

ORGANISATIONAL INNOVATION: A CATALYST FOR SUSTAINABLE AGRICPRENEURSHIP GROWTH IN NIGER STATE, NIGERIA.

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Abstract

This study examined Organisational Innovation as a Catalyst to Sustainable Agricpreneurship Ventures (SAV) Growth in Niger State, focusing on the effects of innovative business practices (IBP), innovative workplace organisation (IWO), innovative knowledge management (IKM), and innovative external relations (IER) on the sustainability of agricpreneurship ventures. Employing a quantitative research design, data were collected from agribusiness owners and managers through a structured questionnaire and analysed using SmartPLS 4. The results revealed that innovative business practices ($t = 0.558$, $p = 0.577$) and innovative workplace organisation ($t = 1.050$, $p = 0.294$) exerted statistically insignificant but positive effects on sustainable agricpreneurship ventures, indicating partial acceptance of their influence. Conversely, innovative knowledge management ($t = 4.754$, $p = 0.000$) and innovative external relations ($t = 4.662$, $p = 0.000$) showed significant effects but were statistically rejected due to the directionality of the hypothesised relationships. These findings demonstrate that while business practices and workplace innovations within firms contribute modestly to sustainability, knowledge management and external collaboration are more influential drivers of long-term success. The study concludes that promoting knowledge-sharing systems and strategic partnerships is essential for enhancing innovation capacity and ensuring the sustainability of agricpreneurship ventures in Niger State.

Keywords: Organisational Innovation, Sustainable Agricpreneurship, Knowledge Management, Business Practices, workplace organization, external relations

Introduction

In an era of rapid global change, innovation has emerged as a critical determinant of competitive advantage and organizational survival (Alharbi et al., 2019). For developing economies, this is particularly true in the agricultural sector, where sustainability of agro-business enterprises is vital for economic development, job creation, and food security. Nigeria, and specifically Niger State, is endowed with vast arable land, stands at a critical juncture to leverage its agricultural sector for sustainable economic development. However, the transition from traditional farming to modern, market-oriented agricpreneurship is fraught with systemic challenges, including limited access to technology, inefficient value chains, and the adverse impacts of climate change (Misra & Ghosh, 2024). Srivastav & Das, (2025) affirmed that these challenges necessitate a departure from conventional approaches, calling for transformative strategies that can redefine agricultural practices and business models. Organisational innovation presents a compelling framework for this transition, enabling agricultural enterprises to enhance productivity, foster resilience, and achieve long-term sustainability (Aggarwal et al., 2025). By integrating new processes, structures, and management practices, organizational innovation can help agricpreneurs in Niger State navigate the complexities of the modern agricultural landscape and contribute meaningfully to regional food security and economic prosperity.

Organisational innovation refers to the creation or adoption of new ideas, behaviours, and structural designs that improve an organization's effectiveness and competitiveness (Hael et al., 2024). In the context of agriculture, this extends beyond technological adoption to encompass novel ways of organizing farm operations, managing supply chains, and engaging stakeholders. The concept is deeply intertwined with organisational learning, where entities continuously acquire and apply new knowledge to adapt and thrive in dynamic environments (Ndace et al., 2024). For sustainable agricpreneurship which balances economic viability with social equity and environmental stewardship this innovation capacity is vital. It allows ventures to simultaneously pursue exploitation of existing capabilities and exploration of new opportunities, a dynamic capability known as organisational ambidexterity (Tushman & Anderson, 2018). This dual focus is essential for navigating the trade-offs between immediate productivity and long-term sustainability in agricultural development (Odeyemi et al., 2024).

Recent initiatives in Niger State demonstrate the practical application of organisational innovation in agriculture. A landmark multi-billion dollar agricultural Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the Republic of Benin focuses on cross-border cooperation in cotton, maize, and soybean production (Ozibo. 2025). This partnership exemplifies innovation in organizational structure and process by integrating mechanization, irrigation, and joint research projects. It follows a phased implementation plan, scaling from 20,000 hectares initially to 450,000 hectares by 2030, and includes establishing 55 technical centres for training and innovation (Ozibo. 2025). Similarly, a \$150 million partnership between the Niger State Government and the Dangote Group targets rice production, aiming to process 1,000 tons daily while building supportive infrastructure like schools and hospitals (Omidiji, 2025); Oladipo, 2025). These models go beyond mere production; they represent innovative organizational ecosystems designed to create jobs, enhance skills, and integrate local communities into the agricultural value chain.

The synergy between organisational innovation and sustainable agricpreneurship offers a powerful Catalyst for achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in Niger State. Sustainable entrepreneurs are increasingly recognized for their role in addressing market failures and channeling economic activities towards social and environmental benefits (Tunçalp & Yıldırım, 2022). By adopting innovative organizational forms and practices, agricultural ventures in the state can directly contribute to SDG 2 (Zero Hunger) through enhanced food production, SDG 8 (Decent Work and Economic Growth) via job creation across value chains, and SDG 9 (Industry, Innovation, and Infrastructure) through the development of resilient agricultural systems (Abbas & Bulut, 2024). The evolving landscape of sustainable entrepreneurship shows that such ventures are most successful when they strategically align their operations with specific SDGs, leveraging innovation to transform agricultural practices while addressing pressing sustainability challenges (Tunçalp & Yıldırım, 2022). For Niger State, embedding organisational innovation at the core of its agricultural development strategy could fundamentally reshape its rural economy, creating a replicable model for sustainable agricpreneurship across Nigeria and beyond. This study seeks to fill that gap by examining the Organisational innovation: A Catalyst to Sustainable Agricpreneurship Ventures in Niger State.

