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ENTREPRENEURIAL CREATIVITY AND PERFORMANCE OF BREAD MANUFACTURING FIRMS IN SOUTH-SOUTH ZONE, NIGERIA

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Abstract
The aim of this study was to examine the relationship between the success of bread manufacturing businesses in the South-South region of Nigeria and entrepreneurial ingenuity. The primary objectives were to determine the relationship between efficiency and profitability as performance metrics and originality, resourcefulness, and problem-solving skills. A cross-sectional survey design was used to collect data from 279 management professionals from 93 registered bread manufacturing businesses. After estimating the sample size using Taro Yamane's approach, the 164-person sample was distributed among the six states using the Bowley proportional allocation method. The demographic data was analysed using descriptive statistics, while the remaining data was analysed using Pearson's product-moment correlation coefficient. The two components of entrepreneurial creativity, resourcefulness and problem-solving, were both favourably and significantly

Keyword: ***Bread Manufacturing Firms, Creativity, Entrepreneurial Creativity, Firms Performance.***

INTRODUCTION

Experiential contributions have emerged from discussions about entrepreneurial activity as crucial to the long-term viability of businesses. The important component of an entrepreneurial mindset, according to numerous contributions, is the innate creativity of entrepreneurs. This, in turn, encourages innovation in the form of new products and services as well as processes that ensure outstanding delivery (Venterkarhman, 2014). Firms with a sharp focus on the market are said to have entrepreneurial creativity that allows them to adjust to changes in the business environment. Anderson (2016) proposed the idea that an innate creative mentality promotes persistent entrepreneurial behaviour. According to Culpepper (2015), to stay competitive in a constantly changing economic climate, entrepreneurial creativity needs to be strategically orientated. Entrepreneurial innovation entails generating novel, practical ideas for a business or project and successfully executing them. Products, services, new markets, production techniques, distribution channels, and the procurement of necessary resources are all examples of areas that might benefit from creative thinking (Gorgievski et al., 2014).

The ability to implement unique and relevant solutions while launching a product or service to the market is a critical component of entrepreneurial creativity. Entrepreneurs need to question assumptions, look about them, incorporate ideas from different areas, deal with uncertainty, and make new connections in order to foster creative thinking (Zhang & Bartol, 2010). Proactive innovation relies on anticipating future problems and developing solutions to them. Like entrepreneurs, this method seeks new opportunities. Entrepreneurs need to be imaginative if they want to identify possibilities and take advantage of them. Innovation, finance, development, and growth of new businesses like startups all rely on creative thinking. Entrepreneurs need to be creative thinkers to come up with new ideas and sell them to venture capitalists. Novel concepts have the potential to bring forth either subtle improvements or game-changing innovations, which can significantly impact the market and drive the success of new businesses. On the other hand, exploitation is all about getting things done better, faster, and more efficiently (Lee et al., 2020). Exploration is the conduct in business characterised by curiosity, discovery, risk-taking, and invention. The use of fresh ideas in business endeavours, such as the launch of brand-new

products or markets, is an example of what could be called entrepreneurial activity (DeMassis et al., 2018).

Zhou et al. (2015) noted that research on creativity highlights the possible dangers and rewards of exploring more radical ideas, despite the tension between exploration and commercialisation. The literature on creativity highlights this conflict. According to Zhou et al. (2015), creative ideas are often used to help businesses grow and stay in business. Anderson et al. (2014) suggest that combining new information with old knowledge can lead to the development of new ideas. A company's success depends on its employees' ability to think creatively and come up with new ideas (Im et al., 2013). The ability of entrepreneurs in Nigeria to think creatively and practically is crucial to their companies' long-term success, according to a plethora of studies (George & Zhou, 2012; Amabile, 2016).

By raising the bar for product and service quality, it gives companies an advantage in today's fast-paced business climates (Gilson, 2018), which is essential for maintaining competitiveness and meeting evolving consumer demands. The capacity to materialise fresh ideas is what Gilson (2018) calls entrepreneurial creativity. Both generating ideas and effectively implementing those ideas are essential components of entrepreneurial creativity (Morgan, 2015). The ideas that are generated need to be practical, practical, and helpful. Methods that can be achieved through entrepreneurial innovation include recognising problems, making educated guesses, developing hypotheses, and questioning accepted standards. An organisation's performance is enhanced when its resources and talents are brought together through creative endeavours. According to Cavusgil and Zou (2014), it shows how well companies do in meeting their financial and strategic goals. Creative efforts ought to produce better outcomes than businesses that refrain from engaging in such pursuits. According to Conceicão et al. (2014), there are numerous measures used to evaluate a business's performance. These include sales per employee, ROI (return on investment), total assets, exports per employee, total employment, and profit margins. Acquiring objective performance measurements could be challenging, but they are more accurate. This is because small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) have a lot of performance unpredictability, which makes analysis difficult, and because business owners are reluctant to provide financial information (Sapienza et al., 2018).

There is a noticeable gap in the literature regarding the specific consequences of entrepreneurial creativity for bread-manufacturing enterprises in fast-food firms in the Yenagoa metropolis, Bayelsa State, even though the importance of entrepreneurial creativity in fostering innovation and success in business is well-known. The bread manufacturing business in this region is unique; therefore, research from other areas can provide important insights. However, to fully understand the complex relationship between entrepreneurial innovation and manufacturing enterprise performance, a specialised analysis is necessary. Moreover, most of the existing literature treats entrepreneurial innovation in a broad sense, ignoring its specific features that can be important for the bread manufacturing industry. To address this knowledge gap, this research looks at the fast food industry in Yenagoa metropolitan, Bayelsa State, and how entrepreneurial innovation affects its success.

