

# CUSTOMER JOURNEY MANAGEMENT CAPABILITIES AND ENTREPRENEURIAL SUCCESS OF MANUFACTURING FIRMS IN RIVERS STATE

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## ABSTRACT

*The success of entrepreneurial ventures is increasingly linked to their ability to manage customer journeys effectively. This study investigates the relationship between customer journey management capabilities and the entrepreneurial success of manufacturing firms in Rivers State, Nigeria. The study adopted a cross sectional research design. The population of the study consists of 165 respondents from (14) Manufacturing Firms in Rivers State. The 165 respondents were determined through judgmental sampling method. The respondents comprised of top-level managers, middle-level managers, and lower-level managers because these categories of respondents make decisions and set policies that guide the operations of the organization. Data were collected through survey questionnaire and the analysis involved quantitative method using Pearson Product Moment Correlation Statistic in testing the research hypotheses. The findings revealed a significant relationship between customer journey management capabilities and entrepreneurial success of manufacturing firms in Rivers State. Hence the study concludes that customer journey management capabilities relate with entrepreneurial success of manufacturing firms in Rivers State. Therefore, the study recommended that Management should invest in customer experience design strategies that focus on uniqueness, relevance, and consistency, continuously improve customer experience design to meet and exceed customer expectations to improve innovation customer satisfaction. They should establish a systematic approach to gather, analyze, and integrate customer feedback into the innovation process and identify unmet needs, generate new product/service ideas, and improve existing offerings. They should implement robust feedback mechanisms to gather customer insights at various touchpoints and actively listen to customer feedback and respond promptly to address concerns and suggestions to improve overall customer satisfaction.*

**Keywords:** Customer journey management, entrepreneurial success, customer experience design, customer feedback integration, innovation, customer satisfaction.

## 1.0 Introduction

The business landscape for manufacturing firms in Rivers State is becoming increasingly competitive, requiring firms to adopt innovative strategies to differentiate themselves and achieve sustainable growth. Entrepreneurial success is paramount for the growth and sustainability of small and medium enterprises (SMEs). It encompasses various aspects such as revenue growth, market expansion, profitability, customer satisfaction, and innovation. These elements are crucial not only for the survival of manufacturing firms but also for their ability to compete effectively in an increasingly dynamic market. Firstly, entrepreneurial success drives economic growth and job creation. According to Brush and Chaganti (1999), Manufacturing firms play a critical role in economic development by creating employment opportunities and contributing to GDP. Successful Manufacturing firms can scale their operations, hire more employees, and foster economic stability in their regions. This job creation aspect is particularly important in developing regions like Rivers State, where Manufacturing firms are often the backbone of the local economy.

Secondly, entrepreneurial success enhances innovation and competitiveness. Successful entrepreneurs are typically characterized by their ability to innovate and adapt to changing market conditions (Schumpeter, 1934). They introduce new products and services, improve existing ones, and find new ways to meet customer needs. This innovative capacity is crucial for manufacturing firms to differentiate themselves from competitors, gain market share, and build a loyal customer base. As Porter (1990) points out, innovation is a key driver of competitive advantage, enabling firms to achieve superior performance in their industries. Moreover, entrepreneurial success fosters resilience and long-term sustainability. Manufacturing firms that achieve entrepreneurial success are better positioned to withstand economic downturns and market disruptions. They can build financial reserves, diversify their product lines, and invest in new technologies and processes. This resilience is critical in ensuring that Manufacturing firms can navigate challenges and continue to grow. Furthermore, as noted by Delmar and Shane (2003), successful entrepreneurial ventures tend to have better access to capital, as investors and financial institutions are more willing to support businesses with proven track records.

