IJAAR PUBLISHING®

International Journal of Advanced Academic Research| ISSN: 2488-9849
Vol. 12, Issue 8 (2026) | https://doi.org/10.46654/31c70p31

# PRODUCT AND SERVICE INNOVATION AS PREDICTORS OF SCHOOL PERFORMANCE

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## Abstract

*Every business organisation strives to consistently improve performance with a view to enjoy competitive advantage within the industry. One of the major forces that effectively position organisations in the market place and enhance performance is innovation. Therefore, innovation is a major driver of organisational performance. This study investigated the relationship between product/service innovation and school performance. The study was conducted as a census study of 98 private primary schools in Yenagoa, Bayelsa State. The study employed the mean and standard deviation for univariate analysis, while the pearson correlation was used for test of hypothesis. The result of the test for the relationship between product/service innovation and the measures of school performance reveals that product/service innovation, plays a key role in the outcome of school performance. The test affirms to a significant relationship and positive influence of product/service innovation on related measures of school performance comprising enrolment growth, financial stability, parent satisfaction, and academic performance. The result reveals that product/service innovation, enhances these measures, contributing immensely to the outcome of school performance. This indicate that product/service innovation plays a crucial role in the extent to which the private primary schools are able to drive their overall performance.Thus, it is the conclusion of this study, that strengthening product/service innovative practices and behaviour in private primary schools, is useful in enhancing the performance of such schools. The study therefore recommends that administrators and managements of private primary schools should focus on creating the required supportive framework that allows for and encourages product/service innovation in the operations and activities of the schools, especially in line with the development of content and services. This is crucial as it contributes to the creative pool of the school and enhances its performance outcome.*

**Key words**: Innovation, Product/Service Innovation, School Performance, Competitive Advantage

## Introduction

Private primary schools play a critical role in expanding access to education, complementing government efforts and serving as important Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) in many developing economies. In Nigeria and other nations, these schools operate in increasingly competitive environments occasioned by shifting parental expectations, policy reforms, technological changes, and economic fluctuations.

In recent times, entrepreneurship has evolved beyond the traditional pursuit of profit to encompass creativity, innovation, and problem-solving across diverse sectors, including education. In many economies, particularly in developing economies, private primary schools have emerged as very crucial payers in providing accessible and quality education. These schools often operate as Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs), and like other MSMEs, their performance depends on providing new products and services to enhance performance and sustain growth in an increasingly competitive market.

Products/services entails the introduction and utilisation of novel ideas in products, services, and processes as a driver of competitive advantage and long-term success. For private primary schools, new products and services may include introducing unique curricula, adopting digital learning platforms, streamlining administrative processes, introducing flexible teaching methods, differentiated fee models, developing creative marketing approaches, parental engagement platforms, novel extracurricular programs, and implementing modern management practices. These innovations can significantly improve a school's attractiveness, operational efficiency, student outcomes, and long-term sustainability.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

### Theoretical Review

### The Resource-Based View Theory

The Resource-Based View theory was first developed by Birger Wernerfelt (1984) and was further developed by Jay Barney (1991). It is a theory of organisational performance which explains that an organisation achieves and sustains superior performance by possessing and effectively utilizing valuable resources and capabilities that is difficult for competitor to easily copy. The theory posits that organizations do not perform equally because they possess different resources, knowledge, skills, capabilities, and competencies.

### Conceptual Review

### Concept of Product/Service Innovation

Product/service innovation describes the extent to which the organisation or institution is able to redefine and repackage their products and services, in a unique and creative manner; such that it enables it stand out from similar ones within its market. Product service innovation is a critical factor or concern in advancing the competitiveness or value of the organisation (Sulaimon et al. 2024). Shama et al. (2022) opined that organisastions, through product/service innovation, can revitalize their brands, create meaningful impact on their customers and in the markets, and that way drive their market objectives and goals. Product/service innovation is a core component and facet of innovative entrepreneurship as it demonstrates the organisations' ability for creatively redefining itself and its brand.Product/service innovation in schools involves the introduction of new or improved

educational services such as innovative teaching methods, enriched curricula, and extracurricular programs (Timotheou et al, 2023). Product or service innovation is the introduction of a product or service that is new or significantly improved with respect to its characteristics or intended uses. Many organisations have redefined their service businesses explicitly in terms of product or service. According to the American Productivity & Quality Centre (2007), business that is capable of differentiating their product/service from other businesses in the same industry to large extent will be able to reap profits. Therefore, small businesses that are able to utilize product/service innovation effectively will be able to expand and grow into larger businesses, while gaining a competitive advantage over its remaining competitors.

