

Entrepreneurial Disruptive Innovation and Organizational Responsiveness of Telecommunication Firms in Port Harcourt

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Abstract: *In today's rapidly changing digital world, telecommunications companies are under increasing pressure to innovate swiftly and adapt effectively to shifting customer demands, technological advancements, and competitive challenges. This study explores the link between entrepreneurial disruptive innovation and organizational responsiveness in telecommunications firms located in Port Harcourt, Nigeria. A quantitative research design was employed, with data collected through structured surveys distributed to employees of chosen telecommunications companies in Port Harcourt. Descriptive statistical methods, including Pearson correlation were utilized to examine the data. The study's population consists of employees from various telecommunication firms operating in Port Harcourt, encompassing both multinational and local companies. These include major providers such as MTN Nigeria, Airtel, Globacom, and 9mobile, along with smaller Internet Service Providers (ISPs) and emerging digital telecom startups with operations in the city. The sample size will be determined using the Yamane formula for finite populations. With an assumed population of 300 staff members across selected firms, a sample size of approximately 171 respondents will be chosen. The findings indicate a significant positive correlation between entrepreneurial disruptive innovation and organizational responsiveness. Companies that adopt entrepreneurial mindsets and disruptive strategies tend to display increased adaptability, quicker reaction times, and better customer focus. This study adds to existing knowledge by offering empirical insights from the context of a developing economy, where innovation is crucial for maintaining competitiveness. It suggests that telecommunications companies promote an innovative culture, invest in new technologies, and implement adaptable, customer-focused business approaches to boost responsiveness. These strategies will not only enhance organizational performance but also ensure long-term viability in a fiercely competitive market.*

Keywords: Entrepreneurial disruptive innovation, organizational responsiveness, adaptability, agility.

Introduction

The telecommunications sector is at the front of innovation and transformation in the fast-paced, technologically advanced world of today. Advances in mobile technology, rising internet penetration, digital platforms, and changing consumer expectations have all contributed to the industry's rapid global evolution. Organizational responsiveness pertains to a company's capacity to identify, interpret, and effectively address shifts in the environment, consumer requirements, and market upheavals (Renteria, 2025). In the telecommunications sector, where technological advancements and customer preferences evolve swiftly, responsiveness transcends being merely a competitive edge it becomes imperative for survival. This concept includes various strategic and operational actions such as prompt decision-making, adaptability to innovation, versatile resource distribution, and swift customer service responses (Georgewill, 2021). It signifies a company's ability to synchronize its internal strengths with external demands in a timely manner. For telecommunications companies operating in volatile and fast-paced markets like Port Harcourt, organizational responsiveness is essential. A firm's aptitude for recognizing changes in the competitive arena whether in the form of emerging technologies, regulatory variations, or shifting customer expectations and responding appropriately is crucial for maintaining relevance and profitability (Porter, 2023). A responsive organization is better equipped to engage with its customers, deliver innovative services, lower attrition rates, and remain agile amidst uncertainty. In Nigeria's telecommunications landscape, where consumers expect speed, innovation, and reliability, responsiveness has a direct impact on customer satisfaction, brand loyalty, and market share. Additionally, it aids firms in mitigating risks, minimizing operational inefficiencies, and quickly aligning with new business opportunities or threats.

A growing body of scholarly work has examined the connection between innovation and organizational responsiveness. Martínez-Vergara, and Valls-Pasola, (2021) introduced the notion of disruptive innovation, illustrating how smaller firms with limited resources can challenge long-established businesses by launching innovations that initially fall short in mainstream markets but eventually thrive due to better alignment with evolving consumer needs. Papachroni, Heracleous, and Paroutis, (2015) highlighted the necessity of organizational ambidexterity balancing exploration and exploitation to remain alert to changes. In the Nigerian context, researchers such as Omolade (2019) and Uzoamaka, Abbah, and Igwe (2019) have investigated the responsiveness of service firms to technological disruptions and consumer behaviors. However, few studies specifically explore how entrepreneurial-driven disruptive innovations influence the responsiveness of telecommunications companies in cities like Port Harcourt, which has distinct economic, infrastructural, and demographic characteristics. The telecommunications industry in Nigeria, particularly in Port Harcourt, has undergone significant transformation driven by technological progress, deregulation, and evolving consumer demands.