Customer satisfaction is another vital component of entrepreneurial success. Manufacturing firms that prioritize customer needs and deliver exceptional value are more likely to build strong customer relationships and retain their clientele. According to Morgan and Hunt (1994), trust and commitment are fundamental to successful long-term business relationships. Manufacturing firms that consistently meet or exceed customer expectations can achieve higher levels of customer loyalty, leading to repeat business and positive word-of-mouth referrals. Entrepreneurial success is crucial for manufacturing firms as it drives economic growth, fosters innovation and competitiveness, enhances resilience, ensures customer satisfaction, and contributes to the development of the entrepreneurial ecosystem. By understanding and leveraging the factors that contribute to entrepreneurial success, manufacturing firms in Rivers State and beyond can achieve sustainable growth and long-term success. One strategy for effective customer journey management encompasses the entire process of understanding, designing, and optimizing every interaction a customer has with a business. This holistic approach ensures that customers have positive experiences at every touchpoint, fostering loyalty and driving business success (Lemon & Verhoef, 2016). Despite its importance, many Manufacturing firms in Rivers State still struggle to implement robust customer journey management practices due to limited resources and knowledge.

Customer journey management capabilities include various components such as customer experience design, data analytics, customer feedback integration, and personalized marketing. Each of these components plays a crucial role in creating seamless and satisfying customer experiences. For instance, designing intuitive and engaging customer experiences can significantly enhance customer satisfaction and retention (Pine & Gilmore, 1999). Leveraging data analytics allows businesses to gain deep insights into customer behaviors and preferences, enabling them to make informed decisions and tailor their offerings accordingly (McAfee & Brynjolfsson, 2012). Integrating customer feedback helps Manufacturing firms continuously improve their services and products (Morgan & Hunt, 1994), while personalized marketing efforts ensure that customers feel valued and understood.

Understanding the impact of these customer journey management capabilities on entrepreneurial success is critical for manufacturing firms in Rivers State. Entrepreneurial success can be measured through various indicators such as revenue growth, market share, profitability, and customer satisfaction (Brush & Chaganti, 1999). This study aims to explore the relationship between these customer journey management capabilities and the entrepreneurial success of manufacturing firms in Rivers State. By identifying the key factors that contribute to effective customer journey management, this research seeks to provide Manufacturing firms with practical insights and strategies to enhance their performance and achieve long-term success in a competitive market. Despite the importance of customer journey management in attaining entrepreneurial success and the valuable insights it provides, there is a notable gap in research specifically focusing on manufacturing firms in Rivers State. Most studies tend to generalize findings from developed economies or larger businesses, which may not be directly applicable to the unique economic, cultural, and business environments of manufacturing firms in Rivers State. This gap highlights the need for localized studies that consider the specific challenges and opportunities faced by manufacturing firms in this region.

### **Statement of the Problem**

Manufacturing firms in Rivers State have experienced significant challenges in achieving entrepreneurial success, which is evidenced by poor innovation and an inability to meet customer satisfaction expectations. The root of these issues lies in the lack of developing customer journey management capabilities. Customer journey management involves understanding and optimizing every interaction a customer has with a business, from the initial point of contact to post-purchase experiences (Lemon & Verhoef, 2016). Without these capabilities, Manufacturing firms struggle to innovate and tailor their offerings to meet customer needs effectively, leading to dissatisfaction and reduced loyalty.

Moreover, the competitive landscape in Rivers State necessitates that Manufacturing firms continually innovate to maintain relevance and attract customers. However, the absence of robust customer journey management capabilities hinders this innovation process. Studies have shown that firms that prioritize customer experience and continuously innovate their customer journey tend to outperform those that do not (Bharadwaj et al., 2013). The lack of attention to these capabilities results in a gap between what customers expect and what Manufacturing firms can deliver, thereby stunting growth and limiting the potential for entrepreneurial success. Furthermore, the inability to achieve customer satisfaction due to poor customer journey management has broader implications for the sustainability of manufacturing firms in Rivers State. Customer satisfaction is closely linked to repeat business and positive word-of-mouth, both of which are crucial for the long-term success of any enterprise (Homburg et al., 2005). Without satisfied customers, manufacturing firms face

a continuous struggle to maintain market share and profitability. Addressing this problem requires a strategic focus on developing and implementing effective customer journey management practices to enhance innovation and meet customer expectations consistently. Hence, this study examined the relationship between customer journey management capabilities and entrepreneurial success of manufacturing firms in Rivers State.