Statement of the Problem

The topic of company performance has occupied a considerable amount of research. The company's long-term success relies on maintaining high performance in various areas, which further emphasises this focus. Businesses see a decline in profitability when they operate in an unstable economy with poor capacity utilisation. As an example, Alade (2018) demonstrated a direct correlation between the increasing morbidity among small businesses in developing nations and a decrease in profitability as a result of decreases in patronage and increased capital expenses. They have been unable to attract investment capital due to a shortage of operational cash. The current economic climate, which is characterised by high inflation, has negatively impacted operational efficiency. Especially for small and medium-sized businesses

(SMEs) that are fighting for survival in this economic storm, the inefficiencies seen are the result of increased operational costs and other kinds of waste, such as delays in production and higher supply chain expenses. Strategic intervention is necessary to achieve the required performance level among challenges and has attracted academic interest. The impact of risk management on the productivity of a large Finnish manufacturing company was studied by Fillis and Rentschler (2021). A significant coefficient pertaining to the influence was suggested by the study's results. A study by Hong et al. (2013) showed that there is a strong relationship between a company's success and its strategic attitude toward learning. This research indicates a persistent performance gap, particularly among small and medium-sized organisations, especially in economically disadvantaged areas. This suggests that these companies have a hard time implementing the kind of strategic learning orientations that would boost their success, which may include adopting innovative practices, investing in employee training, and fostering a culture of continuous improvement. Israel (2015) looked at how Norwegian recreation centres fared in relation to the number of people who had an entrepreneurial mindset. His study found a statistically significant link. However, no studies were ever carried out in developing economies, which differ significantly from industrialised ones. Therefore, additional research is required to fill the gap that this scenario creates. This research takes a close look at the fast food industry in Yenagoa City, Bayelsa State, to see whether there is a correlation between entrepreneurial inventiveness and business success.

Research Questions

The following research questions guided the study:

1. What is the relationship between resourcefulness and profitability of fast food firms in Yenagoa metropolis, Bayelsa State?
2. Does a relationship exist between problem solving and profitability of fast food firms in Yenagoa metropolis, Bayelsa State?

Research Hypotheses

The following null hypotheses were formulated to guide the study:

1. There is no significant relationship between resourcefulness and profitability of food firms in Yenagoa metropolis, Bayelsa State
2. There is no significant relationship between problem solving and profitability of food firms in Yenagoa metropolis, Bayelsa State.

Aim and Objectives of the Study

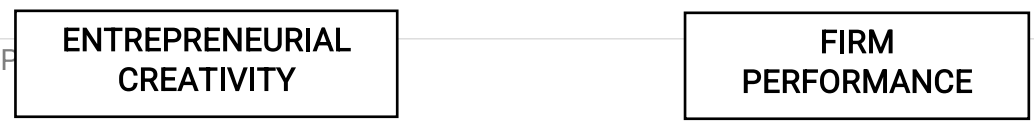
The aim of this study is to examine the relationship between entrepreneurial creativity and performance of fast food firms in Yenagoa metropolis, Bayelsa State.. Specifically, the study sought to:

1. examine the relationship between resourcefulness and profitability of fast food firms in Yenagoa metropolis, Bayelsa State.
2. ascertain the relationship between problem solving and profitability of fast food firms in Yenagoa metropolis, Bayelsa State.

Conceptual Review

This section on extensively discussed entrepreneurial creativity, dimensions of entrepreneurial creativity, firm performance and its measures, and other concepts relating to the variables under study.

Conceptual Framework



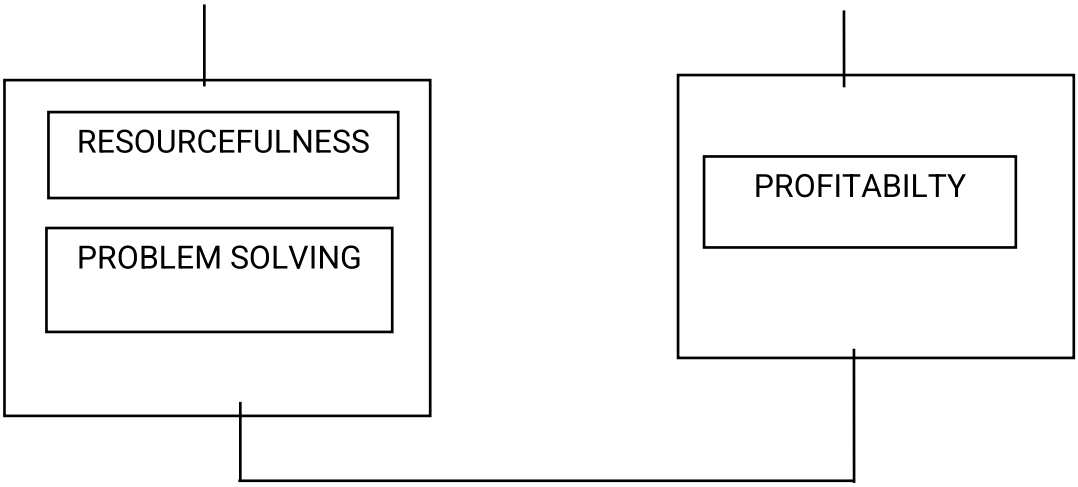


Figure 2.1: Conceptual framework of the Relationship between Entrepreneurial Creativity and Firm.
Source: Adapted from Antonites and Van Vuuren (2014). Kanfer and Kantrowitz (2002)

Entrepreneurial Creativity

In fast-paced industries, staying ahead of the competition requires entrepreneurial creativity, which is defined as the ability to come up with new and useful ideas. Allowing for the discovery of opportunities and the launch of new businesses, this innovation stage is the starting point of the innovation process. De Massis et al. (2018) assert that entrepreneurs should make use of their imagination to find untapped product-market niches and unique ways to offer value. In order to build companies that can reliably turn concepts into profitable goods, these are necessary. According to Dabć et al. (2021), the essence of entrepreneurial innovation is its capacity to assist organisations in adjusting, prospering, and developing in the face of constantly shifting conditions. George and Zhou (2018) define creative thinking as the process of generating novel, practical, and exceptional ideas. In order for these ideas to be useful, they need to improve the chances of reaching specific goals. According to Anderson et al. (2014), creative tasks typically require a different way of thinking because they are open-ended. Global competition, technological advancement, and shorter product life cycles have all increased the importance of creativity and the need for innovative approaches to old problems (Lee et al., 2020). In their 2018 article, George and Zhou define creativity as the process of coming up with novel, practical, and outstanding ideas. In order for these ideas to be useful, they need to improve the chances of reaching specific goals. According to Anderson et al. (2014), creative tasks typically require a different way of thinking because they are open-ended. Global competition, technological advancement, and shorter product life cycles have all increased the importance of creativity and the need for innovative approaches to old problems (Lee et al., 2020). Dabić et al. (2021) define creativity as the process that results in unique and useful products, whereas Vrgović et al. (2017) state that entrepreneurial performance is essential for the creation of jobs and economic growth. A common definition of success in new undertakings is the capacity to endure, adjust, grow, and generate a profit (Gorgievski et al., 2014). One common measure of entrepreneurial success in Nigeria is the ability to survive the initial years (Owoseni & Akanbi, 2014).