Despite these transformations, many firms find it challenging to remain responsive due to rigid structures, inadequate innovation strategies, or a lack of entrepreneurial vision. This research seeks to explore the role of entrepreneurial disruptive innovation as a catalyst for organizational responsiveness. The impetus for this study arises from observed trends where smaller, nimble telecom companies in Port Harcourt introduce services such as targeted data bundles, AI-driven customer support, or mobile financial services that challenge the offerings of larger, more established enterprises. Understanding the mechanisms through which these innovations affect responsiveness will provide insights for strategic planning, especially in developing economies (Agyapong, et al;).

Entrepreneurial disruptive innovation refers to the introduction of novel ideas, processes, or technologies by entrepreneurs or entrepreneurial firms that significantly alter industry norms, displace established entities, and redefine consumer expectations. These innovations typically start at the lower echelon of the market or among underserved customer segments and subsequently evolve to challenge incumbents (et al; 2020; Hopp, Kaminski, & et al; 2018). Within this study's context, entrepreneurial disruptive innovation encompasses digital platforms, value-based pricing models, mobile payment systems, and customer-focused service designs introduced by telecom operators. It is frequently fueled by an entrepreneurial mindset marked by risk tolerance, proactivity, and innovativeness targeting unmet needs in inventive ways. This variable is particularly pertinent to the telecommunications sector, which thrives on continuous innovation and agility. Companies that embrace entrepreneurial disruptive innovation often challenge traditional business frameworks and quickly respond to consumer needs, positioning themselves as frontrunners in service delivery and customer satisfaction (Narula & Sabharwal, 2024).

This study will investigate how these innovations affect the responsiveness of firms in Port Harcourt, thereby contributing to a deeper understanding of innovation-driven competitive strategies in emerging markets. Although there is an abundance of literature on innovation and responsiveness individually, there is a notable lack of contextual studies that integrate both concepts within Nigeria's telecommunications environment. Most existing research tends to generalize innovation without focusing on its entrepreneurial and disruptive attributes. Furthermore, organizational responsiveness is often evaluated in static terms, neglecting the dynamic, environment-specific elements that influence it. Few studies have explored how entrepreneurial innovation particularly of a disruptive type shapes responsiveness in cities like Port Harcourt, where infrastructural challenges, consumer diversity, and technological literacy vary considerably from other regions. This study aims to bridge this gap by exploring the relationship between entrepreneurial disruptive innovation and organizational responsiveness, with a particular focus on telecommunications firms in Port Harcourt.

Statement of the Problem

In the contemporary and swiftly transforming business environment, telecommunications companies face mounting pressure to rapidly adapt to technological advancements, evolving customer expectations, and competitive disruptions. This pressure is particularly acute in Port Harcourt, a key commercial hub in Nigeria, where there is an escalating demand for high-quality, innovative, and adaptive telecommunication services. Although the sector is experiencing growth, numerous telecommunications companies find it challenging to maintain agility and responsiveness due to rigid operational frameworks, delayed adoption of innovations, and a deficiency in entrepreneurial orientation. Entrepreneurial disruptive innovation, which involves the introduction of novel and transformative products, services, or processes that fundamentally alter industry standards, has emerged as a potential catalyst for enhancing organizational responsiveness.

While global literature indicates a positive correlation between disruptive innovation and a firm's adaptability, there is a paucity of empirical studies in the Nigerian context, specifically among telecommunications firms in Port Harcourt. Existing studies tend to take a broad view of innovation, often not focusing on its disruptive or entrepreneurial aspects, and they frequently overlook how such innovations translate into real-time responsiveness in complex and dynamic markets. Consequently, this study aims to investigate the impact of entrepreneurial disruptive innovation on the organizational responsiveness of telecommunications firms in Port Harcourt. It seeks to ascertain whether firms that adopt disruptive, entrepreneurially-driven innovations are better equipped to anticipate and respond effectively to market shifts, customer demands, and competitive pressures. Furthermore, this research intends to address a significant gap in existing literature by providing contextual evidence from a developing economy, thereby offering insights that can inform managerial decision-making and policy formulation within the industry.