### **Aim and Objectives of the Study**

The primary aim of the study was to examine the relationship between customer journey management capabilities and entrepreneurial success of manufacturing firms in Rivers State. The objectives of the study were to:

1. Examine the relationship between customer experience design and innovation of manufacturing firms in Rivers State.
2. Evaluate the relationship between customer experience design and customer satisfaction of manufacturing firms in Rivers State.
3. Ascertain the relationship between customer feedback integration and innovation of manufacturing firms in Rivers State.
4. Determine customer feedback integration and customer satisfaction of manufacturing firms in Rivers State

### **Research Questions**

The following research questions guided the study.

1. What is the relationship between customer experience design and innovation of manufacturing firms in Rivers State?
2. Evaluate the relationship between customer experience design and customer satisfaction of manufacturing firms in Rivers State?
3. Ascertain the relationship between customer feedback integration and innovation of manufacturing firms in Rivers State?
4. Determine the relationship between customer feedback integration and customer satisfaction of manufacturing firms in Rivers State?

### **Research Hypotheses**

The following null research hypotheses guided the study

**HO<sub>1</sub>:** There is no significant relationship between customer experience design and innovation of manufacturing firms in Rivers State

**HO<sub>2</sub>:** There is no significant relationship between customer experience design and customer satisfaction of manufacturing firms in Rivers State

**HO<sub>3</sub>:** There is no significant relationship between customer feedback integration and innovation of manufacturing firms in Rivers State

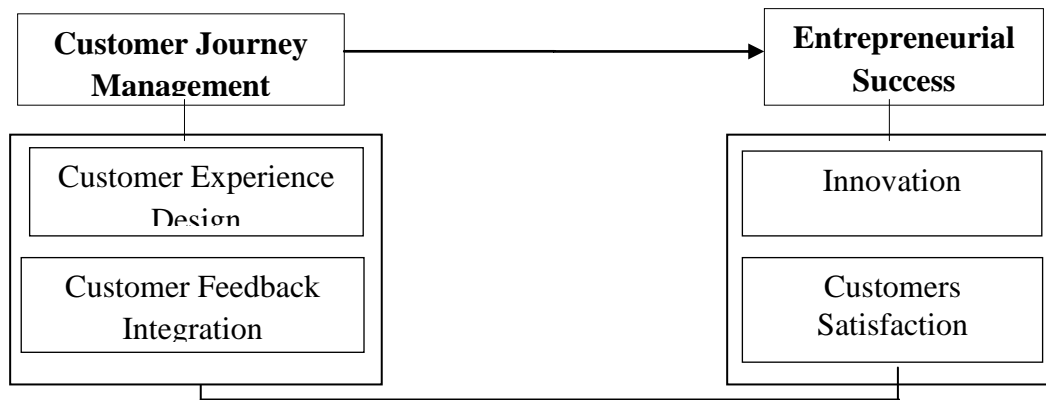
**HO<sub>4</sub>:** There is no significant between customer feedback integration and customer satisfaction of manufacturing firms in Rivers State.

## 2.0 LITERATURE REVIEW

### Conceptual Review

This study's conceptual review focused on investigating the relationship between customer journey management capabilities and the entrepreneurial success of manufacturing firms in Rivers State. Customer experience design and innovation, customer experience design and customer, customer feedback integration and innovation, customer feedback integration, and customer satisfaction.

#### Conceptual Framework



Source: Research Study (2024)

### Concept of Customer Journey Management Capabilities

Concept of Customer journey management capabilities refer to an organization's ability to effectively understand, design, and optimize the various stages a customer goes through when interacting with the company. These capabilities encompass mapping the customer journey, gathering and analyzing customer data, and leveraging insights to enhance customer experience. A key aspect of customer journey management is the ability to create a seamless and personalized experience across multiple touchpoints, which can significantly improve customer satisfaction and loyalty (Rosenbaum et al., 2017). Effective journey management requires integrating various data sources, such as CRM systems, social media, and customer feedback, to gain a comprehensive view of the customer's interactions and preferences (Lemon & Verhoef, 2016).