Creative thinking is essential for entrepreneurs to keep ahead of the competition and secure their advantage. However, to transform unique ideas into marketable products, innovation is key, not originality. Innovation, which is the process of improving products, processes, or ideas, is essential for transforming creativity into value (Montiel-Campos, 2018). Entrepreneurs that think outside the

box are more likely to come up with novel solutions to problems, according to research by Zhou et al. (2021). The capacity to generate and implement novel approaches to the establishment of new enterprises is fundamental to entrepreneurial innovation. Various individual and societal factors influence it, including ways of thinking, motivation, personality, intelligence, and knowledge (Cunningham & Lischeron, 2015). When entrepreneurs use a mix of intrinsic and extrinsic motivators, such as rewards for skill improvement, their creativity soars, according to research by Li and Zhang (2016). Employees are more likely to incorporate their interests into creative business plans as a result of this synergy (Montiel-Campos, 2018).

Creative thinking is essential for entrepreneurs to keep ahead of the competition and secure their advantage. However, to transform unique ideas into marketable products, innovation is key, not originality. Innovation, which is the process of improving products, processes, or ideas, is essential for transforming creativity into value (Montiel-Campos, 2018). Research by Zhou et al. (2021) suggests that entrepreneurs who think creatively are more likely to develop innovative solutions to problems. The capacity to generate and implement novel approaches to the establishment of new enterprises is fundamental to entrepreneurial innovation. Various individual and societal factors influence it, including ways of thinking, motivation, personality, intelligence, and knowledge (Cunningham & Lischeron, 2015). When entrepreneurs use a mix of intrinsic and extrinsic motivators, such as rewards for skill improvement, their creativity soars, according to research by Li and Zhang (2016). Employees are more likely to incorporate their interests into creative business plans as a result of this synergy (Montiel-Campos, 2018).

Entrepreneurial innovation allows firms to innovate, adapt to changing environments, and challenge established market structures (Audretsch & Belitski, 2020). Creativity is essential for companies to thrive in complex and competitive environments because it enables them to innovate, adapt, and grow. When entrepreneurial creativity blends the novel with the pragmatic, it can uncover advantages over the competition and ensure long-term success (Sternberg & Lubart, 2019).

Resourcefulness

Entrepreneurial resourcefulness is defined as the ability to manage difficult, complicated, and demanding situations through effective self-regulatory behaviours (Sahin et al., 2015). According to Kanungo and Misra (2022), three basic abilities action orientation, emotional intelligence, and cognitive capacity constitute entrepreneurial resourcefulness. These cognitive abilities allow for effective adjustment to different environmental factors. A talent for resourcefulness influences entrepreneurial action in various ways, including the process of spotting possibilities and beginning enterprises, such as identifying market gaps, leveraging networks, and adapting strategies to overcome challenges. Entrepreneurial resourcefulness enhances the ability to predict entrepreneurial behaviour (Sasi and Sendil, 2018). An entrepreneur's ability to creatively use both financial and non-financial resources is critical to the success of their business (Russell).

Applying novel and imaginative approaches to address problems in society, business, or technology is the essence of entrepreneurial problem-solving. When personal struggles are recognised and validated in the marketplace, they can sometimes inspire entrepreneurial endeavours, resulting in new solutions that benefit both the entrepreneur and society as a whole. When entrepreneurs see a need in the market, they either fill it by developing new products or enhancing current ones. These solutions might help with things like user experience, efficiency, or unfulfilled consumer demands. Rather than concentrating on opportunity detection or product development, this chapter emphasises entrepreneurial attitudes and problem-solving methodologies. According to Mayer (2014), when the answer is not immediately obvious, problem-solving is the mental process of trying to change the current situation into the desired one.

Analytical, critical, creative, and logical thinking, along with drawing on one's own experiences, are all essential abilities for addressing problems (Reeve, 2017). As early as infancy, humans actively begin to solve problems, acquire new information, and organise their memories into organised

knowledge (Resnick & Glaser, 2014). This body of knowledge governs our understanding of the world and our responses to problems in many spheres of existence, such as the job and the classroom. According to AAAS (2016), real-world problems are frequently complex, open-ended, and ill-structured; this is in line with the scientific inquiry that emphasises the lack of specified procedures to get scientific information (Fortus et al., 2015; Yu et al., 2014). From simple problems with a single solution (such as turning on an appliance) to more complicated systems with many interrelated difficulties, there is a vast variety of problem types (Frensch et al., 2016). The first kind of challenge is well-defined, with specific goals and parameters; the second is ill-defined, with no clear parameters and no apparent answers (Blanchard-Fields, 2015). According to Vancouver et al. (2016), solving complex problems frequently calls for creative thinking and abstract reasoning. Everyone from engineers to business owners to physicians to mathematicians to social scientists has their own unique way of contemplating and solving challenges. The field of psychology refers to the process of identifying and resolving issues in a practical way as problem-solving (Dimotakis et al., 2012). A key component of problem-solving-related critical thinking is the ability to make reasonable decisions in light of available evidence (Roodt, 2015). Critical thinking, like the scientific method, comprises proposing a hypothesis, gathering relevant data, logically testing the hypothesis, and drawing a trustworthy conclusion (Sarwako et al., 2016). Evaluating possible solutions and making educated decisions based on principles of critical thinking are part of a larger process that includes processing shared societal needs and environmental concerns (Leroy et al., 2017). Because they question authority figures, the status quo, and conventional wisdom an inquiry based approach critical thinkers, according to Frake (2017), wield enormous societal power.

Problem-Solving

Entrepreneurial problem-solving entails coming up with innovative answers to challenges in the realms of society, business, and technology. When shown in the market, personal struggles can motivate businesses. When entrepreneurs see a need in the market that isn't being filled, they either improve existing products or come up with entirely new ones. This can involve coming up with novel technology or services. Instead of looking at how entrepreneurs identify opportunities or make products, this chapter focuses on how they solve problems. According to Mayer (2014), when the answer is unclear, problem-solving entails mental operations that transform the current situation into the ideal one. To overcome obstacles, problem-solving specialists agree that emotional, motivational, and cognitive aspects play a role (Reef et al., 2015; Klieme, 2014).