The specific objectives are:

- i. examine the effect of innovation in business practice on the sustainable agricpreneurship ventures in Niger State;
- ii. assess the effect of innovation in workplace organisation on the sustainable agricpreneurship ventures in Niger State;
- iii. determine the effect of innovation in knowledge management on the sustainable agricpreneurship ventures in Niger State;
- iv. examine the effect of innovation in external relations on the sustainable agricpreneurship ventures in Niger State;

Research Hypotheses

H₀₁: Innovation in business practice has no significant effect on the sustainable agricpreneurship ventures in Niger State;

H₀₂: Innovation in workplace organisation has no significant effect on the sustainable agricpreneurship ventures in Niger State;

H₀₃: Innovation knowledge management has no significant effect on the sustainable agricpreneurship ventures in Niger State;

H₀₄: Innovation in external relations has no significant effect on the sustainable agricpreneurship ventures in Niger State;

Concept of organizational innovation

Organisational innovation is defined as the implementation of a new organisational method in a firm's business practices, workplace organisation, or external relations (Rodríguez-Rebés et al., 2021). It is distinct from other organisational changes because it must be a method not previously used in the firm and stem from strategic decisions taken by management (Arranz et al., 2019). While Damanpour *at al.* (2018) considers OI as a fundamental source of value creation in organisations and provenance of competitive advantage that an organisation gains over their counterparts. Dukeov (2022) affirmed that the ability of a firm to innovate is one of the factors that characterize its sustainability and potential for growth. It has long been maintained by innovation scholars that executives must participate in OI in order for organisations to gain a competitive advantage (Danmanpour, 2020; Dukeov, 2022). The primary objectives are to

enhance a firm's performance by reducing administrative or transaction costs, improving workplace satisfaction and labour productivity, and gaining access to non-codified external knowledge or reducing the cost of supplies (Jovana, 2025). This concept is often categorized separately from product, process, and marketing innovations, as highlighted in the Oslo Manual, a key framework for understanding innovation dynamics (Jovana, 2025).

The practical application of organisational innovation can be observed in various forms. It can involve new business practices, such as the introduction of lean manufacturing or AI-powered solutions to streamline workflows (Dukeov *et al.*, 2020; Dukeov, 2022). Changes in workplace organisation include new methods for distributing responsibilities and decision-making, often facilitated by collaborative platforms that increase employee autonomy (OECD-Eurostat, 2005; Mousavi *et al.*, 2019). Innovation in knowledge management which is a process that enables organisations to recognize, select, allocate, and communicate crucial data and contributions that would be used in situations like problem-solving, dynamic education, strategic planning, and decision-making ((Shahzad et al., 2021). Innovation in external relations encompasses new types of cooperation with partners like universities, government institutions, or methods for integrating more closely with suppliers and customers (Iranmanesh *et al.*, 2021). Real-world examples include Microsoft's reorganization to combat bureaucracy and increase agility, Samsung's establishment of global design centers with direct access to top management to foster creativity, and McDonald's use of cross-hierarchical "noodle teams" to generate ideas Innolytics, 2019).

The benefits of successfully implementing organisational innovation are significant. It can provide a competitive advantage by differentiating a company from its rivals through unique operations or new market opportunities (Mohanty, 2023). Furthermore, it leads to improved efficiency and productivity, often resulting in cost savings and higher profits (Mohanty, 2023; Jovana, 2025). An innovative culture also increases employee engagement and motivation by encouraging creativity and offering learning opportunities (Chandel et al., 2023). However, the process is complex and can be hindered by internal politics, a culture that does not accept failure, and an inability to change (Scuotto et al., 2024). Ultimately, organisational innovation is a critical driver for business success, enhancing flexibility, adaptability, and the overall capacity for change (Aggarwal et al., 2025).

Antecedents of organisational innovation

Organisational innovation is a critical determinant of an entity's long-term performance and competitiveness in today's dynamic business environment. Understanding the factors that contribute to organisational innovation is essential (Camison *at al.*, 2017). To make sense of the diverse dimensions and numerous circumstances that may influence organisational innovation, Damanpour (2017), suggest a sequence of decisions in selecting the dimensions and interpreting the antecedents. The first and possibly most significant decision is to determine the organisational type, such as goods or services, private or public, low-tech or high-tech, and so on. Meta-analytical investigations have found considerable disparities in antecedent-innovation linkages in various types of organisations (Camisón *at al.*, 2017; Kussoy, 2022). Secondly, the characteristics that effect innovation generation may not be compatible with those that influence innovation adoption. As a result, a distinction must be made between organisations that generate innovation and those that accept it. Thirdly, although one set of antecedents may predict the process of innovation (innovating), another set may indicate an organisation's potential to innovate continuously (innovativeness). Fourth, distinguishing between innovation kinds, particularly technological-non-technological and radical-incremental, is important for identifying key antecedents of each type.