Conceptual Framework

Entrepreneurial Disruptive Innovation

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Organizational Responsiveness

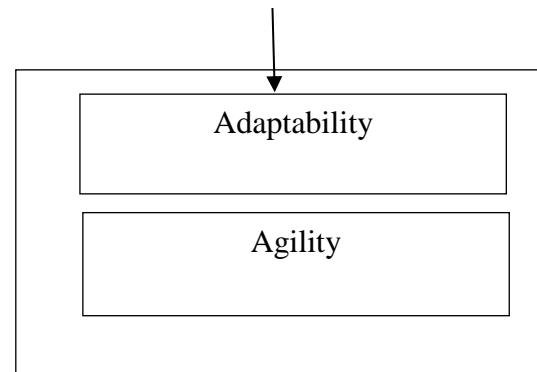


Fig. 1.1 Conceptual model of Entrepreneurial Disruptive Innovation and Organizational Responsiveness.

Source: Adapted from: Charles, & Wechie, (2023).

Aim and Objectives of the Study

The aim of this study is to ascertain the relationship between Entrepreneurial Disruptive Innovation and Organizational Responsiveness of telecommunication companies in Port Harcourt. The specific objectives are to;

- i. Determine the relationship between entrepreneurial disruptive innovation and adaptability of telecommunication companies in Port Harcourt
- ii. Ascertain the relationship between entrepreneurial disruptive innovation and agility of telecommunication companies in Port Harcourt

Research Hypothesis

H₀₁: There is no significant relationship between entrepreneurial disruptive innovation and adaptability of telecommunication companies in Port Harcourt

H₀₂: There is no significant relationship between entrepreneurial disruptive innovation and agility of telecommunication companies in Port Harcourt

Review of Related Literature

Theoretical Foundation: In the disruptive innovation theory elucidates how novel entrants or current firms introduce innovations that initially target niche or lower-tier markets, progressively displacing established competitors. Disruptive innovations typically present as more cost-effective, straightforward, and accessible alternatives to preexisting solutions (Kořacz, Quintavalla, & Yalnazov, 2019). Gradually, these innovations adapt to satisfy the needs of the mainstream market, transforming industry dynamics and compelling incumbents to either adapt or risk obsolescence. In the realm of telecommunications firms in Port Harcourt, this theory elucidates how entrepreneurial ventures or innovative units within larger telecom entities bring forth technologies or business models, such as mobile money services, pay-as-you-go data plans, or AI-driven customer support, which initially appeal to underserved or price-sensitive consumers. These innovations progressively gain momentum, establishing new benchmarks for service delivery, pricing, and customer interaction (Purchase, & Volery, 2020). The theory provides a rationale for why firms need to remain responsive, proactive, and strategically equipped to lead or endure industry upheavals. This theory directly aligns with the predictor variable in this study, entrepreneurial disruptive innovation, as it encapsulates the nature, trajectory, and impact of innovations challenging conventional industry standards.

Entrepreneurial Disruptive Innovation

The scholarly community has grappled with defining "disruptive innovation" (Mahto et al., 2020). While Christensen's (2006) original concept is often viewed as either essential or inconsistent (Hopp et al., 2018), it remains key to comprehending the idea. Christensen (2006) posits that disruptive innovation can be generally categorized into low-end and new-market disruptions (Yu and Hang Chieh, 2008), commencing within niche markets (Petzold et al., 2019). Low-end disruption offers a cost-effective and reduced-quality alternative to existing products or services, without advancing their performance (Henderson, 2006). Conversely, new-market disruption introduces functionalities to consumers in an innovative manner, namely products or services with features and performance attributes distinct from those of current offerings (Reinhardt and Gurtner, 2011). Over time, disruptive innovation gains acceptance among mainstream consumers who initially opposed it (Schmidt and Druehl, 2008). Thus, some academics concur that disruptive innovations create new markets and functionalities, consequently transforming existing industries (Danneels, 2004). This conceptualization is reflected in Schumpeter's (1942) theory of economic change, particularly in the initial interpretation of "creative destruction," which views the innovation process as "incessantly destroying the old one, incessantly creating a new one."

