



New Products Marketing: an Empirical Assessment of Challenges and Developments in Akwa Ibom State

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Abstract: *The study examined the new product marketing challenges and developments in Akwa Ibom State. To carry out this study, specific research objectives were developed from which null hypotheses were developed and tested. The research design for this study is an ex post facto design. The population of the study consisted of all SME operators in the three senatorial districts of Akwa Ibom State. Purposive sampling was used to select 383 respondents out of the population. The instrument used for data collection was a questionnaire. Data from completed questionnaires was subjected to independent t-test analysis. Based on the data analysis and findings of the study, the researchers concluded that there are challenges affecting the marketing of new products in Akwa Ibom State. The study recommends that the organisation conduct an extensive market survey to determine the feelings of customers toward a given product. Product testing surveys should be a priority in ensuring that the right product is taken to market. This will determine the influence of the purchasing decisions of another customer and, hence, improve sales of the company's products and thus improve profits.*

Introduction

New product development is a critical activity for businesses all around the world. It's very hazardous and difficult to sell new goods since product failures may cost hundreds of millions of dollars. Copper, R.G., and E.J. Kleinschmidt (2017) Innovative new goods are critical for every business, according to Ramaseshan B., Caruana Albert, & Loo Soon P. (2018). In technology-driven companies, the success of new products is a key managerial problem. Few resources are available to new product managers to help them better align their organization's external orientation with their product's target market. According to Cooper, R.G., and E.J. Kleinschmidt (2017), the success of a new product is highly dependent on its market understanding and marketing expertise. Buyer behaviour, market potential, and competition should all be well understood by the business. Aside from that, the company's launch sales team and distribution efforts were both robust and laser-focused. What should be clear is that the commercial feasibility of a new product lies with its prospective buyers. As a result, the success of a new product depends heavily on knowing the market and launching it effectively. Marketing plays a crucial role in successfully and efficiently converting new product market knowledge into the market throughout the new product development process, especially in an international setting. New goods must have distinct advantages in order to capture a significant share of the market and return a profit to the producer. New product sales volume must build up gradually before the production facility can function at full efficiency. Ongoing research is conducted to improve effectiveness, expand usage patterns, and reduce risk for the products. New product development processes in underdeveloped nations have lacked a defined marketing plan. New product development processes in manufacturing sectors are still influenced by many marketing activities, particularly in developing nations, where the consequences of these activities in deciding new product success on the market have yet to be explored. In addition, R&D is recognised as an

essential department that must be created inside a company to guarantee the continuation of product development and innovation. When it comes to business choices, market knowledge is critical, as stated by Kohli and Jaworski (2016). African manufacturing firms' experiences with new product development and market research have been mixed, and further study is needed. Strategic alliances with rivals are very important to many manufacturers when launching new goods in Nigeria. New goods that appeal to customers are in high demand, and the costs and risks of product development are reduced for each collaborating business when several companies cooperate. Customers' expectations may be met by producing a larger variety of goods. Manufacturers of agricultural products, such as seed firms, may extend their product lines to cover additional crops or locations, as well as new customers, by partnering with them (Wanjohi, S. C. (2015). The government only mandates what manufacturers may not sell in Nigeria, not what they must sell. Manufacturers must not sell anything. It's possible that a producer will register a product even if it satisfies regulatory requirements in certain countries but not in others. They may also limit registration and marketing due to a wide range of legal and ethical concerns. The product line of a business represents the company's stance on environmental stewardship, human safety, and global responsibility. In 2010, Rift Valley Bottlers launched new goods to the market, including cans, sunfil, pulpy, 200-ml Coke and Fanta, NoVida, and Coke Zero. The business utilised the marketing impact team to promote the products, and they also used displays to advertise them. Some of them were successful, while others were not. Examples of successful products include pulpy, Coke Fants, Novida, and Coke Zero. Other products, such as cans and sunfil, were not successful in gaining market share (Rift Valley Bottlers, 2010).