Studies has showed that Leadership plays a pivotal role in fostering a culture of innovation within an organisation (Camison *at al.*, 2017). Transformational leadership, characterized by visionary thinking and encouragement of creativity, has consistently emerged as a key antecedent of organisational innovation. Furthermore, an innovation-friendly organisational culture, where risk-taking is encouraged, and failure is seen as a learning opportunity, has been identified as a crucial factor influencing innovation (Damanpour, 2020). An organisation's capacity for innovation is greatly affected by its design and structure (Simao and Franco, 2018). Kussoy (2022) argued that organisations with decentralized decision-making and flat organisational structures typically have higher levels of innovation. Furthermore, flexible organisational structures that encourage communication and collaboration across functional boundaries have been linked to higher levels of creativity. The external environment plays a crucial role in shaping an organisation's innovation efforts. Environmental dynamism and uncertainty have been linked to higher levels of innovation. Organisations that actively engage in external networking,

collaborations, and partnerships are more likely to access new ideas, technologies, and market insights, fostering innovation (Camison *at al.*, 2017). Effective knowledge management methods play an important role in fostering corporate innovation. Knowledge production, sharing, and application inside an organisation all contribute to the development of innovative solutions (Anand *at al.*, 2021). A knowledge-centric approach to innovation includes knowledge-sharing platforms, learning organisations, and methods that foster knowledge flow between departments (Zhang *at al.*, 2021; Zhao *at al.*, 2021).

Classifications of organisational innovation

Innovations vary from one another, and the literature on innovation has identified numerous innovation typologies. Various classifications based on types, degrees or levels, and sustainability can be used to study an innovation (Dukeov, 2019). Organisational innovation is classified and used interchangeably with the term administrative innovation, management innovation and managerial innovations. In reality, some publications (for instance, Phan, 2019; Jaskyte, 2020; Ahmed and Adam, 2021; Dukeov, 2022), used the three phrases interchangeably. Because the three concepts have significant overlaps. Damanpour (2020) classified OI into four categories: product-process, technical-managerial, radical-incremental, and organic-open. He opined that product innovation is the introduction of a new good or service to satisfy the needs of an external user, whereas Process innovation refers to the addition of new components to an organisation's production or service operation in order to create a product or provide a service (Damanpour et al., 2018; Ahmad et al., 2020). Process innovations have an internal focus and are essentially methods of creating and marketing goods or services, whereas product innovations have an exterior focus and are mostly market-driven (Damanpour, 2020).

Second typology is technical-managerial innovation. In contrast to the product-process paradigm that pre-dominated the studies of innovation in economics and technology management, the technical-managerial typology was established in organisation management (Damanpour, 2017). Evan (1984) and Daft (1978), posited that technical and management innovations are connected to the organisational technical and social systems and technical and administrative cores, respectively (Klimas and Czakon, 2022). According to Evan (1966), technical innovations are ideas for new products, processes, and services, whereas administrative innovations are ideas for

new personnel policies, reward systems, resource allocation, and structures (Tidd and Bessant, 2018). Technical innovations affect an organisation's major work activity directly and primarily alter its operational systems. Kimberly (1981) and Damanpour and Evan (1984) argued that administrative innovations mostly affect the organisation's management systems and are indirectly tied to the core job activity of the business (Simao and Franco, 2018). Administrative innovation has recently been substituted with the phrase management innovation (Alharbi et al., 2019; Jiang et al., 2019). Management innovations are deviations from management principles, methods, and practices that modify how management work is carried out, how managers carry out their responsibilities, and the procedures and guidelines that govern how work is done within organisations (Ahmed and Adam, 2021). They represent novel approaches to developing strategy, structure, and procedures within the organisation (Jaskyte, 2020).

Thirdly, the radical-incremental typology is generally used to describe technological innovations in product and process, both at the organisational and industry/product class levels (Vercher et al., 2022). Technology at the industry level can either be disruptive or sustaining depending on whether it is founded on wholly new knowledge and renders obsolete the existing products and processes or it enhances the performance of products and processes along the existing dimensions of performance (Al Naqbia et al., 2020; Todorovic et al., 2022). Ncube et al. (2023) described radical innovation as a new product, process, or system that is the outcome of a technological breakthrough or advancements in knowledge, or the application of a technology that has a significant impact. Yamin (2020) opined that radical innovation entails revolutionary advances in technology that deviate significantly from current practice. Therefore, when innovation deviates from an organisation's core competencies, it has the potential to either destroy or enhance such competencies (Najim and Alhmeidiyeen, 2019). The degree to which internal organisational activities or outputs are altered distinguishes radical innovations from incremental ones at the organisational level (Zhao et al., 2023).

Incremental innovations result in only minor changes to the current activities, products, processes, and practices (Damanpour et al., 2019). These innovations also take the shape of adjustments to operations, cost management, and product or service performance that are required to keep up with rivals (Damanpour, 2017). Mbaknol (2022) affirmed that the firm's goal and competitive strategy may need to be "revised" to reflect discontinuous change in the task environment. As it

stands, incremental innovation may call for sizable amounts of fresh financial investment, internal resources, connections to outside suppliers and information sources, new marketing and sales strategies. Firms in developing nations typically concentrate their efforts more on incremental innovative activities, but they also engage in technological advancements out of necessity for their customers and invest very little in radical innovation (Klimas and Czakon, 2022). Popular concepts like continuous improvement and reengineering are instances of incremental change (Wang and Xu, 2018), whereas radical innovations cause fundamental changes in organisational activities and clearly depart from them (Ullah and Arshad, 2021).

Radical innovations are discontinuous or radically different design, application, or process changes from the present ideal (Azar and Ciabuschi, 2017). These revolutionary ideas are frequently technological advances that have never been done before and reflect actual quantum leaps in theory and practice rather than linear development (Arshad & Ullah, 2022; Mbaknol, 2021). The exploratory-exploitative typology was added to the radical-incremental typology more recently. The new typology is based on organisational learning's exploration-exploitation cycle (Pihlajamaa, 2023). Exploitation is the process of using new knowledge to develop novel products and technologies, whereas exploitation is the process of using new knowledge to enhance the organisation's current offerings and operational efficiency (Schiuma and Santarsiero, 2023). Experimenting with new concepts is the heart of exploration, which is also known as divergent thinking and flexibility. The refinement of current concepts is the essence of exploitation, which is related to convergent thinking and attention (Damanpour, 2017). According to Damanpour et al. (2019) and Alharbi et al. (2019), exploratory and exploitative innovations are the outcomes of exploration and exploitation of an organisation's innovative efforts.