**Concept of School Performance**

Scholl performance describes the related wellbeing, growth and extent of progress in the activities and operations of schools. This also extends to the academic performance, and the satisfaction of guardians, wards, or parents of students within the institution (Amadi & Udisi, 2021; Owolabi & Makinde, 2012). School performance is a function of several factors, dominant amongst which include the extent of funding for the schools, collaboration with stakeholders, technology competence, efficiency and cost-effectiveness of operations, qualification and competence of workers or teachers, sufficient infrastructure and others. These factors affect the general wellbeing of these schools and determine the extent to which they are able to achieve their academic and administrative goals (Aquino et al., 2021; Lixia, 2017). Hartinah et al. (2019) affirmed that when it comes to schools, the discussion on performance borders on the operations of the institutions and also extends to the experience of the students and the learning outcomes. These agrees with Awour (2019) position, and their view that learning institutions play critical roles in their context, shaping and nurturing knowledge and development.

Robert et al., (2021) posited that learning institutions and schools, incorporate a variety of activities aimed at advancing value and a more enriched experience for their students. Adeyeye (2020) noted that the study of learning institution performance, has for decades adopted the path of performance reflected within the most business and for-profit organisations. Ray-Offor (2021) noted that learning institutions are distinct in their character and practice, and their focus is such that draws not only on the content of their services, but also the usefulness or significance of such in view of the changes or emerging attributes of the environment. This is because it builds on equipping clients or participants with the necessary tools and skills, applicable and useful for coping and thriving with their context or environment. Chantathai et al., (2018) argued that where these features contribute to the distinct concerns of performance when it comes to learning institutions or schools; these determine the extent to which these schools or institutions could be viewed as adequately or substantially addressing its performance concerns.

**Enrolment Growth**

Enrolmentgrowth describes the extent to which candidate are attracted, drawn to and are engaged by the school system. Growth in this respect, focuses on the number of candidate engaged by the school and thus is also an indication of its wellbeing in terms of students' interest and choice (Acquino et al. 2021). Enrolment growth is a sign of the institutions ability to maintain its value and relevance, within its context. It implies that the organisation is not only competitive, but it is also able to provide value and that way, stimulate the interest of the populace in its activities and services. According to Robert et al., (2021), growth in

students' enrolment and engagement details the wellbeing and robustness in running and operation of the institution.

### Financial Stability

Finance is the life blood and as such core concern of any institution or organisation. It is a central concern in the management and coordination of people and other organisational resources, and services as the basis for most profit-oriented organisations. Where organisations are able to achieve financial stability, then they are able to acquire the necessary financial resources and means for promoting their interests and concerns while at the same time, addressing related expenses (Robert et al., 2021). Owolabi and Makinde (2012) posited that financial stability is a relative term and such that is often anchored on the particular or unique features and characteristics of the organisation. This view is reiterated by Robert et al., (2021) who affirmed that most of the barriers or challenges experienced by learning institutions are often tied to their lack of or instability in financial position.

### Parent Satisfaction

The gaol of any institution is the satisfaction of its stakeholders; this can occur in variety of forms, but primarily it dwells on the extent to which stakeholders, like parents are content and identify with the services of the institution as consistent with their expectations (Robert et al.,2021). Ray-offor (2021) noted that it is only through satisfaction that organisations can attract and draw in more customers or patronage, and this is only possible when existing clients, customers or in this case, parents are content and consider the activities of the organisation as satisfactory. Parent satisfaction is crucial as an outcome and facet of performance as it details the extent to which the institutions policies, programs and content, reflect key concerns and interests, thus suggesting value and quality.