Organizational Responsiveness

Customer responsiveness is characterized by Kumar & Singh (2017) as a company's ability to swiftly respond to the needs and desires of its customers, as well as adapt to changing market conditions. Alireza, Anahita, Somayeh, Arian, and Amin (2011) define it as fulfilling customers' legitimate demands in a timely manner. Pehrsson (2014) views it as an organization's engagement of clients in decision-making processes related to activities that add value, such as problem-solving, relationship-building, and service customization. According to Grandey, Goldberg, and Pugh (2011), responsiveness is an employee's responsibility to promptly address customers' needs and inquiries, which is essential for service excellence. In reality, a company's ability to effectively meet its clients' desires is one of the crucial factors that determine its performance in competitive markets (Jayachandran, Hewett & Kaufman, 2004). Quickly addressing client needs can positively impact the company and establish it as a leader in the industry, thereby enhancing its performance. A firm gains a competitive advantage based on differentiation and ultimately improves performance by surpassing its competitors in understanding, identifying, and fulfilling the evolving needs of its customers. This is essential for achieving superior customer responsiveness (Alireza et al., 2011).

Empirical Review

Charles and Wechie (2023) studied business recovery and organizational responsiveness of telecommunication firms in South-South, Nigeria. The study utilized a cross-sectional survey design to gather data. Primary data was collected through structured questionnaires that were distributed to 28 management staff members from four telecommunications companies MTN, Globacom, Airtel, and 9mobile in the South-South region of Nigeria. The research tested three hypotheses; each considered bivariate, using Spearman's Rank Order Correlation. The hypotheses were evaluated with this correlation coefficient at a 0.05 significance level. The study's findings identified the processes and actions involved in managing and coordinating business life-cycle dynamics as crucial for enhancing the responsiveness of telecommunications firms in this region. Additionally, the results indicated a significant relationship between business recovery and organizational responsiveness in these firms.

Okeke, et al. (2020) investigated disruptive innovation on sustainable entrepreneurship in selected telecommunication industries in South East Nigeria. The research utilized a descriptive survey methodology for this study. A sample of 201 participants was selected from a total population of 917. The hypotheses were tested using inferential statistical techniques, specifically Regression Analysis and Pearson's Correlation Analysis, conducted with the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) software, version 20. The findings indicate a significant positive impact of new market disruptions on sustainable entrepreneurship opportunities, with a correlation coefficient of .568, F-value of 122.059, t-value of 11.048, and a p-value less than 0.05. Additionally, there is a noteworthy positive influence of low-end disruptions on uncertainty in sustainable entrepreneurship actions, with a correlation coefficient of .776, F-value of 387.760, t-value of 19.692, and a p-value less than 0.05. The study concludes that disruptive innovations significantly affect sustainable entrepreneurship within the selected telecommunications companies in Southeast Nigeria.

Gabriel and Edenkwo (2024) researched on entrepreneurial Innovations and Organizational performance of telecommunication firms in Port Harcourt, Nigeria. The investigation employed a correlational approach as a method of inquiry alongside a quantitative research methodology. The study's population consisted of 20 managerial personnel from 4 telecommunication companies located in Rivers. A census study was conducted, targeting managerial staff, specifically those in Research and Development, Marketing, and Sales managerial positions. A questionnaire was distributed, with each company receiving five copies, amounting to a total distribution of 20 questionnaires. The reliability of the research instrument was assessed utilizing Cronbach's alpha via the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 23, yielding a coefficient of 0.78, surpassing the standard threshold of 0.70. The collected data were analyzed using both descriptive and inferential statistical methods. Hypotheses were tested through the Pearson Product Moment Correlation Method, facilitated by SPSS version 23.0. The research results indicated that the entrepreneurial innovation

facets of product and process innovations exhibited a strong, positive, and statistically significant correlation with organizational performance.

Oguru, et al. (2023) examined entrepreneurial proactiveness and organisational performance of telecommunication companies in south-south, Nigeria. The investigation utilized an explanatory research framework. The target population consisted of the four mobile telecommunications firms operating within the South-South region of Nigeria, specifically MTN, Globacom, Airtel, and 9Mobile. From each of these four companies, five managerial personnel were selected from across the six states constituting the South-South geopolitical area of Nigeria, resulting in a comprehensive sample size of 120 participants. Data collection was facilitated through a meticulously crafted questionnaire, employing a Likert scale ranging from strong disagreement to strong agreement. For data analysis purposes, inferential statistical methods, particularly the Pearson's Product Moment Correlation, were applied to evaluate the formulated hypotheses. All analytical procedures were executed using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS), version 25.0. The results pointed to entrepreneurial proactiveness as a robust indicator of organizational efficacy. Therefore, we infer that entrepreneurial proactiveness holds a substantial correlation with the organizational performance of telecommunication entities in the South-South region of Nigeria.