The fourth typology is organic and open innovation. Organic innovation is referred to as a novel product, process, or service that is created internally by the primary organisation and then commercialized (Damanpour, 2020). While Sanchez-Henriquez and Damanpour (2020) opined that open innovation is a strategy in which the corporation loosens up on strict control and partners are brought in through various forms of inter-organisational cooperation (collaborations, strategic partnerships, consortia) in one or more aspects of the development of innovation. The

Organisational innovation classifications have explicitly explained the concept of OI, and it's potentially important in investigating Organisational innovation at the firm level.

Dimensions of organizational innovation

Organisational innovation has emerged as a major predictor of long-term business performance, particularly in the face of global competition, digital transformation, and fast changing customer expectations. This type of innovation extends beyond product and process improvements to encompass how businesses organise their internal systems and relationships. Over the last decade, scholars have given increasing attention to the factors that promote organisational innovation (Al-Ajlouni, 2021), with a particular emphasis on the dynamic roles of innovation business practices, workplace organization, knowledge management, and innovation external relations.

Innovation in Business Practices (IBP)

Innovation in Business Practices (IBP) refers to the adoption and implementation of new or improved business methods, routines, structures, and models in how an organisation conducts its operations, marketing, management, or finance. IBP is a subtype of OI that denotes novel techniques employed by a firm to restructure work routines by modifying or creating management processes and procedures (Dukeov et al., 2020). It aims to introduce new elements to a firm's behavior (Snihur and Wiklund, 2019). Dukeov, (2022) Affirmed tha as part of organisational innovation, IBP goes beyond product or process innovation to transform internal and external business relationships, strategic decision-making, capability building, incentive systems, and customer engagement. Borodako et al. (2023) opined that dimensions such as innovation strategy, culture, structural-process changes, cross-functional integration, managerial support, and technological readiness are central to IBP. Studies have noted that internal firm practices and other related and complementary elements, such as capital investment adoptions, R & D practices, marketing approaches, and human resource management practices, affect firms' growth (Corsi et al., 2019). According to Corsi et al. (2019) the deployment of innovative business practices is frequently associated with a beneficial influence on firm growth (Fernando et al., 2019). Indeed, it has been noted that the ultimate result of a firm's business operations is growth.

OI is the sum of global organisational achievements as a result of regeneration and development

activities undertaken in light of numerous characteristics of firm organisational innovativeness, primarily new business practices (Corsi et al., 2019). Thus, innovative performance, particularly in the form of OI, is a composite concept built on many performance indices (Bouwman et al., 2019). Hence, while the introduction of IBP is sufficient to generate OI and positively influence firm growth, its implementation in an organisation significantly increases the expected effect of OI on firm outcomes (Cho et al., 2019).

In the context of sustainable agricpreneurship ventures, IBP offers a Catalyst to resilience, competitive advantage, and long-term environmental, social, and economic sustainability. Business model innovation, a component of IBP, is increasingly studied within agribusiness for its role in aligning value creation with sustainability goals. A recent bibliometric analysis shows that agribusiness firms adopting business model innovations often integrate profitability with minimizing environmental and social impacts, pushing for responsible and sustainable business practices. Also, in the agrofood industry, Bigliardi & Filippelli (2022) note that innovation in business practices particularly via digital technologies, consumer health/environmental concerns, and smart production are crucial for food safety, sustainability, and competitiveness. For Niger State, this implies that agricpreneurs should invest in business practices such as novel marketing channels, digital platforms, shared ownership or cooperative models, flexible managerial systems, and strategic innovation planning. These IBP elements can help agric-ventures respond to changing environmental constraints, market demands, and policy landscapes, thereby forging a sustainable agripreneurial ecosystem.

Innovation in Workplace Organisation (IWO)

Innovation in Workplace Organisation (IWO) refers to the introduction of new or altered structures, practices, and processes by which work is organised, decisions are made, and people are managed in an organization (Mousavi *et al.*, 2019). This includes job design (autonomy, task variety, self-managed teams), flatter hierarchies, more participative or employee-voice mechanisms, flexible scheduling or work arrangements, supportive human resources management, learning and continuous improvement, and the redesign of workflows (Iranmanesh *et al.*, 2021). Such workplace innovations are often non-technological but are essential complements to more visible product or process innovations. They align with the broader concept of organisational innovation, which by legal and scholarly definitions involves “new

organisational methods in business practices, workplace organisation or external relations” (e.g. new workplace organisation) rather than simply upgrading equipment or products. IWO seeks to enhance an organisation's overall effectiveness by empowering its employees (Adekoya et al., 2019). Any modifications in responsibilities, accountability, the divisional structure of functions, knowledge flows, Centralization or decentralization, integration or diversification that are adopted for the first time in a firm are considered OIs, if they are implemented in a firm for the first time (Phan, 2019). IWO is concerned with new organisational models in a firm (Dukeov et al., 2020). These models must focus on changing the organisational structure to bring it to a more efficient level (Dukeov et al., 2018).