It's ideal for new goods to outperform those already on the market for the same or comparable purposes. Because they are new and have the greatest sway over customers, the new goods should do well. In order for a company to be profitable and expand, new goods must be introduced to the market and marketed. When it comes to these operations, the most successful companies use methods and procedures that are only marginally different from those used by their less successful competitors, but result in significant performance advantages. As a result, goods aren't subject to constant competition for market share. The newness of goods is short-lived owing to the rapid advancement of technology. Consumer income and the absence of marketing techniques to promote the goods are two factors that make it more difficult to launch a new product successfully on the market. In Nigeria, this has been the case. New product marketing has devolved into a time-consuming chore, and as a result, few new goods are commercial successes. If this is the case, it's probably because there isn't enough information available on the methods that may help new goods succeed. Organizations continue to use outdated methods that hinder the adoption of their new goods on the market.

Assessment of the Challenges of Marketing New Products

There are many reasons why companies invest heavily in new product development. Top company leaders often cite corporate expansion, diversification, and the need for a competitive advantage over competitor businesses as reasons for new product creation (Sachs and Benson, 2016). Another motivation for a company to create new goods is to take advantage of new possibilities. To take advantage of this new opportunity and satisfy significant consumer demand, a company would be wise to develop and launch new goods that have those specific product characteristics in high demand (Hise, 2017). The creation of new products has the potential to be critical to the growth of a company. Product development, along with other types of development such as market development, product positioning development, and supply development, may help companies achieve important business goals. It's difficult to describe how organic product development may help achieve one of the most essential goals. Bruce, Margaret, and Biemans, Wim G. (2015) According to Wei, Yinghong, and Morgan's (2014) research, theoretical knowledge about new product performance has three consequences for businesses. Beginning with the critical role of organisational environment supportiveness in defining a firm's market orientation, this study discovers and experimentally supports significant differences in Chinese companies' success rates for new product introductions. To begin with, interviews conducted throughout the research revealed that cultural

settings play an important role in describing how businesses are involved in processing market information, which in turn helps them perform better when developing new products. They also found that organisational climate has an impact on a company's market orientation practises, which in turn affect new product performance. At the business-unit level, new product success was reduced to two main underlying dimensions: profitability and effect on the company. Cooper and Kleinschmidt (2017) ended their research with this conclusion: The profitability of the new product efforts of the whole company included: whether or not the overall initiative achieves profit goals; its profitability in relation to expenditure; and the effect of the total effort on the earnings of the business unit. The entire new product effort had the following effects on the company: the business unit's sales percentage of new products, the impact of the new products on the unit's sales and profits, the attained success rate, and the technical success rating. A company's capacity to create goods that outperform its rivals in the marketplace has been shown to boost new product development and help establish a firm's own competitive advantages. In the year 2018, Kok R., Robert A.W. (2018), and Yew, Ng Tee (2018) found that the corporate environment's market orientation is a key factor in new product development success. Gaining a better understanding of this connection may aid in the creation of new goods that perform better overall in terms of company performance, profitability, sales revenue, and customer happiness. It was discovered by Langerak, F., Hultink, E. J., & Robben, H. S. J. (2014) that there was a favourable correlation between market orientation and product advantage, and between product development competence and market testing, launch budgeting, and launch strategy. There was broad agreement in the research of global industrial companies by Wren, Brent M., and Souder, Wm. E. (2016) that market orientation is important in achieving new product success. The strategic direction, therefore, should have a beneficial impact on the process of developing new products. One of the most effective tools for predicting a product's success is the marketing plan. Researchers Maidique, M. A., and Zirger, B. J. (2014) found that developing organisations that are good at marketing and devote significant amounts of their resources to sales and promotion have a better chance of bringing in new products that are also successful. There is some evidence, however, to indicate that although marketing plan execution is essential to new product success, the proper application of marketing strategies also plays a significant role. A substantial and beneficial impact on the success of new goods may be shown by the design of the marketing strategy. To reiterate, developing effective marketing strategies is crucial if new products are to be successful and perform well. A company's tactics have been shown to have an impact on new product creation. For instance, Wind and Mahajan (2016) suggested that the implementation of strategies impacts the new product development performance throughout the new product development process. Market research operations must also be handled seriously if the information collected is to be used in the new product. Proper market research activities Previous studies have shown the importance of export performance and new product development market research efforts. Market research is critical in evaluating whether a new product will do well in the market, according to Hart and Tzoka (2015). According to Cooper, R.G., and E.J. Kleinschmidt (2017), new product development may be improved by first collecting relevant market information, then evaluating internal and external resources, and planning product development methods that align with corporate objectives. While developing and designing a new product, almost all product development teams rely on market knowledge in some way (Ramaseshan B., Caruana Albert, & Loo Soon P. 2018). This implies that companies must collect as much market information as possible to better understand consumer requirements and desires and provide greater input for improved product development. In other words, according to this theory, market research affects new product development.

