ideas are properly align with the blue print of Femine Flour Mill Company.	17(20%)	40(47.1%)	21(24.7%)	7(8.2%)
2	New process concept is influenced by consumer needs.	18(21.2%)	44(51.8%)	14(16.5%)	9(10.6%)
3	Our company has developed testing solutions to finished product.	15(17.6%)	45(52.9%)	20(23.5%)	5(5.9%)
4	The marketing and sales channels are launched immediately the products are ready.	21(24.7%)	39(45.9%)	24(28.2%)	1(1.2%)

Source: Field Survey, 2021

Table1depicts respondents' opinion onlevel of process innovation strategies. The first item in the table reveals that 17 respondents (20 percent) strongly agreed that the new ideas are properly align with the blue print of Femine Flour Mill Company. 40 respondents (47.1 percent) agreed, 21 respondents (24 percent) disagreed and 7 respondents (8.2 percent) werestrongly disagree to the issued.

The second item in the table reveals that 18 respondents (21.2 percent) strongly agreed that the new process concept is influenced by consumer needs. 44 respondents (51.8 percent) agreed, 14 respondents (16.5 percent) disagreed and 9 respondents (10.6 percent) strongly disagreed to the issue.

The third item in the table reveals that 15 respondents (17.6 percent) strongly agreed that their company has developed testing solutions to finished product. 45 respondents (52.9 percent) agreed, 20 respondents (23.5 percent) disagreed and 5 respondents (5.9 percent) strongly disagreed on the issue.

The fourth item in the table reveals that 21 respondents (24.7 percent) strongly agreed that the marketing and sales channels are launched immediately the products are ready. 39 respondents (45.9 percent) agreed, 24 respondents (28.2 percent) disagreed and 1 respondent (1.2 percent) strongly disagreed to the issue.

Table 2. Evaluation of Product Innovation Strategies

S/N	Statement	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
1	Femine Flour Mill products are design in-line with customer needs.	30(35.3%)	36(49.4%)	14(16.5%)	5(5.9%)
2	Comprehensive analyses of customer needs are done before production.	29(34.1%)	42(49.4%)	10(11.8%)	4(4.7%)
3	Our company has developed a product technology track to actively explore potential market opportunities.	20(23.5%)	20(23.5%)	30(35.3%)	15(17.6%)

4	In depth understanding of a potential product are ascertain through brainstorm from different technical knowledge.	41(48.2%)	29(34.1%)	13(15.3%)	2(2.4%)

Source: Field Survey, 2021

Table2depicts respondents' opinion onproduct innovation strategies. The first item in the table reveals that 30 respondents (35.3 percent) strongly agreed that Femine Flour Mill products are design in-line with customer needs. 36 respondents (49.4 percent) agreed, 14 respondents (16.5 percent) disagreed and 5 respondents (5.9 percent) were strongly disagree to the issued

The second item in the table reveals that 29 respondents (34.1 percent) strongly agreed that the comprehensive analyses of customer needs are done before production. 42 respondents (49.4 percent) agreed, 10 respondents (11.8 percent) disagreed and 4 respondents (4.7 percent) strongly disagreed to the issue.

The third item in the table reveals that 20 respondents (23.5 percent) strongly agreed that their company has developed a product technology track to actively explore potential market opportunities. 20 respondents (23.5 percent) agreed, 30 respondents (35.3 percent) disagreed and 15 respondents (17.6 percent) strongly disagreed on the issue.

The fourth item in the table reveals that 41 respondents (48.2 percent) strongly agreed that an in depth understanding of a potential product are ascertain through brainstorm from different technical knowledge. 29 respondents (34.1 percent) agreed, 13 respondents (15.3 percent) disagreed and 2 respondents (2.4 percent) strongly disagreed to the issue.