Moreover, organizations with strong customer journey management capabilities can proactively identify pain points and opportunities within the customer journey, allowing them to implement targeted interventions that enhance the overall experience. This proactive approach is facilitated by advanced analytics and AI-driven tools, which help in predicting customer behavior and personalizing engagement (Bolton et al., 2014). By continuously monitoring and refining the customer journey, companies can foster deeper relationships with their customers, drive repeat business, and gain a competitive edge in the market. Therefore, investing in customer journey management capabilities is essential for businesses aiming to thrive in an increasingly customer-centric landscape (Edelman & Singer, 2015).

## **Customer Experience Design**

Customer experience design focuses on creating meaningful and positive interactions between customers and a brand. It involves understanding customer needs, preferences, and pain points to craft a seamless and enjoyable experience across all touchpoints. By prioritizing customer experience design, companies can foster loyalty, enhance brand perception, and drive business growth. According to Lemon and Verhoef (2016), a well-designed customer experience can significantly impact customer satisfaction and loyalty, leading to improved business outcomes. Moreover, Pine and Gilmore (2011) argue that in today's competitive market, companies must move beyond product and service quality to create memorable experiences that resonate with customers on an emotional level.

Implementing an effective customer experience design requires a holistic approach that integrates various elements such as user interface design, customer journey mapping, and personalized interactions. As Verhoef et al. (2009) highlight, companies need to continuously gather and analyze customer data to understand their evolving preferences and expectations. This information can then be used to optimize the design and delivery of customer experiences, ensuring that every interaction aligns with the brand's values and meets customer expectations. Furthermore, a study by Gentile et al. (2007) emphasizes the importance of emotional and sensory experiences in customer experience design, suggesting that companies should create multisensory experiences that engage customers on multiple levels.

## **Customer Feedback Integration**

Customer feedback integration involves systematically collecting, analyzing, and incorporating customer feedback into business processes and decision-making. This practice is essential for understanding customer needs, identifying areas for improvement, and fostering a customer-centric culture. According to Morgan and Rego (2006), integrating customer feedback helps companies stay attuned to customer preferences and enhances their ability to deliver products and services that meet or exceed customer expectations. Additionally, Homburg et al. (2017) argue that companies that actively listen to and act on customer feedback are better positioned to build strong customer relationships and drive long-term loyalty.

Effective customer feedback integration requires a structured approach to gather feedback from various channels, such as surveys, social media, and direct interactions. As suggested by Griffin and Hauser (1993), companies should implement robust feedback mechanisms that enable continuous collection and analysis of customer input. This data should then be used to inform product development, service enhancements, and strategic decisions. Moreover, a study by Schneider et al. (1998) highlights the importance of creating a feedback-friendly culture where employees are encouraged to seek and utilize customer feedback to drive improvements. By embedding customer feedback into the organization's DNA, companies can create a more responsive and customer-focused business environment.

## **Concept of Entrepreneurial Success**

Entrepreneurial success is multifaceted, encompassing financial performance, business growth, and the achievement of personal and business goals. It is often measured by metrics such as profitability, market share, and revenue growth. According to Baron and Markman (2003), successful entrepreneurs possess specific traits and skills, such as social competence

and the ability to identify and exploit opportunities, which contribute to their success. Additionally, Rauch and Frese (2007) emphasize the importance of psychological traits, such as resilience and proactive behavior, in achieving entrepreneurial success.

At the company level, researchers have primarily defined entrepreneurial success as firm development (Achtenhagen et al., 2010), using metrics such as sales, profit, or staff expansion (Baum & Locke, 2004; McKelvie & Wiklund, 2010). To operationalize success, entrepreneurs are questioned about their absolute performance in terms of sales, employees, or profit, as well as their relative performance in contrast to other companies in their field (Delmar, 2006). Despite the widespread use of growth indicators to assess entrepreneurial success, studies frequently find only weak correlations between growth indicators, implying that different growth indicators may have different causes (Delmar, 2006; Shepherd & Wiklund, 2009). Furthermore, Wiklund and Shepherd (2003) discovered that not all entrepreneurs are driven by growth, implying that entrepreneurs utilize variables other than business growth to assess their performance (Walker & Brown, 2004).