A person's understanding of the problem is the starting point, according to Funke (2015), and the process continues with activities that make use of existing resources to attain the final state, which may include analysing the problem, generating potential solutions, and evaluating their effectiveness. Competence in these areas typically necessitates emotional intelligence, drive, and motivation. Whether it's a simple activity or a complex corporate or technical issue, problem-solving is an essential skill (Ohlsson, 2015). To find answers to issues, one must be able to: analyse; think critically; be creative and logical; and have experience (Reeve, 2017). People learn to solve problems and organise information in memories while they are young (Resnick & Glaser, 2014). According to Blanchard-Fields (2015), well-defined problems have clear objectives and obstacles, whereas problems that are ill-defined are ambiguous and lack a definitive solution. To overcome complex problems, one must use abstract reasoning and imagination (Vancouver et al., 2016), which can involve applying different strategies depending on the field, such as analytical thinking in engineering or creative problem-solving in social science.

Firm Performance

In business, "performance" is often defined as meeting objectives within the allotted time limit while simultaneously cutting expenses and making the most of available resources. Employees' performance is measured in two ways: the standard of the workplace and the degree of service provided to customers. Managers' performance, for instance, may be defined as the degree to

which the firm is profitable or competitive. Because of all the different departments that make up the company, the idea isn't consistent. Performance is often described by scholars as a complex concept that can be interpreted in different ways depending on the subject being studied. Performance can be defined in two ways, according to Osisioma et al. (2015). One way looks at it as the actions taken to complete tasks, while the other way looks at it as the outcomes.

According to Nnabuife (2009), performance is the sum of an employee's efforts leading to a defined goal, which managers must then compensate in line with their expectations. As key measures of how well an organisation accomplishes its objectives and satisfies stakeholder expectations, performance outcomes are directly tied to the organisation's strategic goals, customer satisfaction, and financial contributions. As mentioned in Akintonde (2013), Armstrong (2004) argues that performance is best understood as behaviour, particularly as it pertains to the way in which individuals, groups, and organisations carry out their operations. Hornsby et al. (2017) state that "performance" encompasses both the level of success in completing a task and the effort required to actually carry it out. The usefulness of performance reviews in revealing employees' accomplishments, the most effective strategies, and the rate at which they are progressing toward their career objectives has been proven by a number of studies, including Nnabuife (2009) and Osisioma et al. (2015).

Rose and Hudgins (2018) define a financial institution's performance as its ability to meet the demands of its diverse stakeholders. Among these groups are the company's shareholders, workers, depositors, creditors, and borrowers. Bank performance is important for investors to keep an eye on because it affects ROI, shows how stable the economy is, and makes investing in the bank a safer bet. A systematic evaluation procedure that gives feedback on an organisation's performance over time is often necessary for improvement among individuals, groups, or organisations. You can provide this information in a number of ways; for example, through financial analysis reports, surveys of customers, or performance appraisals. It is necessary to assess the performance before claiming an improvement. What connects the decision-making processes of an organisation to its aims and objectives is performance. Performance can be either determinant-based (involving factors like price and products) or results-based (involving factors like profitability and market share), according to Abdulrasheed et al. (2021). They go on to say that performance is multi-faceted and involves things like financial results (profit or loss), productivity (output/input connections), customer attention (via things like quality), innovation, adaptability, and HR expertise.

Profitability

Owners' equity is a source of funding for a company's operations. Profitability is the lifeblood of every company in today's cutthroat business climate. Profitability is defined by Bacha and Attia (2016) as the efficiency with which a company uses its resources. So, it's crucial for many business stakeholders. A company's profitability determines the level of interest from stakeholders such as investors, creditors, employees, and others. Profitability is a key performance indicator for most stakeholders. Management, employees, bondholders, investors, and trade creditors all keep an eye on how profitable a business is. All publicly traded companies are required to provide financial reports, which financial analysts use to calculate profitability. In addition to revealing the company's profitability, these statements provide stakeholders with reliable, consistent, and accurate financial data. Companies' bottom lines are affected by a lot of different things. You can find these metrics, among others: ROE, ROA, EPS, DPS, and BPS. Profitability with BPS is measured in this study. While other financial indices have been extensively studied in relation to the ownership structure of Nigerian financial institutions, BPS has received less attention. Profitability can be measured using BPS in certain instances, according to Catuogno et al. (2016).

A company's "gross profit" is its profit less its production and selling expenses. By deducting the cost of goods sold from revenue from sales, this figure is displayed on a company's financial

statement. One measure of a business's financial health is its gross profit, which is also known as sales profit or gross income. Operating profit is the remaining amount after deducting operational expenditures from gross profit. Net profit is the remaining amount after deducting taxes and interest. Net sales less product expenses over a period of time equal gross profit. Calculating gross profit is as simple as subtracting product expenses from net sales. Gross Profit Margin (GPM) is an important metric for evaluating a company's success right alongside gross profit. The gross profit margin (GPM) is a comparison of sales to gross profit over a period of time for a company. The GPM of the company is impacted by sales pricing, according to Ratnasari and Handayani (2013). Performance is enhanced by profitability. Nevertheless, GPM will decline as product prices go up, which could be detrimental to the company's performance (Iftia, 2012), especially if the price hike causes a decline in sales or consumer demand. A company's competitiveness and profitability can be hinted at by looking at its gross profit and gross profit margin.

Empirical Review

Relationship between Entrepreneurial Creativity and Firm Performance

Both the company's strategy and its resources, as well as the entrepreneurial innovation of its personnel, determine the company's performance. According to Amabile (1998) and Gong et al. (2009), employees' creative thinking is a product of their education, experience, and skill in the area. Leadership that encourages employees to think creatively, a culture that values teamwork, and resources that help employees solve problems in new ways are all aspects of a positive work environment (Amabile et al., 2018). According to Sharlay et al. (2000) and Unsworth (2020), in order for firms to thrive in today's dynamic global economy, they must be creative. Workers in every industry, from research and development to manufacturing, require creative individuals since they boost innovation and productivity (Shalley & Gilson, 2004; Andreeva et al., 2021). This language is still difficult to understand in service sectors like healthcare (OECD, 2021). The current government performance discussions emphasise this conceptual mismatch by using outputs and outcomes interchangeably. According to recent studies, policymakers have a hard time differentiating between the two and instead evaluate the effectiveness of services depending on the results they produce (Pollitt & Bouckaert, 2017). This misunderstanding emphasises the necessity of differentiating between outputs (what is produced) and outcomes (the effects or results), particularly when evaluating the efficiency of the public sector.