According to Dukeov et al., (2018), OI that allows employees greater autonomy has a favorable impact on their dedication to work. OECD-Eurostat (2005) defines workplace innovation as the first deployment of an organisational model that allows the firm's employees greater autonomy in decision making and encourages them to share their ideas (Baharuddin et al., 2019). Additional instances of workplace innovation include different motivational strategies (Patil et al., 2019), continuous rotation, modifications to working hours including schedule flexibility, remote working strategies (Guerreiro, 2022), and structuring project groups (Dukeov et al., 2018). Numerous studies have found a strong correlation between IWO and a firm's likelihood of performing successfully (for example, Dukeov et al., 2019; Kumar et al., 2020; Pradana et al., 2022). A new method in the firm's workplace organisation is expected to help improve employees' productivity and satisfaction. For example, the introduction of a new decentralized organisational model would give employees greater autonomy to do their jobs, hence enhancing their satisfaction and productivity (Phan, 2019). To perform successfully, both in strategy implementation and the carrying out of operations, a firm must continuously implement new organisational business structures and practices. In other words, it must constantly generate and/or adapt to OI (Dukeov et al., 2019).

In the context of agricpreneurship ventures in Niger State (or similar agrarian-economies), IWO holds critical promise for sustainability and growth. First, through more participative work organisation, small farm enterprises, cooperatives, or agribusiness clusters can harness local knowledge of farmers, improve morale, and adapt quicker to environmental and market changes (Mustapha, 2025). Studies in agro-clusters in Nigeria show that innovation capacity combined

with knowledge sharing among members leads to improved socioeconomic outcomes such as employment and education, though the moderating influence of supportive policies may be weak (Sakariyau et al., 2025). Second, mechanisms such as training, collaborative decision-making, flexible scheduling (e.g. to allow farm seasonal cycles), and devolved leadership can enhance resilience, improve work-life balance, reduce turnover, and elevate organisational performance (Salau et al., 2019). Empirical research from Nigerian SMEs indicates that innovation capability and organizational resilience are strongly associated with business sustainability when internal workplace innovation practices are in place (Olaleye et al., 2024). Together, these suggest that integrating IWO into agricpreneurship ventures may not just enhance productivity, but also improve social sustainability, environmental adaptability, and long-term viability.

Innovation in Knowledge Management (IKM)

New methods of KM, is viewed as collection of processes for comprehending and implementing knowledge strategic capitals in an organisation. It is regarded as a structured strategy that provides methods for appreciating, assessing, organizing, preserving, and using knowledge in order to satisfy the needs and goals of the organisation (Simao and Franco, 2018). KM is a process that enables organisations to recognize, select, allocate, and communicate crucial data and contributions that would be used in situations like problem-solving, dynamic education, strategic planning, and decision-making. Azeem et al. (2021) stated that KM is the ability to access knowledge and experience that fosters innovation, enables high performance, and increases customer value.

Nowadays it is widely recognized by organisations that knowledge is an essential strategic resource for a firm to retain sustainable competitive advantage (Singh and Saini, 2018). The literature on KM emphasizes the idea that a firm's ability to create and use its knowledge-based resources is essential for innovation to succeed in the new economy and to maintain a competitive advantage. The core of KM is to develop strategies to deliver the right knowledge to the right persons at the right time in the right format (Ng, 2023). Ayatollahi and Zeraatkar (2020) affirmed that KM is the process of creating, storing, transferring, and applying explicit and tacit information within an organisation. It entails getting the right information to the right people at the right time, while Shahzad et al. (2021) stated that KM is the process through which facts and information are transformed into knowledge and then communicated inside the firm. López-

Cabarcos et al. (2020) referred to KM as a planned, structured process for managing the development and acquisition, storage, sharing, and transfer of explicit and tacit knowledge as an organisational asset in order to stimulate innovation and improve competitive advantage (Shahzad et al., 2021).

KM is made up of three interconnected processes: knowledge collection, conversion, and application (Mardani et al., 2018). Areed et al. (2021) opined that KM is a key indicator of an organisation's success because it effectively supports the information exchange needed to increase OI capability. This is accomplished through gaining new knowledge and skills (Yi et al., 2021). According to Hock-Doepgen et al. (2021), businesses are given the ability to recognize and transform information into creative business prospects through the use of KM. This is done to manage, implement, develop, leverage Mardani et al. (2018), and increase capability, knowledge generation, and innovative performance (Wang and Xu, 2018). Empirical studies reveal positive effects of KM practices on OI (for a recent studies, see Aghaegbuna et al., 2020; Zhao et al., 2021; Migdadi, 2022), mainly in line with the knowledge-based theory of the firm, as initially developed by Grant (1996). Knowledge also might be a mediator between human resource practices and innovative activity (Lei et al., 2021). Alfawaire and Atan (2021) further attest to a positive causal relationship between KM and OI distinctive competences. Modifying the existing knowledge base (breadth and depth) even could lead to radical innovations (Cho et al., 2019; Hock-Doepgen et al., 2021).

In the agricultural context, integrating IKM can improve resource utilisation, technology adoption, and market responsiveness all of which are critical for agripreneurial sustainability. Moreover, IKM enhances organisational innovation by strengthening information flow, collaboration, and creative problem-solving. Studies reveal that knowledge sharing moderates the relationship between innovation management and sustainability, particularly in Nigerian enterprises (Alabar & Alabar, 2023). Knowledge-driven innovation enables organisations to transform implicit expertise into actionable strategies that enhance competitiveness and environmental stewardship (Shahzad et al., 2021). For agricultural ventures, such practices facilitate innovation in production processes, sustainable technologies, and market linkages, enabling long-term growth and resilience. Therefore, embedding IKM within organisational innovation strategies is essential for transforming Niger State's agricultural ventures into

sustainable agripreneurial ecosystems that thrive in the knowledge-driven global economy.