Entrepreneurial success also involves the ability to innovate, adapt to changing market conditions, and build a sustainable business model. As Drucker (1985) notes, entrepreneurship is about creating and exploiting opportunities for innovation and growth. Furthermore, a study by Wiklund et al. (2009) suggests that entrepreneurial orientation, characterized by innovativeness, risk-taking, and proactiveness, is positively associated with business performance. By fostering an entrepreneurial mindset and continuously seeking new opportunities, entrepreneurs can drive business success and achieve their long-term objectives.

### **Innovation**

Innovation is the process of creating new products, services, or processes that provide value to customers and differentiate a business from its competitors. It is a critical driver of business growth and competitive advantage. According to Schumpeter (1934), innovation is the engine of economic development, enabling businesses to create new markets and disrupt existing ones. Moreover, Tidd and Bessant (2018) argue that innovation is essential for businesses to adapt to changing market conditions and maintain their competitive edge. Innovation involves a systematic approach to identifying opportunities, generating ideas, and implementing solutions. As suggested by Dyer et al. (2011), companies that foster a culture of innovation encourage employees to think creatively and take calculated risks. This culture can be supported by providing resources, such as time and funding, for innovation initiatives and by recognizing and rewarding innovative efforts. Additionally, a study by Crossan and Apaydin (2010) highlights the importance of leadership in driving innovation, suggesting that leaders should actively promote and support innovation activities within their organizations.

### **Customer Satisfaction**

Customer satisfaction refers to the degree to which customers' expectations are met or exceeded by a company's products or services. It is a key determinant of customer loyalty and business success. According to Kotler and Keller (2016), satisfied customers are more likely to repurchase, recommend the brand to others, and become loyal advocates. Additionally, Anderson, Fornell, and Lehmann (1994) argue that high levels of customer satisfaction are associated with increased profitability and market share.

Measuring and managing customer satisfaction involves understanding customer needs, setting clear expectations, and consistently delivering quality products and services. As Parasuraman et al. (1988) suggest, companies should regularly assess customer satisfaction through surveys and feedback mechanisms to identify areas for improvement. This information can then be used to enhance product and service offerings, ensuring that they align with customer expectations. Furthermore, a study by Oliver (1999) highlights the importance of managing customer expectations and delivering consistent value to achieve high levels of satisfaction.

### **Theoretical Review**

The theoretical foundation for understanding these variables in this study is grounded in the Service-Dominant Logic (SDL) by Vargo and Lusch (2004). SDL emphasizes the co-creation of value through interactions between customers and companies, highlighting the importance of customer experience design and feedback integration. According to Vargo and Lusch (2008), this paradigm shift from a goods-dominant logic to a service-dominant logic signifies that value is not embedded in the products themselves but is co-created during the interactions between the service provider and the customer.

SDL posits that customers are active participants in the value creation process, and their feedback is crucial for continuous improvement and innovation. This perspective aligns with the findings of Prahalad and Ramaswamy (2004), who argue that the co-creation experience is the basis of value creation in the contemporary market. They suggest that companies should engage customers in an active dialogue, fostering environments where customers can contribute to the creation of personalized experiences. Furthermore, Grönroos (2011) expands on SDL by introducing the concept of value co-creation from a relationship marketing perspective, asserting that companies must develop strategies that involve customers in the service production process. This interaction facilitates a deeper understanding of customer needs and enhances the overall service experience. Similarly, Lusch and Nambisan (2015) highlight that SDL's emphasis on value co-creation necessitates those organizations adopt a holistic approach to innovation, where customer insights and feedback play a pivotal role in shaping product and service offerings.