Methodology

Research Design

The design can be described as an "outline," a general arrangement or plan from which something may be made. Nworgu (1991:136) highlights that a research design is a plan or blueprint that specifies how data relating to a given problem should be collected and analyzed. It lays out the procedure for conducting any investigation.

Areas of study

The study area is Akwa Ibom State. Akwa Ibom State is one of the thirty-six (36) states in the Federal Republic of Nigeria (Akwa Ibom Property and Investments Company Limited, 2005). Akwa Ibom occupies a total landmass of 7,245,935 square kilometres in Nigeria's wealth basin, the south-south zone of the Delta region. It lies between latitudes $4^{\circ} 33'$ and $50^{\circ} 33'$ north of the equator and longitudes $70^{\circ} 35'$ and $60^{\circ} 2'$ east of the Greenwich Meridian. On the west, Akwa Ibom State is bordered by Rivers State and Abia State. Akwa Ibom State, which falls within the tropical zone with a dominant vegetation of green foliage of trees, shrubs, and an oil palm tree belt, holds the highest density of cash crops in the world.

Population of the Study:

The population of the study consisted of all SME operators in the three senatorial districts of Akwa Ibom State. As Unyimadu (2015:36) points out, "population" can be defined as a collection of objects, individuals, or events that share a common characteristic that the researcher is interested in investigating.

Sampling and Sample Size

The Sample sizes of 383 respondents were purposively selected in the study area. The sample size was statistically determined using the sample fraction

Data Collection Instrument and Validation:

The research instrument used for the study was the questionnaire. The questionnaire was used to obtain data on the independent and dependent variables presented in both sections A and B of the questionnaire. While section A measured the demographic data of the respondents such as name, gender, age, educational qualification and marital status, section B measured the independent variables.

In order to establish the validity of the instrument, research experts were given the instrument for vetting. The items in which at least two experts agreed upon were regarded as suitable and used in the instrument. The items in the questionnaire were properly worded to meet the respondents' level of understanding.

Techniques of Data Analysis:

The data obtained were analyzed using Pearson moment correlation analysis.

Data Analysis

Table 1: Distribution of Respondents by sex

Sex	No. of Respondents	% of Respondents
MALE	194	50.65
FEMALE	183	47.78
Total	383	100

Table 1 show that one hundred ninety four (194) respondents representing 50.65% of the sample population were male while one hundred and eighty three (183) respondents representing 47.78% of the population were female.

Table 2: Age Distribution

Age	No. of respondents	% of Percentage
20 – 25	106	27.67
26 – 30	77	20.10
31 – 35	56	14.62
36 – 40	88	22.97
41 – Above	56	14.62
Total	383	100

Table 2 shows that hundred and six (106) respondents representing 27.67% of the sample were between the age bracket of 20 – 25 years, seventy seven (77) respondents each representing 20.10% were between the age bracket of 26 – 30 years, fifty six of the respondents representing 14.62% were 17% were 31 – 35 years respectively, also eighty eight (88) respondents representing 22.97% of the sample were between the age limit of 36 – 40 years and fifty six (56) respondents representing 14.62% were within the age limit of 41 and above years.