Table 3. Evaluation of Firm Performance

S/N	Femine Flour Mill performance is influence by the level of their process innovation	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
1	Our company has maintained consistent technology track of potential products.	18(21.2%)	46(54.1%)	17(20.0%)	4(4.7%)
2	Our company performance is influence by the marketability of our different segmented products.	34(40.0%)	39(45.9%)	12(14.1%)	0(0%)
3	In depth understanding of customer needs is the source of our competitive advantage.	26(30.6%)	35(41.2%)	19(22.4%)	5(5.9%)
4	Femine Flour Mill performance is influence by the level of their process innovation.	15(17.6%)	47(55.3%)	20(23.5%)	3(3.5%)

Source: Field Survey, 2021

Table3depicts respondents' opinion onfirm performance. The first item in the table reveals that 18 respondents (21.2 percent) strongly agreed that their company has maintained consistent technology track of potential product. 46 respondents (54.1 percent) agreed, 17 respondents (20.0 percent) disagreed and 4 respondents (4.7 percent) were strongly disagree to the issued

The second item in the table reveals that 34 respondents (40.0 percent) strongly agreed that their company performance is influence by the marketability of our different segmented products. 39 respondents (45.9 percent) agreed, 12 respondents (14.1 percent) disagreed, while none strongly disagreed to the issue.

The third item in the table reveals that 26 respondents (30.6 percent) strongly agreed that the in depth understanding of customer needs is the source of our competitive advantage. 35 respondents (41.2 percent) agreed, 19 respondents (22.4 percent) disagreed and 5 respondents (5.9 percent) strongly disagreed on the issue.

The fourth item in the table reveals that 15 respondents (17.6 percent) strongly agreed that Femine Flour Mill performance is influence by the level of their process innovation. 47 respondents (55.3 percent) agreed, 20 respondents (23.5 percent) disagreed and 3 respondents (3.5 percent) strongly disagreed to the issue

Table 4

Correlations

		performance	process	product
Pearson Correlation	performance	1.000	.302	.366
	Process	.302	1.000	-.022
	Product	.366	-.022	1.000
Sig. (1-tailed)	performance	.	.003	.000

	Process	.003	.	.419
	Product	.000	.419	.
N	performance	85	85	85
	Process	85	85	85
	Product	85	85	85

Source: SPSS Output IBM version 25

4.0 INTERPRETATION OF THE FINDINGS

From the table of value above, the relationship between level of process innovation strategies, product innovation strategies and firm performance is positive at 0.419 and 0.419 respectively, indicating that an improvement in level of process innovation strategies and product innovation strategies will lead to increase in the firm performance on the average. The probability value is 0.302 and 0.302 respectively which is less than 0.05, on this ground; we accept the alternate hypothesis and conclude that level of process innovation strategies and product innovation strategies has a significant and positive relationship with firm performance.

4.1 Discussion of Findings

The relationship between level of process innovation strategies, product innovation strategies and firm performance is positive at 0.419 and 0.419 respectively. The findings is in line with Rubera and Kirca (2012) who agreed that process innovation contributes to an organization's final performance outcomes, such as financial position and company value, in their study on the relationship between organizations' innovativeness, strategic orientations, and performance. When combined with strategic creative processes, the pursuit of efficiency, operational excellence, cost advantage in raw material procurement, and economies of scale are essential factors in a firm's performance. In similar vein Omerzel (2016), says that process innovations are typically backstage initiatives aimed at increasing efficiency and productivity; technology investments are the key factors in a firm's performance. Strong process innovation strategies are credited with the service industry's dynamism and growth since they are a critical source of competitive advantage and, as a result, performance.

5.0 CONCLUSIONS

The relationship between level of process innovation strategies, product innovation strategies and firm performance is positive at 0.419 and 0.419 respectively, indicating that an improvement in level of process innovation strategies and product innovation strategies will lead to increase in the firm performance on the average. This is credited to the marketability of our different segmented products and In-depth understanding of customer needs since is a critical source of competitive advantage.

6.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

1. The management of Femine Company should maintain a consistent track of potential needs of customer.
2. The management should conduct a comprehensive product analysis and also develop a product technology track in order to actively explore the potential market opportunities.

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