### Academic Performance

Academic performance describes the extent to which students are able to not only comprehend, but demonstrate their learning through practice and cognitive ability. Academic performance thus marks the individual's change of cognitive state and shift in understanding, indicating a more informed and educated state or form (Aquino et al., (2021). As learning institutions, private primary schools engage in knowledge transfer and academic activities designed to spur the intellect and also equip students and individuals with the necessary skills and capacities for not only coping with real-life challenges and problems, but in dealing with conceptual and abstract concerns as well. Thus, it is a crucial and often emphasized feature of school performance as it not only details the outcome at the individual level (student), but it also examines the activities and quality of effort exerted at the organisational or institutional level as well, especially with regards to the development of courses, and learning content (Aquino et al., 2021; Robert et al., 2021).

## The Relationship between Product/Service Innovation and School Performance

The relationship between product/service innovation and the performance of schools, bothers on the role of uniquely packaged programs and activities, creative services and operations in the outcome of school performance, particularly with regard to measures comprising enrolment and growth, financial stability, parent satisfaction and academic performance (Adele, 2015; Adiele & Onuoha, 2023). Product/service innovation is central to enriching the experience of clients and for advancing value. Organisations that are high on products/service innovation, tend to be more competitive and able to sustain their relevance in the long run (Bob-Manuel, 2024). Adele (2015) argued that through creativity, learning institutions can

address most of their administrative and operational challenges, leveraging on developing or enriching their service content and also advancing frameworks that serve to enhance the quality of relationships they have with their various stakeholders, particularly, with their students, wards and parents. However, there appears to be a scarcity of studies addressing the relationship between product and service innovation and school performance, especially within the geographical confines of private primary schools in Bayelsa State. Hence the following hypothetical statements are put forward

**Empirical Review**

Carla Haelermans and Kristof De Witte (2012) conducted a study on the relationship between educational innovation and secondary school performance in the Netherlands using a nonparametric conditional efficiency model and data collected from Dutch secondary schools. The result of the research indicated that profiling innovations, pedagogical innovations, process innovations, and education-chain innovations were positively related with school efficiency. The study concluded that innovation contributes significantly to educational attainment and overall school performance.

Haelermans and Blank (2012) conducted an empirical study to examine whether school performance is related to technical change and innovation in Dutch secondary schools. The study used data from 126 secondary schools. The findings showed that process innovation, teacher professionalization innovations, and education-chain innovations positively influence school productivity and student performance. The result showed that innovations were found to affect school performance both directly and indirectly through improved student outcomes.

Hofman et al. (2013) conducted a study on the effects of educational innovations on school quality and student achievement. The study was conducted in the Netherlands with a sample of 97 secondary schools. The study found that innovative schools demonstrated better performance in areas such as teaching-learning processes, instructional quality, and educational effectiveness. The results indicated that innovation can improve school quality, although the magnitude of its impact may be different across educational levels.

Kim, Lee, & Cha (2017) conducted a study on service innovation and customer satisfaction in a private educational institution. The study was conducted in a private preparatory school for college entrance examination in Incheon, South Korea. The study examined hoe service blueprinting could improve operational processes and enhance customer satisfaction. The findings indicated that innovation in service delivery improved customer (student and parent) satisfaction, enhanced institutional reputation, and strengthened competitiveness. Since customer satisfaction is often linked to enrolment growth and financial sustainability, service innovation indirectly contributes to school performance.

Bappahyaya, Usman, Abubakar, & Ahmad (2026) conducted a study on the effect of innovation on entrepreneurship. The study was conducted on private schools in North-East geopolitical zone of Nigeria. The study found that collaborative innovation and innovative ideas had significant positive effects on entrepreneurship and organisational growth. The study concluded that schools that continuously introduce innovative services and educational offerings are more likely to achieve sustainable performance and competitive advantage.

Davies, S., & Quirke, L. (2005) conducted a study on innovation in educational markets. The study was an organisational analysis of private schools in Toronto. The study found that innovative schools differentiated themselves through unique educational services, personalized learning approaches, and specialized pedagogical themes. These innovations

enhanced their attractiveness to customers, thereby improving enrolment and school performance.