Methodology

This study employs a quantitative research approach to investigate the association between entrepreneurial disruptive innovation and the organizational responsiveness of telecommunication firms in Port Harcourt. The rationale for selecting this approach lies in the necessity to gather quantifiable data, evaluate hypotheses, and discern patterns or correlations between variables. The research utilizes a descriptive and explanatory survey methodology. The descriptive component offers an overview of the existing entrepreneurial innovation practices within the telecommunication industry, while the explanatory component aims to ascertain the extent to which entrepreneurial disruptive innovation can predict organizational responsiveness. The study's population consists of employees from various telecommunication firms operating in Port Harcourt, encompassing both multinational and local companies. These include major providers such as MTN Nigeria, Airtel, Globacom, and 9mobile, along with smaller Internet Service Providers (ISPs) and emerging digital telecom startups with operations in the city. A stratified random sampling method will be employed to ensure adequate representation across departments such as innovation, operations, marketing, and customer service. Within each organization, employees will be categorized according to these departments, and random samples will be drawn from each group. The sample size was determined using the Yamane formula for finite populations. With an assumed population of 300 staff members across selected firms, a sample size of approximately 171 respondents was chosen. The study will primarily rely on data gathered through structured questionnaires. To ensure content validity, the questionnaire will be reviewed by academic experts and professionals within the telecommunication sector. A pilot test was conducted with 20 respondents from firms not included in the final sample. The reliability of the instrument will be assessed using Cronbach's Alpha, with a coefficient of 0.70 and above deemed acceptable.

Data analysis will be performed using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) version 25. The Pearson Product-Moment Correlation was employed to examine the strength and direction of the relationship between entrepreneurial disruptive innovation and organizational responsiveness. Simple and Multiple Regression Analyses will be utilized to determine the predictive influence of various dimensions of entrepreneurial disruptive innovation (e.g., innovativeness, proactiveness, risk-taking) on organizational responsiveness. Hypotheses will be tested at a 0.05 level of significance.

Statistical Analyses using Spearman Ranking Correlation

Entrepreneurial Disruptive Innovation and Adaptability

H₀₁: There is no significant relationship between entrepreneurial disruptive innovation and adaptability of telecommunication companies in Port Harcourt

Correlations

	Entrepreneurial disruptive innovation	Adaptability
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Spearman's rho	Entrepreneurial disruptive innovation	Correlation Coefficient	1.000	.819**
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.	.000
		N	171	171
	Adaptability	Correlation Coefficient	.819**	1.000
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.
		N	171	171

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

Source: Field Survey Data, 2025, SPSS (Output)

The result shows that entrepreneurial disruptive innovation has a strong significant relationship and positively correlates with adaptability at a $Rho = 0.819$ and a $Pv = 0.000$. The result presents entrepreneurial disruptive innovation as having a significant and positive impact on the two measures of organizational responsiveness of telecommunication companies in Port Harcourt. Therefore, we reject null hypotheses one and two relating to entrepreneurial disruptive innovation and adaptability, because the $Pv (0.000) < 0.05$ level of significance.

Entrepreneurial Disruptive Innovation and Agility

H₀₂: There is no significant relationship between entrepreneurial disruptive innovation and agility of telecommunication companies in Port Harcourt

Correlations

			Entrepreneurial disruptive innovation	Agility
Spearman's rho	Entrepreneurial disruptive innovation	Correlation Coefficient	1.000	.821**
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.	.000
		N	381	381
	Agility	Correlation Coefficient	.821**	1.000
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.
		N	381	381

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

Source: Field Survey Data, 2025, SPSS (Output)

The result shows that entrepreneurial disruptive innovation has a strong significant relationship and positively correlates with agility at a $Rho = 0.821$ and a $Pv = 0.000$. The result presents entrepreneurial disruptive innovation as having a significant and positive impact on the two measures of organizational responsiveness and as such contributing significantly toward telecommunication companies in Port Harcourt. Therefore, we reject null hypotheses one and two relating to entrepreneurial disruptive innovation and agility, because the $Pv (0.000) < 0.05$ level of significance.