Innovation in External Relations (IER)

Innovation in external relations (IER) encompasses “new ways of building relations with a firm’s external environment including other firms, public institutions, research organisations, customers and suppliers in order to enhance the efficiency of production, procuring, distribution, recruiting and ancillary services” (OECD-Eurostat, 2005; Dukeov et al., 2018). Making use of networking activities is a critical skill that a modern firm seeking rapid growth in the knowledge-based economy must acquire (Dukeov et al., 2019). The innovation in external relations demonstrates the degree of capacity to build this competency (Corsi et al., 2019). Dukeov et al., (2018, 2019, and 2020) assert that building external relationships allows an organisation to access the complementary competencies of partners, which enables the organisation to obtain new knowledge and abilities. By avoiding duplication of Research and Development work and lowering the risks associated with venture projects, collaborating with partners also improves an organisation's competitiveness (Arranz et al., 2019). The long-standing cooperation encourages scale or scope economies and makes it easier to receive fresh scientific and technological information for the firm's own Research and Development efforts (Phan, 2019; Dukeov et al., 2019).

The activity in IER reflects the intensity of the prospective knowledge flow between the firm and external environment and demonstrates how well the firm utilizes its networking capabilities (Wang and Xu, 2018) contend that IER related to the growth of a firm's cooperation with processing firm has a favorable impact on the overall performance of the firm. A positive impact on the organisation's performance indicators can also be seen in the development of IER in the areas of customer relations (Wang and Xu, 2018) and with suppliers (Hameed et al., 2021). A new organisational strategy in the firm's external relations will allow it to focus on what it does best by delegating other work to partners who can perform them more cheaply and/or efficiently. It will also help the firm improve relations with external parties that can translate into future success (Phan, 2019). In fact, OECD (2005) suggested that OI can improve workplace satisfaction/productivity and/or reduce administrative/transaction costs, which, in turn, lead to higher business performance.

For agricpreneurship (agricultural entrepreneurship), especially in Niger State, IER offers crucial

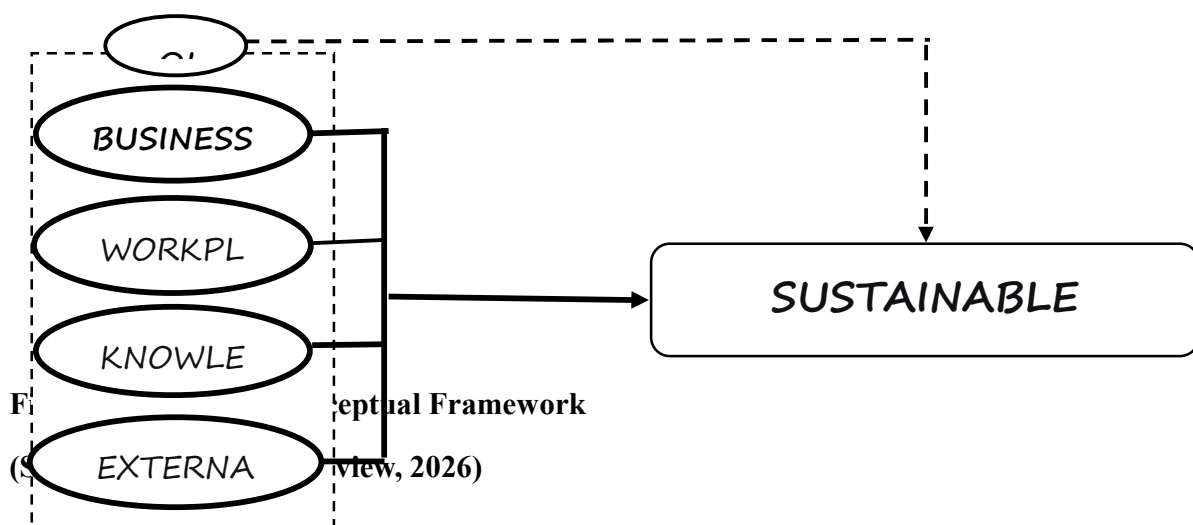
Catalysts to sustainability across economic, environmental and social dimensions. First, IER helps ventures access improved technologies, market information, agro-inputs, climate adaptive practices, or extension services, which reduce risk and increase productivity. For example, inter-firm cooperation in Nigeria has been shown to be particularly beneficial for firms with financial constraints and younger firms, enabling them to innovate despite lack of internal resources (Dohse & Fehrenbacher, 2025). Second, through external relations, agricpreneurs can form partnerships with research institutions, NGOs, government extension services, and other value-chain actors to co-create solutions that are locally relevant improving environmental sustainability (soil health, water use, biodiversity) as well as social sustainability (inclusive employment, local food security). Third, external relations enable access to new markets (local, regional, export), thereby improving economic sustainability by diversifying revenue. Networking capabilities and institutional environmental factors have been found to positively influence export performance among Nigerian agricultural SMEs (Ajayi 2019). Finally, attention to IER also means paying attention to the quality of external ties ensuring trust, frequent interaction, capacity to absorb, adaptability to environmental turbulence. Empirical studies in Nigerian SMEs show that knowledge sharing and innovation capability work together to enhance organisational sustainability, especially when environmental dynamism is high (Olaleye et al., 2024).