The integration of customer feedback into business processes is essential for sustaining a competitive edge, as highlighted by Payne et al. (2008). They propose a framework for managing the co-creation of value, which includes mechanisms for gathering and utilizing customer feedback to refine and enhance offerings continuously. This approach ensures that companies remain agile and responsive to changing customer preferences and market dynamics. Additionally, SDL underscores the importance of viewing customers as operant resources rather than operand resources. This distinction, as discussed by Akaka and Chandler (2011), implies that customers have the potential to act upon other resources and contribute to the value creation process. By leveraging the knowledge, skills, and feedback of customers, companies can drive innovation and improve service delivery, ultimately leading to higher levels of customer satisfaction and loyalty. Thus, the Service-Dominant Logic (SDL) provides a robust theoretical foundation for understanding the interconnected roles of customer experience design and feedback integration. It emphasizes the active role of customers in co-creating value, necessitating that companies engage in continuous dialogue with customers and incorporate their feedback into business processes. This approach not only enhances customer satisfaction but also drives innovation and competitive advantage in the marketplace.



## Empirical Review

Few studies have examined variables related to entrepreneurial success. Nwekeala (2023) investigated the entrepreneurial capabilities and business success of manufacturing firms Port Harcourt. The study used a correlational research design. This study's population comprises all of Rivers State's 536,852 registered small business owners. The sample size was 400, however only 366 respondents submitted the necessary information for the study. The questionnaire was utilized. The study's hypotheses were tested using the Spearman correlation. The results demonstrated a strong link between proactiveness and company success, measured risk-taking and business success, and innovativeness and business success. The study concluded that the use of entrepreneurial marketing practices (proactivity, calculated risk-taking, innovativeness, opportunity focus, resource leveraging, customer intensity, and value creation) and their subsequent effects on the competitive advantage of manufacturing firms in Rivers state.

Lemon and Verhoef (2016) investigated understanding customer experience across the customer journey. Understanding the customer experience and their journey across time is crucial for businesses. Customers today connect with businesses via a variety of touch points across different channels and media, and their experiences are more social in character. Because of these developments, businesses must integrate numerous company departments, as well as external partners, in order to create and deliver good customer experiences. In this paper, the authors want to get a better knowledge of customer experience and the customer journey in an age of more complicated consumer behavior. To reach this purpose, they investigate current definitions and conceptualizations of customer experience as a construct, as well as present a historical perspective on the origins of customer experience in marketing. They then seek to integrate what is presently known about customer experience, customer journeys, and customer experience management. Finally, they propose key topics for further study on this vital subject.

Gunawardana et al. (2013) studied the impact of customer experience design clues on customer satisfaction: Empirical evidence from Sri Lanka. The goal of this research is to determine the influence of customer experience design cues on customer satisfaction. The idea of customer experience is unclear, with no agreement on its meaning. Furthermore, the notion of customer experience has been identified as vital for retail establishments. As a result, the purpose of this research is to investigate how the idea of customer experience cues has been used in clothes retail establishments in a booming Asian economy, as well as the influence on customer satisfaction. The survey included a random sample of 400 consumers who visited big chain and small clothes retail establishments in Sri Lanka. The data was analyzed using principal component analysis and multiple regression analysis, and the findings show that functional and mechanical experience has an influence on consumer happiness.

Patil and Rane (2023) investigated customer experience and satisfaction: the impact of customer reviews and value on purchasing decisions. The purpose of this research is to look at how restaurant ratings on Zomato, especially in the Navi Mumbai area, influence customers' dining choices. The research looks at the relationship between patron ratings, restaurant evaluations, and purchase preferences. The research combines a qualitative investigation of Zomato customer reviews with a quantitative analysis of data collected via questionnaire survey. The research provided insight on the factors that influence clients' restaurant choices, as well as the importance of customer evaluations in this process. This research will assist restaurants that use Zomato understand how internet reviews play a

significant role in customer purchasing behavior and optimal company growth. Keywords include customer experience, customer satisfaction, purchasing preferences, customer value, online reviews, and customer reviews.

Kumar et al. (2023) investigated the effect of user experience design on customer satisfaction in e-commerce websites. A mixed-methods study methodology was used, which included a survey of 500 online customers and 10 semi-structured interviews with e-commerce website designers. According to the results, UXD has a considerable beneficial influence on customer satisfaction, with the most relevant aspects being simplicity of navigation, clarity of product information, visual design, and page load speed. The survey also found that personalization and customisation options may increase consumer satisfaction by providing a more unique and engaging buying experience. Furthermore, the report emphasizes the significance of mobile optimization, as people increasingly utilize mobile devices to purchase online. These results have important implications for e-commerce website development, indicating that UXD should be a top focus for website designers and developers in order to improve client happiness and loyalty.