Resourcefulness and Profitability

Resourcefulness refers to the ability to think quickly and creatively tackle new problems. When faced with challenging objectives and no obvious way forward, one must be resourceful. According to Bang et al. (2021), it promotes original thought. To alleviate poverty, formal education should encourage entrepreneurial spirit, which includes being resourceful, intelligent, proactive, creative, and innovative. To achieve success, one must be creative and resourceful. To enhance customer service and creativity, small businesses need to be creative. Resources include things like money, supplies, and human capital, whereas resourcefulness refers to the ability to overcome challenging work situations. Riches alone do not guarantee success; ingenuity is also necessary. Being resourceful as a manager of people entails thinking of new ways to serve customers and the company (Babalola & Ayemi, 2021). Every manager needs to be creative to come up with innovative ideas. Ineffective decision-making stems from the difficulty in generating ideas in its absence. Creative individuals often discover methods to make tedious jobs go by faster, such as implementing new technologies or streamlining processes to enhance efficiency. Actively engaging in challenging everyday tasks allows resourceful managers to remain optimistic about opportunities, even in the face of uncertainty.

On a continuum that few can achieve due to limits, resourcefulness shows how occupational performance progresses toward the best possible societal contribution. One example of being

resourceful is coming up with ideas and potential replacements. Even when faced with seemingly insurmountable obstacles, resourceful people discover ways to overcome them by reimagining existing challenges and developing novel approaches (Bill, 2022). Being creative means coming up with your materials to make them work better, such as using recycled items or repurposing tools to enhance functionality and efficiency. Being resourceful encourages initiative, originality, and new ideas. Individuals weather economic downturns with resourcefulness rather than riches (Bill, 2022). When faced with economic hardship and competition, a small business's capacity to use its human, material, financial, and physical resources determines its success. We require creativity and new ideas. The ability to respond to challenges like financial restrictions, poor economic conditions, and government laws depends on the resourcefulness of the business operator, who combines all managerial talents with operations to effectively plan and improve management. Udo (2023) argues that factors such as a lack of available capital, unfavourable economic conditions, a dearth of potential business opportunities, and restrictive government regulations work against entrepreneurship. Despite these challenges, operators who are resourceful can still achieve their full potential.

Problem Solving and Profitability

Collaborative creative problem-solving is more effective, according to research by Lumsdaine and Lumsdaine (1994), which promotes holistic and iterative thinking. Members of both the individual and collective levels are urged to question established ways of thinking by considering problems from novel and alternative perspectives. As a result, it may shed light on the dynamics of innovation and the unprofitability of operations within organisations in a way that has never been seen before. Despite numerous empirical investigations on the topic, the relationship between problem-solving and profitability remains elusive (Bowen et al., 2010). Damanpour and Schneider (2016) assert that successful organisations universally recognise innovation as a vital element. Eze (2018) further pointed out that the majority of studies in this field have concentrated on profitability indicators, resulting in a limited exploration of the effect of innovation on non-profitability.

There are two main reasons why the concept of organisational performance encompasses more than just financial achievements. Researchers have examined the consequences of innovation on areas like sales (Cassiman & Veugelers, 2006) and profitability (Jansen et al., 2006) in excellent detail; however, there are two key factors that contribute to this reality. To start, there are other ways to measure an organization's success besides its bottom line. To illustrate the point, non-profits might not place a premium on monetary metrics. Financial measurements do not reflect an organisation's capacity for long-term survival and also offer a narrow view of organisational performance (Kaplan & Norton, 2007), as they often overlook factors such as employee satisfaction, customer loyalty, and social impact that contribute to sustainable success. Businesses should consider more than just financial performance indicators. And as Burisch and Wohlgemuth (2016) point out, innovation is crucial to a company's long-term viability as much as it is to its short-term profitability. Therefore, innovation efforts should center on enhancing performance metrics that are important to key stakeholders, such as consumers, employees, and shareholders.

Theoretical Framework

Componential Theory (Amabile, 1980)

Amabile revised her conception of intrinsic motivation in 1996 by making adjustments to her model of personal creativity (Amabile et al., 1996). Subsequently, in 2008, Amabile and Mueller incorporated affect as an additional factor that determines creativity within companies. According to Hamlin and Sawyer (2007), the updated model proposes that creativity is driven by both internal and extrinsic variables. The updated model proposes that creativity is influenced by both internal factors and external variables. These elements include domain-relevant abilities, creativity-relevant

processes, and task motivation. The model also suggests that factors like one's social surroundings can have an impact on creative output. According to Hamlin and Sawyer (2007), the surrounding environment, especially the social context, can either stimulate or inhibit creativity. Creativity, however, can only flourish in the presence of intrinsic motivation. Spender and Strong (2010) state that individuals, rather than solitary settings, often generate the majority of innovative ideas. The relationship between an individual's intrinsic drive and the external environment, on the other hand, is a complicated one. In situations when the atmosphere is unsupportive or stifling, it is possible that an individual's creative potential may be stifled or never completely discovered.
Amabile's paradigm places emphasis on the need to determine oneself. The extent to which external variables influence creative output. Furthermore, Culpepper (2015) emphasises the significance of evaluating the creative environment in order to ascertain the extent to which it influences individuals' creative processes. Amabile and her colleagues created the "Keys to Creativity and Innovation" (KEYS) instrument. This tool evaluates the creative abilities of both people and groups that are present in the workplace. Validation of KEYS as a tool for quantifying individual perceptions of the work environment, separate from the creative products generated within it, has led to its widespread renown as one of the first and most respected assessment tools for measuring the creative climate in companies (Amabile et al., 1999; Culpepper, 2015).