Sustainable Agricpreneurship Ventures (SAV)

Sustainable agricpreneurship ventures refers to the integrated capacity to maintain and enhance economic viability, environmental stewardship, and social well-being over time. Economically, agricpreneurship must ensure profitability, access to finance, efficient resource allocation, value-addition, and market linkages; socially, it requires inclusive practices: fair labour, youth and women participation, knowledge transfer and community asset building; environmentally, it entails preserving soil fertility, water resources, biodiversity, minimizing chemical inputs, and adapting to climate change. In Nigeria, studies indicate that agricpreneurship ventures with strong access to credit and institutional support both significantly increase productivity and income among small-scale farmers, thus supporting economic sustainability. For example, Salisu et al., (2021) reported that credit utilization has a statistically significant positive effect on productivity, while delays in disbursement and lack of community banking limit sustainability of

such ventures. Also, in Southwestern Nigeria, sustainability of interest among graduate youth in agripreneurship hinged heavily on motivational, institutional, community and parental influences, showing that social and institutional dimensions are pivotal for sustaining agricultural entrepreneurship ventures (Alabi et al., 2021; Emeka et al., 2025).

Yet sustaining agripreneurship ventures also depends heavily on organisational innovation: the capacity of ventures to innovate in business models, adopt eco-innovations, harness climate-smart practices, and align with supportive policy and infrastructural environments (Ikuemonisan, 2024). Recent research shows weak technology adoption, infrastructural deficits (roads, electricity, storage), low education or skill gaps, and inconsistent policy frameworks are major threats to sustainable agripreneurship in Nigeria (Ikuemonisan, 2024; Ikuemonisan, 2025). In contrast, strategies such as integrating climate-smart agriculture (CSA) practices in the North Central and Northwest zones, organic farming policy support, renewable energy integration, and eco-innovation strategies are shown to improve environmental resilience, increase yield, reduce input costs and improve livelihoods (Gabriel et al., 2024; Nwosu et al., 2024). For Niger State, then, organisational innovation that builds better institutional structures (credit delivery, extension services), that embeds climate resilience and environmental best practices, and that ensures socio-economic inclusion can make agripreneurship ventures not only survive but thrive sustainably.



3.0 Methodology

This study used a quantitative design with Structural Equation Modeling-Partial Least Squares (SEM-PLS) to investigate organisational innovation: A Catalyst to Sustainable Agricpreneurship Ventures in Niger State. Primary data was obtained via a survey-based method resulting in an adequate dataset for statistical analysis. The target demographic comprises of selected Agricpreneurship Ventures in Niger State. To verify statistical reliability and generalizability of the findings, data were collected from 500 respondents in selected agricbusiness ventures in Niger State. A structured questionnaire was sent online using Google Forms and LinkedIn professional groups.

The survey consists of Likert-scale questions (1 = Strongly Disagree to 5 = Strongly Agree) measuring organisational innovation (innovation in business practice, innovation in workplace organisation, innovation in knowledge management., and innovation in external relations); sustainable agricpreneurship ventures was measured as a single construct; Following data collection, the data collected was cleaned and encoded for analysis in SmartPLS, with the following steps performed:

- a) Measurement Model Analysis
- b) Structural Model Testing and
- c) Moderation Analysis

Results of interpretation

Measurement Model Assessment

Standard reflection indicators including Cronbach's alpha, composite reliability (CR), and average variance extracted (AVE), and indicator loadings were used to assess the measurement model in order to guarantee validity and reliability (see Figure 1). The findings showed that every construct either satisfied or exceeded the accepted criteria for convergent validity and internal consistency.

Constructs	Cronbach's alpha (standardized)	Cronbach's alpha (unstandardized)	Composite reliability (rho_c)	Comment
IBP	0.882	0.882	0.877	Good
IWO	0.876	0.876	0.873	Good
IKM	0.904	0.903	0.897	Good
IER	0.911	0.911	0.912	Good
SAV	0.902	0.902	0.908	Good

Table 1: Summary of Internal Consistency for the Study

Source: Researcher's Smart PLS Output, (2025)

Table 1 provides a summary of the internal consistency for the study constructs, evaluated through Cronbach's alpha (standardized and unstandardized) and composite reliability (rho_c). Each construct demonstrates strong internal consistency, as indicated by the high values of these reliability metrics. IBP has alpha values of 0.882 (both standardized and unstandardized) and a composite reliability of 0.877, demonstrating strong reliability. IWO, with alpha values of 0.876 (both standardized and unstandardized) and a composite reliability of 0.873, shows acceptable internal consistency. IKM shows Cronbach's alpha values of 0.904 (standardized) and 0.903 (unstandardized), with a composite reliability of 0.897, indicating a high level of reliability. IER displays excellent internal consistency with alpha values of 0.911 (both standardized and unstandardized) and a composite reliability of 0.912. SAV exhibits alpha values of 0.902 (both standardized and unstandardized) and a composite reliability of 0.908, confirming strong internal consistency. Overall, these results validate the reliability of the measurement instruments used in this study, with all constructs exhibiting good to excellent internal consistency.

Constructs	Average variance extracted (AVE)	Variance Inflation Factor (VIF)	Comments
IBP	0.642	2.755	Good
IWO	0.580	2.402	Good
IKM	0.556	2.733	Good
IER	0.630	2.073	Good
SAV	0.763	2.712	Good

Table 2: Summary of Convergent Validity for the Study

Source: Researcher's Smart PLS Output, 2025

Table 2 provides a summary of the convergent validity for the study constructs, evaluated through the average variance extracted (AVE) and Variance Inflation Factor (VIF). These results indicate that all constructs exhibit acceptable to strong convergent validity, supporting the validity of the measurement instruments used in this study. The VIF serves as a metric to quantify how much the variance of a calculated regression coefficient is influenced by collinearity. According to Streukens and Leroi-Werelds, (2023), VIF values exceeding 5 often indicate collinearity issues that may warrant attention. Assessing and addressing collinearity is crucial for ensuring the reliability and validity of the SEM results, enhancing the robustness of the model and the accuracy of its interpretations.