**Presentation of Result and Discussion**

Table 1: Distribution for the properties of product/service innovation

| | | N | Minimum | Maximum | Mean | Std. Deviation |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Product/Service Innovation | PIN1 | 89 | 2 | 4 | 3.57 | .824 |
| | PIN2 | 89 | 2 | 5 | 3.93 | 1.106 |
| | PIN3 | 89 | 1 | 5 | 3.55 | 1.390 |
| | PIN4 | 89 | 1 | 5 | 4.01 | 1.173 |
| | Valid N (listwise) | 89 | | | | |

Source: Research Data (2026)

Presented on table 1 is the data distribution for product/service innovation. Result shows that majority of the participants affirm to their experience of the properties of the product/service innovation within the context of the private primary schools. The result shows that mean distributions for the properties are higher than the adopted benchmark ($x > 2.5$). Analysis reveals that the participants agree to the view that within the private primary schools, there are active and deliberate behaviour targeted or engaged in product/service innovation. These result point to the substantiality of product/service innovation within the context of the private primary schools of interest to this investigation

Table 2: Summary for analysis on product/service innovation.

| | N | Mean | Std. Deviation | Skewness | | Kurtosis | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Statistic | Statistic | Statistic | Statistic | Std. Error | Statistic | Std. Error |
| Product/Service Innovation | 89 | 3.7669 | 1.05918 | -1.381 | .255 | .003 | .506 |
| Valid N (listwise) | 89 | | | | | | |

Source: Research Data (2026)

The result for the analysis on the summary for the dimensions of product/service innovation revealedto be substantially evident and as characteristics of the private primary schools. The result from the analysis, affirms to product/service innovation as key facet within the context of the Private Primary Schools performance. Evidence identifies product/service innovation as having a mean coefficients (where $x = 3.7669$). The result affirms to product/service innovation as attributes reflected in the behaviour of the private primary schools.

**School Performance**

The analysis on the criterion variable and its properties is addressed in this section of the chapter. Analysis, focused on assessing the data distribution for the variable and its measures and related properties. Presented on table 4.8 is the distribution for the properties and measures of school performance.

Table 3: Distribution for measures and properties of school performance

| | | N | Minimum | Maximum | Mean | Std. Deviation |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Enrolment Growth | Growth 1 | 89 | 2 | 5 | 3.91 | 1.094 |
| | Growth 2 | 89 | 1 | 5 | 3.57 | 1.405 |
| | Growth 3 | 89 | 4 | 5 | 4.55 | .500 |
| | Growth 4 | 89 | 1 | 5 | 3.91 | 1.579 |
| Financial Stability | Stability1 | 89 | 1 | 5 | 3.55 | 1.261 |
| | Stability 2 | 89 | 2 | 5 | 3.85 | .924 |
| | Stability 3 | 89 | 1 | 5 | 3.80 | .991 |
| | Stability 4 | 89 | 2 | 5 | 4.27 | 1.105 |
| Parent Satisfaction | Satis 1 | 89 | 2 | 5 | 3.97 | .714 |
| | Satis 2 | 89 | 1 | 5 | 3.94 | .436 |
| | Satis 3 | 89 | 2 | 5 | 3.96 | 1.117 |
| | Satis 4 | 89 | 2 | 5 | 3.98 | 1.128 |
| Academic Performance | Perf 1 | 89 | 2 | 4 | 3.57 | .824 |
| | Perf 2 | 89 | 1 | 5 | 3.53 | 1.374 |
| | Perf 3 | 89 | 1 | 5 | 3.88 | .823 |
| | Perf 4 | 89 | 2 | 5 | 3.73 | .822 |
| | Valid N (listwise) | 89 | | | | |

Source: Research Data (2026)

The data distribution for the measures of school performance, affirm to the substantiality of the practices and their evidence as features of the private primary schools. The data offers a position on the distribution for the properties as true, and as accurately reflecting the experiences and observations of participants as it concerns the private primary schools. From the analysis, it is shown that the mean coefficients for all indicators exceed the adopted benchmark ($x = 2.5$) indicating the substantiality of the properties and thus showing that participants generally agree to the properties as true and as reflecting their experiences as regards the private primary schools.