Empirical Review

Specifically, Gong et al. (2013) investigated how employees' creativity's core knowledge relates to the performance of their organization. Regulating the relationship is a function of risky orientation, firm size, and realised absorptive ability. The research drew from interviews with 761 experts in the field, as well as 148 CEOs and HR directors from 148 tech firms. The results demonstrated that core knowledge, employee creativity and company success were negatively correlated when there was a high level of riskiness orientation. The finding of a high absorptive capacity revealed evidence of a positive correlation. Finally, the correlation was more advantageous for smaller companies than for larger ones.
Hassan et al. (2013) studied the Pakistani banking sector to find out how creative employees are, how it affects innovative capacity and performance, and how to quantify this relationship. Using convenience sampling, the researchers surveyed seven different Pakistani banks with branches in Multan city. The data were analysed using SPSS 16 after 164 questionnaires were sent to these employees. Without controlling for the mediating variable, the results showed a correlation between work complexity, supervisory relationship, and employee inventiveness. Companies that encourage their staff to think outside the box tend to have more innovative products and services, as well as greater overall success.
Stradinger (2015) studied the link between innovative thinking at work and American workers' propensity to stay put. One hundred and ninety-nine employees from various Midwest manufacturing companies took part in this study. The results indicate a strong correlation between employee retention and the level of active participation in creative workplace activities. An examination of the hypothesis linking supervisor-subordinate relationships to employees' propensity to participate in innovative problem-solving revealed no evidence of statistical significance. This study implies that creative engagement greatly increases the percentage of employees who remain with the organization, which has significant implications for both academics and practitioners.
Adim and David (2019) conducted a study on high employee creativity and harmonious working conditions at manufacturing companies in Port Harcourt, Rivers State, Nigeria. The study analysed factors using cross-sectional survey methods. The main data source was a self-administered questionnaire. This study will examine 253 Port Harcourt, Rivers State, Nigerians working for seven industrial firms. Using Taro Yamane's sample size estimate, we determined 151. The tool was found reliable using the Cronbach alpha coefficient, with each item scoring over 0.70. The data was analysed using descriptive and inferential statistics. The hypothesis was tested using

Spearman's rank-order correlation statistics. The tests had a significance level of 0.05 and an analytical confidence interval of 95%. The research found a strong correlation between employee creativity and workplace harmony in industrial firms in Port Harcourt, Rivers State, Nigeria. The research found that creativity motivates employees; thus, manufacturing company managers should use it more. Recognition-based programmes would create a pleasant work environment by reinforcing positive behaviour and motivating high performance.

Mensah and Osei (2022) examined how entrepreneurial creativity affects Accra-based agro-processing enterprises. Research examined how originality affects profitability and how market dynamism moderates it. A systematic sample of 1,503 firms yielded 453 respondents. Data analysis uses structural equation modelling (SEM) with AMOS as the main software. The data revealed a strong correlation between creativity and profitability, with market dynamism enhancing this relationship. The study found that encouraging uniqueness in entrepreneurial activities leads to better performance and suggests that policymakers promote innovation in the agro-processing sector. Hassan and Mohammed (2022) examined how problem-solving skills affect pharmaceutical company efficiency in Lagos, Nigeria. The study examined how employee involvement moderates problem-solving skills and operational efficiency. The study included a cross-section of 1,101 pharmaceutical companies, randomly sampling 551 of them. Regression was used for data analysis and SPSS for processing. Problem-solving skills improve operational efficiency, especially in organisations with strong employee engagement. The study suggested that firms boost efficiency by encouraging problem-solving and staff participation.

In Kumasi, Ghana, Oduro and Badu (2022) evaluated resourcefulness and profitability in small-scale manufacturing enterprises. The study examined how entrepreneurial attitude mediates resourcefulness's effects on profitability and operational efficiency. The survey targeted 1,250 firms and sampled 635 by simple random sampling. Regression research showed a favourable association between resourcefulness and profitability, which was improved by entrepreneurial orientation. The study found that promoting resourcefulness is crucial for boosting profits and suggested targeted training for managers to strengthen their entrepreneurial skills. In Nairobi, Kenya, Ndung'u and Muriithi (2023) examined the problem-solving capabilities and operational efficiency of service-oriented organisations. The study examined problem-solving skills and profitability, with employee engagement as a moderator. Stratified sampling was used to sample 501 of 1,098 enterprises in a cross-sectional study. The data was analysed using SPSS regression. Employee engagement strengthened the link between problem-solving skills, profitability, and operational efficiency. To improve performance, the report advises employers to prioritise problem-solving training.

Adedoyin and Adebayo (2023) examined entrepreneurial creativity and creative industry profitability in Lagos, Nigeria. The study examined how originality affects profitability and operational efficiency, with market rivalry as a moderator. The survey population included 1,500 companies, with 650 randomly sampled. Data was analysed using multiple regressions. Originality and profitability were positively correlated, although market competition dramatically attenuated this association. The study found that uniqueness boosts profitability, and it suggested ways to foster creative thinking in organisations. Brown and Lee (2023) examined entrepreneurial originality and profitability in US high-tech startups. The study examined how entrepreneurial innovation affects profitability and how external market pressures moderate it. The study included 1,203 high-tech startups, with 601 randomly selected. Pearson correlation and regression analysis were performed in SPSS. Creativity and profitability were positively correlated, especially in competitive markets. The study found that high-tech businesses, especially in dynamic marketplaces, need entrepreneurial innovation, and it advised firms to prioritise it.

METHODOLOGY

Research Design

A research design, according to Creswell (2014), is a detailed plan for data collecting and analysis

to address a research question. It guides the research process and ensures an orderly organization. Kothari (2004) defines research design as the strategy a researcher uses to coherently and logically combine numerous study components to effectively address the research problem. A cross-sectional survey was used for this study. This design collects data from a population or representative sample once. The cross-sectional survey approach allows for speedy data collection and analysis because the research examines the relationship between entrepreneurial innovation and South-South bread manufacturing firm performance at a certain moment.

Study Population

A research inquiry's population includes all items, individuals, and institutions of interest. All members of a population share traits. All South-South bread-producing firms are the study's population. For accurate demographic data, the Bread Bakers Association of Nigeria South-South Chapters provides a list of registered bread production enterprises. 93 firms joined. The macro research included the owners and two other vantage point managers (marketing and operations). These functional managers from 93 organisations performed roles related to the topics studied. Since these enterprises are small, their owners know the returns on investment of this type. Given the above, the study population is 279 management personnel of the bakery firms.