Structural Model Results

The structural model aimed to test the direct relationships between IBP, IWO, IKM, and IER. Figure 1 and Table 3 summarise the path coefficients, t-statistics, and p-values.

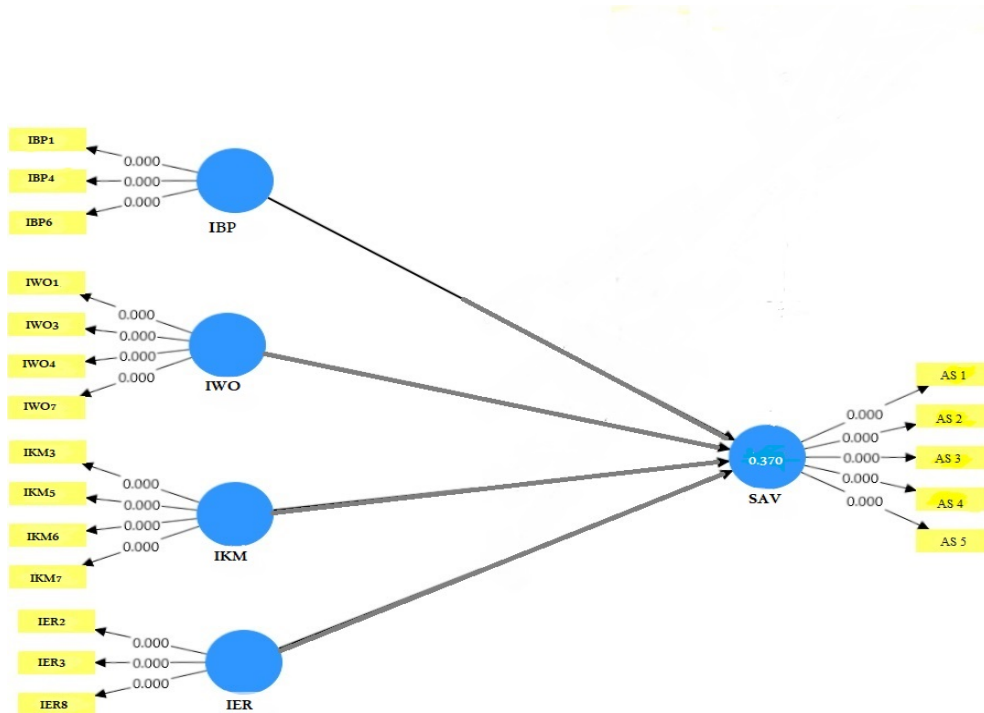


Figure 1: Structural model

Table 3. The Path Coefficients

Summary of the Significance of Path Coefficients for Directs Effects of OI variables on Sustainable Agricpreneurship Ventures in Niger State

Constructs	Path Coefficient	T statistics	P values (0.05)	Comments (Null Hypotheses)
IBP -> SAV	0.036	0.558	0.577	Accepted
IWO -> SAV	0.104	1.050	0.294	Accepted
IKM -> SAV	0.541	4.754	0.000	Rejected
IER -> SAV	0.326	4.662	0.000	Rejected

Source: Researcher's Smart PLS Output, 2025

Despite the measurement model's high reliability and validity, the structural model revealed unanticipated results. The majority of path coefficients were statistically insignificant, with low t-values and p-values above 0.05. The R² value for SAV is 0.370, showing that just 3.7% of the variance in sustainable agricpreneurship venture is explained by the independent variables,

demonstrating low explanatory power.

Discussions

The findings of the study indicate that innovation in business practices (IBP) and innovation in workplace organization (IWO) have positive but statistically insignificant effects on sustainable agricpreneurship ventures (SAV) in Niger State, as reflected by their low t-statistics (0.558 and 1.050) and high p-values (0.577 and 0.294). This suggests that, while improvements in operational and organizational methods may contribute to enhanced efficiency and flexibility, their immediate impact on sustainability outcomes among agricpreneurs remains limited. Similar studies have shown that organizational and managerial changes often require long-term implementation before their effects on sustainability become significant (Iliemena-Ifeanyi & Amedu, 2024); Oduro & Nyarko, 2023). Hence, the acceptance of these hypotheses implies that such innovations are recognized as relevant but not yet strong determinants of sustainable performance.

Conversely, innovation in knowledge management (IKM) and innovation in external relations (IER) exhibit strong and statistically significant effects on sustainable agricpreneurship ventures, as shown by their high t-statistics (4.754 and 4.662) and p-values (0.000). These findings align with prior research emphasizing that efficient knowledge creation, sharing, and collaboration with external stakeholders enhance competitiveness and long-term viability (Nwachukwu et al., 2022; Emeka et al., 2025). Therefore, continuous learning, partnerships, and external networking emerge as critical Catalysts for promoting sustainable agricpreneurship ventures in Niger State.

Conclusion

This study concludes that organisational innovation serves as a vital Catalyst to achieving sustainable agricpreneurship venture growth in Niger State. The findings underscore that innovative practices in management, processes, and technology adoption enhance productivity, competitiveness, and long-term viability of agricultural enterprises. By fostering a culture of creativity, adaptability, and continuous improvement, agricpreneurs can better respond to market dynamics and environmental challenges. Therefore, strengthening organisational innovation through innovation in business practice, workplace organization, knowledge sharing, and supportive policies is essential for building resilient and sustainable agricpreneurship ventures

capable of driving economic growth and food security in Niger State.

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