Table 3: Marital Status Distribution

Status	No. of Respondents	% of Respondents
Single	158	41.25
Married	134	34.98
Divorced	55	14.36
Widow/Widowers	36	9.39
Total	383	100

Table 3 above shows that one hundred and fifty eight (158) respondents representing 41.25% of the sample were single, one hundred thirty four (134) respondents representing 34.98% of the sample were married, only fifty five (55) respondents representing 14.36% of the sample were divorced as well as only thirty six (36) respondents representing 9.39%

Table 4: Educational Qualification Distribution

Qualification respondents	No. of Respondents	% of Respondents
WAEC/NECO	162	42.29
OND	101	26.37
HND/BSC	53	13.83
MSC	21	5.48
PHD	46	12.01
Total	383	100

Table 4 shows that one hundred and sixty two (162) respondents representing 42.29% of the sample were WAEC/NECO holders, one hundred and one (101) respondents representing 26.37% were OND/NCE certificate holders; fifty three (53) respondents representing 13.83% were holders of HND/BSC certificates holders, while twenty one (21) respondents representing 5.48% were MSC certificate holders and only forty six (46) respondents representing 12.01% of the population were PHD holders.

Hypothesis One

There is no significant effect of the challenges of marketing new products in Akwa Ibom State. In-order to test the hypothesis, independent t-test analysis was used in comparing the mean score of the two groups.

Table 5 Independent t-test analysis of challenges of marketing new products in Akwa Ibom State

Variable	N	X	Sd	T
High	234	12.01	1.30	
				21.45*
Low	149	15.15	0.71	

***Significant at 0.05 level; df= 381; N= 383; critical t-value = 1.96**

The above table 5 presents the obtained t-value as (21.45). This value was tested for significance by comparing it with the critical t-value (1.96) at 0.05 level with 381 degree of freedom. The obtained t-

value (21.45) was greater than the critical t-value (1.96). Hence, the result was significant. The result therefore means that there is significant effect of the challenges of marketing new products in of Akwa Ibom State.

Hypothesis two

There is significant effect of product testing on marketing new products in Akwa Ibom State. In-order to test the second hypothesis, independent t-test analysis was used in comparing the mean score of the two groups.

Table 6 Independent t-test analysis of effect of product testing on marketing new products in Akwa Ibom State

Variable	N	X	SD	t
High	201	12.07	1.34	
				18.31*
Low	191	15.00	1.09	

***Significant at 0.05 level; df= 381; N= 383; critical t-value = 1.96**

The obtained t-value is 18.31, as shown in table 6. This value was tested for significance by comparing it with the critical t-value (1.96 at the 0.05 level with 381 degrees of freedom). The obtained t-value (18.31) was greater than the critical t-value (1.96). Hence, the result was significant. As a result, product testing has a significant impact on the marketing of new products in Akwa Ibom State.

Implications of the Findings

Study results and data analysis led the researchers to conclude that Akwa Ibom State has marketing difficulties for new goods. According to the findings, the company should perform a comprehensive market survey to learn how consumers feel about a certain product. An extensive product testing survey is essential to bringing the best possible product to market. Another customer's buying choices will be taken into account in this calculation, and the company's earnings will rise as a result.

Businesses should conduct research on the best methods of bringing their goods to market. This will help goods succeed in the market by preventing them from failing. As a result, product developers must be aware of how product offering features influence a product's market success or failure throughout the development process.

To understand the current marketing structure, companies' marketing teams need to conduct market segmentation. New goods will have a better chance of success if this strategy is used. It is not uncommon for existing marketing systems to act as a barrier to new goods' market success.

According to the findings, the company should make its goods available to consumers on time in order to meet their consumption, whereas other participants suggested that the company increase the quantity of its products in order to meet their needs.

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