Table 1.1 Population Distribution

S/No	States	No. of Bakers
1.	Edo	78
2.	Delta	84
3.	Rivers	54
4.	Akwa Ibom	18
5.	Cross Rivers	39
6.	Bayelsa	6
	Total	279

Source: Bread Bakers Association of Nigeria South-South Chapters, 2026

Sample Size

The Taro Yamane formula was used to determine the sample size for this investigation. This approach yields a trustworthy sample size with an established degree of accuracy, making it suitable for use with limited populations. The following is the formula that is used to determine the sample size:

$$n = \frac{N}{1 + N(e)^2}$$

Where:
n=samplesize
N=Population of the study
1=costant
e=level of significant taken to be 0.05

$$n = \frac{279}{1 + 279(0.05)^2}$$

$$n = \frac{279}{1 + 279(0.0025)}$$

n=164
Hence, around 164 management professionals from the baking enterprises constitute the sample size for the study

Sampling Procedure
Dividing the total sample size among the six South-South states was subsequently accomplished using the Bowley proportional allocation formula. To make sure that the sample is representative of the states' populations, Bowley's algorithm takes that into account. This method guarantees that the study on bread-producing enterprises will use a proportionate and representative sample from each of the six states. A basic random sample strategy was used in the investigation.
Here is the formula:
Nh=NH xn —
Where:

Nh	=	sample size per bakery
n	=	total sample size
N	=	total population

Table 1.2 Sample Size Distribution

S/No	States	No. of Bakers	Sample Size
1.	Edo	84	46
2.	Delta	78	49
3.	Rivers	54	32
4.	Akwa Ibom	18	11
5.	Cross Rivers	39	23
6.	Bayelsa	6	4
		279	165

Source: Bread Bakers Association of Nigeria South-South Chapters, 2026
Method of Data Collection
Structured questionnaires were used to collect data for this investigation. Structured surveys guaranteed that all respondents were asked the identical questions, reducing bias and improving data dependability. The structured questionnaire has two parts to ensure clarity and coverage of all study areas. Respondent demographics were covered first. This section provided a complete picture of respondents' age, gender, education, marital status, and employment experience. These variables help determine responder diversity and ensure the sample accurately represents baking-firm populations. The questionnaire's second part addressed study goals. It covered entrepreneurial inventiveness and corporate performance. Likert was used to create the questions. On a 5-point scale, SA = Strongly Agree (5), A = Agree (4), and MA = Moderately Agree (3). D=Disagree(2) and SD=Strongly Disagree(1) quantify respondents' perspectives and experiences.

Validity of the Instrument
Supervisors and other professionals verified the questionnaire, which was modified to pass content and face validity tests. Validation ensures the instrument provides desired responses. Valid research instruments yield valid responses and results.

Reliability of the Instrument

Reliability is how well findings hold up over time and represent the entire population. This refers to how well a piece of measurement equipment gives consistent scores across trials. Due to their homogeneous data composition, south-south manufacturing business records are reliable secondary data sources. The survey instrument was analyzed using the mean Cronbach alpha coefficient and SPSS; therefore, only items with alpha values of 0.70 or higher were considered.

S/No	Dimensions/Measures of The study variables	Number of items	Cronbach's Alpha
1	Resourcefulness		0.725
2	Problem Solving	3	0.739
3	Profitability	3	0.727
		3	

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Univariate Analyses

The study presents the dimensions and measures of the two main study variables such as: entrepreneurial creativity as (predictor variable), performance of manufacturing firms as (criterion variable) all were analyzed using mean, standard deviation and skewness to interpret the response rate of each of the research question in the study. The response rates for each mean coefficient per indication were assessed using a 5-point Likert scale, with response options ranging from Strongly Agree=5 to Agree=4 to Moderately Agree=3to Disagree=2to Strongly Disagree=1.In the study, the answer rates were measured using the Likert scale. The categorisation that was used by Asawo (2009) was followed in the interpretation of the mean scores and the standard deviation. According to this categorisation, mean values that were lower than 1.2 were considered to be low, values that were between 2.5 and 3.5 were considered to be moderate, scores that were between 3.5 and 4.5 were considered to be high, and mean values that were higher than 4.5 were interpreted as being very high.

Descriptive Statistic on Resourcefulness

Table 1.3 sowed the second research question and expressed the responses rate on problem solving as a dimension of entrepreneurial creativity and measure in three item scale with mean score and standard deviation.

Table 1.3. Mean Rating on Resourcefulness

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
1. Resourcefulness is one of the major ingredients that enhance performance of firms	142	1	5	3.90	801
2. Bakery business operators need t be resourceful to enhance their creativity and performance	142	1	5	4.5 2	.973
3. resourcefulness helps the bakery to cope with difficult situations in the process of job performance	142	1	5	3.18	1.117

Valid N (listwise)
Source: SPSS Out, 2026

Table 1.3 above showed the response rate for resourcefulness using mean and standard deviation and measured with 3-items. The first research item with a high mean value of (x=3.90 and std. dev. =0.801).The second research item with a high mean value of (x=4.52 and Std. dev. =0.973). Third research item with a moderate mean value of(x=3.18and Std. dev. =1.117).The skewness value in the table indicates that the mean is greater than the mode, the curve has a longer tail to the left and it is said to be negative skew in the study. However, majority of the responses showed that there is a high rate of resourcefulness and observed as a strong phenomenon to the study of entrepreneurial creativity in the manufacturing companies in south-south zone, Nigeria.

Descriptive Statistic on Problem Solving

Table 1. 4 showed the second research question and expressed the responses rate on problem solving as a dimension of entrepreneurial creativity and measure in three item scale with mean score and standard deviation.

Table 1. 4. Mean Rating on Problem Solving

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Deviation
1. Problem solving enables individuals and teams to look at situations from different and new perspectives	142	2	5	4.54	.773
2. Problem solving offer a new explanation for innovation dynamics that will drive profitability	142	1	5	4.09	.865
3. Problem solving is seen as a critical driver of organisational performance.	142	2	5	4.37	.818
Valid N(listwise)	142				

Source: SPSS Out, 2026

Table 1.4.above showed the response rate for problem solving using mean and standard deviation and measured with 3-items. The first research item with a high mean value of (x=3.54 and std.dev. =0.773).The second research item with a high mean value of(x=4.09 and Std.dev, =0.865).Third research item with a high mean value of(x=4.37 and Std.dev. =0.818).Furthermore, the skewness value in the table indicates that the mean is greater than the mode, the curve has a longer tail to the left side and it is said to be negative skew in the study. However, majority of the responses showed that there is a high rate of problem solving as a strong phenomenon to the study of entrepreneurial creativity in the manufacturing companies in South-South zone, Nigeria.