### **Gap in Literature**

Existing literature often addresses customer journey management and entrepreneurial success as separate constructs. However, there is limited research on how Manufacturing firms in Rivers State integrate customer journey management capabilities into their entrepreneurial practices. Studies like Lemon and Verhoef (2016) emphasize the importance of a seamless customer journey, but there is little evidence on how SMEs, with their resource constraints, effectively manage and leverage customer journey insights to enhance entrepreneurial success. The role of digital tools and technologies in enhancing customer journey management capabilities is well-documented (Verhoef et al., 2021). However, there is a scarcity of research on how Manufacturing firms in Rivers State adopt and implement these technologies. Understanding the barriers to digital adoption and the specific technological needs of these Manufacturing firms can provide deeper insights into enhancing their customer journey management capabilities and entrepreneurial success. The literature extensively discusses the importance of customer feedback in refining customer journeys and improving business outcomes (Morgan & Rego, 2006). Nonetheless, there is a gap in understanding the specific feedback mechanisms used by manufacturing firms in Rivers State. Research is needed to explore how these businesses collect, analyze, and act on customer feedback within the constraints of their operational and financial capacities.

### **3.0 Methodology**

The study adopted a cross sectional research design. The population of the study consists of 165 respondents from (14) Manufacturing Firms in Rivers State. The 165 respondents were determined through judgmental sampling method. The respondents comprised of top-level managers, middle-level managers, and lower-level managers because these categories of respondents make decisions and set policies that guide the operations of the organization. The research instrument was tested using content validity while the reliability of the instrument was determined through Cronbach Alpha reliability test with a positive coefficient of 0.86 for all variables. Data were collected through survey questionnaire and the analysis involved quantitative method using Pearson Product Moment Correlation Statistic in testing the research hypotheses.

## 4.0 Results and Discussion

The 165 copies of questionnaire was distributed to 14 manufacturing firms in Rivers State, 146copies were filled and collected which was used for the analysis. This implies a successful distribution and collection of the questionnaire. On the basis of the 146 correctly completed copies questionnaire, analyses were carried out. The results in table 1 contained the correlation coefficients of the test of hypotheses.

**Table 1**

### *Results of Correlation Coefficients*

		Customer Experience Design	Customer feedback integration	Innovation	Customer satisfaction
Customer Experience Design	Pearson Correlation	1	.656**	.765**	<b>.756**</b>
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000	.000	.000
	N	146	146	146	146
Customer feedback integration	Pearson Correlation	.656**	1	.884**	<b>.788**</b>
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000		.000	.000
	N	146	146	146	146
Innovation	Pearson Correlation	.765**	.884**	1	<b>.782**</b>
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000		.000
	N	146	146	146	146
Customer satisfaction	Pearson Correlation	<b>.756**</b>	<b>.788**</b>	<b>.782**</b>	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000	
	N	146	146	146	146
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000	.000
	N	146	146	146	146

Source: Research Result (2024)

### **Discussion of Findings**

Customer experience design and innovation have a Pearson Correlation of 0.765\*\*. $p < 0.000$  (highly significant). There is a strong positive correlation between customer experience design and innovation. A study by Mahr et al. (2014) found that customer experience design positively influences innovation performance in service firms. They argue that by designing experiences that are unique, relevant, and consistent, firms can stimulate innovation. This implies that organizations that focus on improving customer experience tend to be more innovative.

Customer experience design and customer satisfaction have a Pearson Correlation of 0.756\*\*. When  $p < 0.000$  (highly significant). This indicates that enhancing customer experience leads to higher levels of customer satisfaction. A study by Verhoef et al. (2009) found that firms that excel in customer experience design also tend to have higher levels of customer satisfaction. They argue that customer experience has a significant impact on customer satisfaction and loyalty.