Discussions of Findings

The research examined the impact of entrepreneurial disruptive innovation on the ability of telecommunication companies in Port Harcourt to respond effectively to market demands, focusing particularly on agility and adaptability as core dimensions of responsiveness. The results indicated a significant and positive correlation between entrepreneurial disruptive innovation and organizational responsiveness. It was observed that companies engaging in entrepreneurial disruptive innovation exhibited enhanced agility. In particular, telecommunication companies that implemented innovative service delivery methods, launched novel digital

platforms, and employed real-time data analytics demonstrated a heightened capacity to respond promptly to customer inquiries, introduce new service packages, and adjust pricing models. These findings support the argument advanced by Doz and Kosonen (2010) that innovation-driven enterprises are more agile because they empower decision-making at the operational level, minimize bureaucratic delays, and continuously monitor market trends. Within the highly competitive context of Port Harcourt, where consumer preferences are rapidly evolving, agility has become a vital factor for success. The study found that firms with a strong entrepreneurial orientation particularly those willing to take calculated risks and act proactively were more adept at launching mobile financial services, resolving service disruptions, and tailoring offers to specific market segments. This is consistent with Christensen's (1997) assertion that disruptive innovators often move more rapidly and adapt more swiftly than traditional incumbents.

The findings further revealed that firms adopting entrepreneurial disruptive innovation exhibited greater adaptability in response to regulatory changes, technological advancements, and evolving customer expectations. For instance, companies that introduced AI-driven customer support systems, migrated to cloud infrastructure, or restructured their service delivery models demonstrated a higher degree of adaptability compared to those adhering to conventional frameworks. This outcome corroborates the work of Tushman and O'Reilly (1996), who argued that adaptability is a function of an organization's strategic flexibility and willingness to embrace change. The study showed that telecommunication firms in Port Harcourt that prioritized innovation through entrepreneurial thinking were better equipped to revise their business models and pivot strategies during industry disruptions, such as policy changes or network challenges. Furthermore, such firms exhibited a greater capacity for workforce reskilling and organizational restructuring. Overall, the findings suggest that entrepreneurial disruptive innovation significantly enhances both agility and adaptability.

Conclusion and Recommendations

This research explored the connection between entrepreneurial transformative innovation and organizational responsiveness within telecommunications companies in Port Harcourt. In an age marked by swift technological advancements, shifting customer preferences, and fierce competition in the telecommunications sector, companies must embrace dynamic and inventive strategies to stay ahead. The research highlighted that entrepreneurial transformative innovation characterized by elements such as creativity, risk-taking, proactive initiatives, customer-focused strategies, and leveraging technology plays a crucial role in enhancing a company's capacity to anticipate and adeptly respond to changes in its external environment. The findings indicate that companies actively pursuing entrepreneurial transformative innovation are better equipped to promptly and effectively address market demands, customer grievances, regulatory challenges, and technological progressions. Such companies tend to exhibit agility, elevate customer satisfaction, and maintain a competitive advantage. In contrast, organizations that uphold rigid structures and resist innovation may face difficulties in meeting the rapidly evolving needs of the telecommunications market in Port Harcourt.

Additionally, the research addressed a noteworthy gap in existing literature by concentrating on the Nigerian telecommunications sector a context where infrastructural limitations, service deficiencies, and intense competition create distinct challenges and opportunities for innovation. By empirically associating entrepreneurial transformative innovation with organizational responsiveness, this study offers valuable insights for both academic researchers and industry practitioners. Entrepreneurial transformative innovation serves not only as a catalyst for market evolution but also as a strategic instrument for enhancing organizational responsiveness. Telecommunications companies in Port Harcourt, and broadly in Nigeria, must prioritize transformative and entrepreneurial thinking to boost their responsiveness, sustain customer loyalty, and foster long-term growth. Consequently, it is advisable for companies to cultivate a culture of innovation, invest in emerging technologies, and encourage employees to undertake calculated risks to remain adaptable in a rapidly changing business environment. However, Drawing from the insights and outcomes of the research on Entrepreneurial Disruptive Innovation and the organizational responsiveness of Telecommunication Companies in Port Harcourt, a series of suggestions are posited to augment adaptability and maintain enduring competitiveness.

- i. Telecommunications companies must cultivate an internal environment that fosters innovation, forward-thinking, and strategic risk-taking.
- ii. These organizations should focus on allocating resources toward the advancement of nascent and transformative technologies, including artificial intelligence, fifth-generation (5G) networks, the Internet of Things (IoT), and platforms that operate on cloud technology.

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