Descriptive Statistic on Profitability

Table 1.5 showed the fourth research question and expressed the responses rate on profitability as a measure of performance of firm and measured in three item scale with mean score and standard deviation.

Table 1.5: Mean Rating on Profitability

	N	Minimum	Maximum	M	D	
1. Profitability help to drive the performance of small scale business.	142	2	5	ean 4.12		.673
2. Lack of profitability affects the growth of small scale business.	142	1	5	4.19		.875
3. Profitability promote the growth and success of small scale business.	142	1	5	3.90		.919
Valid N(listwise)	142					

Source: SPSS Out, 2026

Table 1.5 above showed the response rate for profitability using mean and standard deviation and measured with 3-items. The first research item with a high mean value of (x=4.12 and std. dev. =0.673).The second research with a high mean value of(x=4.19and Std. dev.=0.875).Third research item with a high mean value of (x=3.90 and Std.dev.=0.919).Furthermore, the skewness value in the table indicates that the mean is greater than the mode, the curve has a longer tail to the left side and it is said to be negative skew in the study. However, the majority of the responses showed that there is entrepreneurial creativity in the manufacturing of Nigeria companies in the South-South zone,

Descriptive Statistic on Profitability

Table 1.6 showed the fourth research question and expressed the responses rate on profitability as a measure of performance of firm and measured in three item scale with mean score and standard deviation.

Table 1.6: Mean Rating on Profitability

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std.
1. Profitability help to drive the performance of small scale business.	142	2	5	4.12	Deviation .673
2. Lack of profitability affects the growth of small scale busine ss.	142	1	5	4.19	.873
3. Profitability promote the growth and success of small scale business.	142	1	5	3.90	.919
Valid N(listwise)	142				

Source: SPSS Out, 2026

Table 1.6 above showed the response rate for profitability using mean and standard

deviation and measured wih 3-items. The first research item with a high mean value of (x=4.12 and std. dev.=0.673).The second research with a high mean value of(x=4.19and Std. dev.=0.875).Third research item with a high mean value of (x=3.90 and Std.dev.=0.919). Furthermore, the skewness value in the table indicates that the mean is greater than the mode, the curve has a longer tail to the left side and it is said to be negative skew in the study. However, majority of the responses showed that there is a high rate of profitability and observed as a strong phenomenon to the study of performance of firm in the manufacturing firms in South-south zone, Nigeria.

Bivariate Analyses

In order to determine the extent of the connection that exists between the variables that serve as predictors and those that serve as criteria, the study made use of Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficients. The study focused mainly on hypotheses Hol through Ho2, all of which were composed of two variables and provided in the form of a null hypothesis.

Table 1.7: **Entrepreneurial Creativity and the Measures of Performance of firms**

Resourcefulness	Pearson Correlation	Resourcefulness	1 Profitability
	Sig.(2-tailed)		845
Profitability	N		.000
	Pearson Correlat	142	142
	ion	845	1
	Sig.(2-tailed)		
	N	.000	
Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level		142	142

Source: Research Data, 2026

Ho1: There is no significant relationship between the resourcefulness and profitability of bread manufacturing firms in the South-South zone.

The preceding table shows that South-South zone bread manufacturers are resourceful and profitable. This link has a p-value of 0.000 and a correlation coefficient of .845, indicating its strength and magnitude. This high correlation shows the variables are linked. Based on actual data, the alternate hypothesis is accepted, and the null hypothesis is rejected. Thus, bread production enterprises in Nigeria's South-South region benefit from resourcefulness and profitability.

Table 1.8: Correlation Result showing the relationship between problem solving and profitability

		Problem Soling	Profitability
Problem Solving	Pearson Correlation		
	Sig.(2-tailed)	1	.767
	N		.000
Profitability	Pearson Correlation	142	142
	Sig.(2-tai	.767	1

	led)	.000
	N	
Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level	142	142

Source: Research Data 2026

HO2: There is no significant relationship between problem-solving and profitability of bread-manufacturing firms in the south-south zone.

Problem-solving increases profitability in South-South bread production enterprises, as shown in the table above. The correlation coefficient of 0.767 validates the strength and amplitude of this link, and its p-value of 0.000 is below 0.05. This coefficient indicates significant variable association. Based on empirical evidence, the null hypothesis is rejected and the alternate hypothesis adopted. Positive and significant association between problem-solving and profitability in South-South Nigerian bread manufacturing enterprises.

Findings

The study examined the impact of entrepreneurial inventiveness on bread manufacturing enterprises in South-South Nigeria. Since bread manufacturers were close to the researcher, they self-administered structured surveys. A cross-sectional survey methodology was used to analyze the variables' relationships using descriptive and inferential statistics. A total of two (2) hypotheses were tested, and all two null hypotheses were rejected. The investigation showed that all dimensions of entrepreneurial creativity positively and significantly affect the performance of manufacturing businesses in the South-South. The analysis yielded these results:

1. There is a positive and significant relationship between resourcefulness and profitability of bread manufacturing firms in South-South zone, with a correlation coefficient of 0.845 and a p-value of 0.000.
2. There is a positive and significant relationship between problem solving and profitability of bread manufacturing firms in South-South zone, with a correlation coefficient of 0.767 and a p-value of 0.000.

CONCLUSION

The study examined entrepreneurial creativity and bread manufacturing firm performance in the South-South Zone, Nigeria. Thus, based on empirical results, previous studies, and literature reviews, the study concludes that entrepreneurial creativity positively and significantly affects bread manufacturing firm performance in the South-South Zone, Nigeria. The study concludes that resourcefulness affects bread manufacturing enterprises' profitability in the South-South zone, Nigeria. In South-South Nigeria, problem-solving affects bread manufacturing enterprises' profitability.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the study's findings, we hereby offer the following recommendations:

1. Bread manufacturing firms should implement training programs that encourage employees to optimize resource usage and develop innovative solutions. This could be achieved through workshops focused on creative problem-solving.
2. Bread manufacturing firms should establish dedicated problem-solving teams tasked with addressing operational challenges and empower employees through regular brainstorming sessions. This could foster a culture of collaboration and innovation.

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