Table 4: Summary for measures and properties of school performance

| | N | Mean | Std. Deviation | Skewness | | Kurtosis | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Statistic | Statistic | Statistic | Statistic | Std. Error | Statistic | Std. Error |
| Enrolment Growth | 89 | 3.9860 | 1.08473 | -1.156 | .255 | -.361 | .506 |
| Financial Stability | 89 | 3.8680 | .97780 | -1.565 | .255 | .848 | .506 |
| Parent Satisfaction | 89 | 3.9607 | .68143 | -1.632 | .255 | 1.440 | .506 |
| Academic Performance | 89 | 3.6770 | .83445 | -1.429 | .255 | .374 | .506 |
| Valid N (listwise) | 89 | | | | | | |

Source: Research Data (2025)

The summary distribution for the measures of school performance reveals all measures as substantial and as characterising the private primary schools. From the analysis, it is evident that enrolment growth has the highest mean coefficient (x = 3.9860) indicating that the private primary schools are advancing and have a high success rate when it comes to the enrolment of their students. Other measures such as financial stability (x = 3.8680) parent satisfaction (x = 3.9607) and academic performance (3,6770) are all revealed to have high mean distributions as well.

Table 5: Product/service innovation and school performance

| | | Product/Service Innovation | Enrolment Growth | Financial Stability | Parent Satisfaction | Academic Performance |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Product/Service Innovation | Pearson Correlation | 1 | .929** | .922** | .938** | .962** |
| | Sig. (2-tailed) | | .000 | .000 | .000 | .000 |
| | N | 89 | 89 | 89 | 89 | 89 |
| Enrolment Growth | Pearson Correlation | .929** | 1 | .886** | .924** | .954** |
| | Sig. (2-tailed) | .000 | | .000 | .000 | .000 |
| | N | 89 | 89 | 89 | 89 | 89 |
| Financial Stability | Pearson Correlation | .922** | .886** | 1 | .819** | .926** |
| | Sig. (2-tailed) | .000 | .000 | | .000 | .000 |
| | N | 89 | 89 | 89 | 89 | 89 |
| Parent Satisfaction | Pearson Correlation | .938** | .924** | .819** | 1 | .932** |
| | Sig. (2-tailed) | .000 | .000 | .000 | | .000 |
| | N | 89 | 89 | 89 | 89 | 89 |
| Academic Performance | Pearson Correlation | .962** | .954** | .926** | .932** | 1 |
| | Sig. (2-tailed) | .000 | .000 | .000 | .000 | |
| | N | 89 | 89 | 89 | 89 | 89 |

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

The test for the relationship between product/service innovation and the measures of school performance as shown on table 5 reveals that product/service innovation, plays a key role in the outcome of school performance. The test affirms to a significant relationship and positive influence of product/service innovation on related measures comprising enrolment growth (R = o.929 and P = 0.000), financial stability (R = 0.922 and P = 0.000), parent satisfaction (R = 938 and P = 0.000) and academic performance (R = 0.962 and P = 0.000). The result reveals that product/service innovation, enhances these measures, contributing immensely to the outcome of school performance. This indicate that product/service innovation plays a crucial role in the extent to which the private primary schools are able to drive their overall performance. The results thus reveal that:

**Summary of Findings**

i. Product/service innovation, significantly contributes toward outcomes of enrolment growth of private primary schools
ii. Product/service innovation, significantly contributes toward outcomes of financial stability of private primary schools
iii. Product/service innovation, significantly contributes toward outcomes of parent satisfaction of private primary schools
iv. Product/service innovation, significantly contributes toward outcomes of academic performance of private primary schools

**Conclusion**

The relationship between product/service innovation and school performance is revealed to be significant in this research. The product/service innovation is inextricably linked to an organization's mission, vision, goals, and strategies. Organisations should be committed to significant investment in research and development, training and development, product repackaging, product pricing, purchasing or manufacturing a product, technological advancements, and product quality. Also, it encompasses significant advancements in technology, materials, user-friendliness, or other strategic methods that result in a rise in business performance. The classic explanation for the association between product/service innovation and school performance is based on the assumption that innovative products/services have limited, direct competition when they are first launched to the market, allowing firms to earn comparatively high profits. While these high earnings are expected to wane with time due to copying and competition, companies that continue to introduce innovative goods and services may be able to maintain a sustained level of performance. Theultimate goal of enterprises engaging in innovation activities is to increase company performance and achieve organizational success.

**Recommendation**

The study therefore recommend that private primary schools should be committed to significant investment in product/service innovation to enable them enjoy competitive advantage and enhance performance.

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