Customer feedback integration and innovation have a Pearson Correlation of 0.884\*\* when  $p < 0.000$  (highly significant). There is a very strong positive correlation between customer

feedback integration and innovation. A study by Berthon et al. (2012) found that organizations that effectively integrate customer feedback into their innovation processes are more likely to achieve breakthrough innovations. They argue that customer feedback is a valuable source of ideas and insights for innovation. This suggests that integrating customer feedback is closely related to an organization's ability to innovate.

Customer feedback integration and customer satisfaction have a Pearson Correlation of 0.788\*\* when  $p < 0.000$  (highly significant). There is a strong positive correlation between customer feedback integration and customer satisfaction. This indicates that effectively integrating customer feedback leads to higher levels of customer satisfaction. A study by de Juan et al. (2019) found that organizations that actively integrate customer feedback into their operations tend to have higher levels of customer satisfaction. They argue that integrating feedback allows firms to respond more effectively to customer needs and preferences. The overall results suggest that there are strong positive relationships between these variables, indicating that organizations that focus on improving customer experience, integrating customer feedback, and fostering innovation are likely to achieve higher levels of customer satisfaction which will lead to entrepreneurial success.

## **5.0 Conclusion**

Based on the discussion of findings, the study concludes that Firms that focus on improving customer experience through unique, relevant, and consistent design are more likely to stimulate innovation. This suggests that investing in customer experience design can lead to increased innovation performance. Firms that excel in customer experience design tend to have higher levels of customer satisfaction and loyalty. This implies that enhancing the design of customer experiences can result in improved customer satisfaction levels. Organizations that effectively integrate customer feedback into their innovation processes are more likely to achieve breakthrough innovations. This highlights the importance of leveraging customer feedback as a source of innovative ideas and insights. Organizations that actively integrate customer feedback into their operations tend to have higher levels of customer satisfaction. This indicates that integrating feedback allows firms to better meet customer needs and preferences, leading to increased satisfaction. Therefore, both customer experience design and customer feedback integration play crucial roles in driving innovation and enhancing customer satisfaction. Firms that strategically focus on these aspects are likely to achieve competitive advantages through innovative offerings and increased customer satisfaction which will lead to entrepreneurial success.

## **Recommendations**

1. Management should invest in customer experience design strategies that focus on uniqueness, relevance, and consistency. Furthermore they should implement processes to capture customer insights and integrate them into innovation initiatives.
2. Management should continuously improve customer experience design to meet and exceed customer expectations. Also use customer feedback and analytics to identify areas for improvement.
3. Management should establish a systematic approach to gather, analyze, and integrate customer feedback into the innovation process. Use customer feedback to identify unmet needs, generate new product/service ideas, and improve existing offerings.

4. Management should implement robust feedback mechanisms to gather customer insights at various touchpoints. Actively listen to customer feedback and respond promptly to address concerns and suggestions, personalize interactions and improve overall customer satisfaction.

### Areas for Further Research

To further research on customer journey management capabilities and entrepreneurial success of manufacturing firms in Rivers State, Nigeria, future researchers need to consider the following areas:

1. Investigate how digitalization of customer journey management processes influences entrepreneurial success in manufacturing firms. Explore the adoption of digital tools such as CRM systems, analytics platforms, and automation technologies.
2. Examine the relationship between customer journey management capabilities, customer experience, and customer loyalty. Determine how effectively managing the customer journey impacts repeat purchases and brand advocacy.
3. Explore how manufacturing firms in Rivers State can leverage customer journey insights for organizational learning and continuous improvement. Investigate how firms capture, analyze, and disseminate customer feedback across departments.
4. Study how customer journey management capabilities contribute to the development and implementation of market expansion strategies. Assess how firms identify new market segments and tailor their offerings to meet customer needs.
5. Analyze how customer journey management capabilities create a competitive advantage for manufacturing firms. Investigate how firms differentiate themselves based on the customer experience they deliver.
6. Examine the role of customer journey management in integrating supply chain processes. Investigate how firms collaborate with suppliers and distributors to enhance the overall customer experience.

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