



Building a Competitive Edge: Adaptive Learning and Property Company Success

Okwurume, Clarence Nkasirim

Department of Business Administration

Faculty of Administration and Management

Rivers State University, Nkpolu-Oroworukwo, Port Harcourt

Abstract: *The study examined the relationship between adaptive learning and comparativeness of property company success in Rivers State. The study adopted the cross-sectional research design. The study comprised a total target population of 25 supervisors from 11 statistically selected relevant property companies in Rivers State. Based on this, 275 staff was statistically selected as the sample size. Consequently, 275 questionnaires were distributed among the supervisors employing a simple random sampling technique. The likert 5 point scale structured questionnaire was used in the collection of both qualitative and quantitative data after ascertaining the validity and reliability of the data collection instrument. After data cleaning 220 copies of the questionnaire were found fit for use in the analysis, four hypotheses were posited and tested. The research data were descriptively and inferentially analyzed using Spearman's Rank Order correlation coefficient statistical technique at 0.05 level of significance with the aid of statistical package for social sciences software. Based on the analyses, the results revealed that there is a significant and positive correlation between the predictor and criterion variables. This indicates that there is a strong association between adaptive learning components and the competitiveness of property companies in Rivers State. In conclusion, the study emphasizes the importance of adaptive learning, particularly in shared vision and supportive leadership for property companies success to thrive to a greater heights. Based on this, the study recommended amongst others that managers should prioritize their firms, and there by implementing shared vision strategies as to enhance the well-being and overall firm performance.*

Key words: *Shared Vision, Supportive Leadership, Cost Reduction, Innovativeness.*

Introduction

Organizations have over a time frame realized that behaviour change cannot happen consequently of a separated learning incident. Adaptive learning is considered as great operative plan applied to encapsulate the training process within the organization. Knowledge has become one of the most important resources for companies to create competitive advantages and to ensure long-term business success with constantly changing market conditions. An organization's capability to learn has been linked to a fundamental source of competitive advantage (Ewans, Olai & Ofor 2017).

Adaptive learning helps to improve an organization's competitive advantage as well as responsiveness to change. Interestingly, business executives and intellectuals have come to realize that knowledge assets and intellectual capital can best serve as a source of competitive advantage. Organizations learn regardless of whether they apply systematic learning approaches to gain the ability for systematic learning. Adaptive learning can be perceived as a management tool that involves controlling and planning, its areas of focus include adaptive strategic creation, capture and internalization of knowledge. However, learning at an individual level is necessary but not sufficient condition to establish a learning organization. In a learning organization, learning must continually occur at all levels, individual, group and system level. In today's rapidly evolving business environment, companies must continually learn and apply new knowledge to remain competitive (Muhammad & Abdul, 2015). Adaptive learning is recognized as the primary source of competitive advantage (Hussein et al., 2014), facilitating quick adaptation to industry changes (Vithessonthi & Thoumrungroje, 2011). This adaptive capacity is crucial for sustaining competitive advantages in dynamic environments (Kor & Mahoney, 2005; Vithessonthi & Thoumrungroje, 2011).

However, adapting to environmental changes often comes with significant costs (Prahalad & Lieberthal, 2003; Vithessonthi & Thoumrungroje, 2011). Competitiveness is essential for navigating market forces, expanding into new markets, attracting investments, and outperforming rivals (Fagerberg & Srholec, 2017). Despite its importance, adaptive learning is often overlooked by Nigerian managers and organizations, except in the banking sector (Mehmet et al., 2014; Ewans, Olai, & Offor, 2017).

This study addresses two key gaps in the literature: first, by developing a multidimensional framework of business competitiveness, and second, by investigating the impact of adaptive learning on the competitive advantage of property companies in Port Harcourt. The real estate industry is particularly pertinent due to its rapid growth and the constant introduction of affordable housing projects to attract more customers and thrive in the competitive market. Existing research has primarily focused on innovation, resources, and leadership in strategy creation and execution, neglecting the role of cost-driven efficiency in Nigeria's economic climate. Furthermore, the potential benefits of innovation for cost reduction and its implications for price-sensitive real estate firms in Port Harcourt remain unexplored. Additionally, inefficiencies within industry initiatives and supply chains require attention to optimize competitiveness. Therefore, this study aims to investigate how adaptive learning influences the competitiveness of property companies in Port Harcourt by addressing these gaps.

Objectives of the Study

The major aim of this study is to investigate the relationship between adaptive learning and property company success. Specifically, the study shall seek to:

1. Evaluate the nature of relationship between shared vision and adaptive learning of property company success in Rivers State.
2. Ascertain the extent of relationship between supportive leadership and adaptive learning of property company success in Rivers State.

Research Questions

The following research questions guided the study:

1. What is the nature of relationship between shared vision and adaptive learning of property company success in Rivers State?
2. What is the extent of relationship between supportive leadership and adaptive learning of property company success in Rivers State?

Hypotheses

The following hypotheses were stated in a null form:

- H₀₁: There is no significant relationship between shared vision and cost reduction of property company success in Rivers State.
- H₀₂: There is no significant relationship between shared vision and innovativeness of property company success in Rivers State.
- H₀₃: There is no significant relationship between supportive leadership and cost reduction of property company success in Rivers State.
- H₀₄: There is no significant relationship between supportive leadership and innovativeness of property company success in Rivers State.

Literature Review

Theoretical Foundation

Grounded in the Social Cognitive Theory of learning, this study delves into the intricate interplay between individual actions, traits, and environmental influences. As posited by Bandura (1977), the Social Cognitive Theory asserts that behavior is shaped by a dynamic interaction among personal factors, environmental influences, and behaviors. Environmental factors encompass social pressures and situational features, while personal factors encompass cognitive, personality, and demographic traits. This theory underpins intervention efforts and elucidates the acquisition and retention of behavioral patterns.

Adaptive Learning

An organization's capability to learn has been linked to a fundamental source of competitive advantages. Business executives and intellectuals have come to realize that knowledge assets and intellectuals capital can best serve as a source of competitive advantage in comparison with the total dependence of traditional factors. Adaptive learning consists of all the methods mechanics and processes which are used in the organization in order to achieve learning. Adaptive learning is the process of improving actions through better knowledge and understanding. It involves knowledge acquisition, knowledge sharing, knowledge utilization and new success.

Adaptive learning, as elucidated by Chris (2013), is a continual process wherein companies and their personnel acquire the knowledge and skills necessary for enhancing their talents, resources, and capacity for effective performance. It encompasses knowledge management approaches utilized across the organization to facilitate learning. Mylse (2014) underscores that adaptive learning is essential for businesses to adapt to their environment, utilizing various competencies, know-how, and capacities to attain competitiveness. Robelo et al. (2002) define adaptive learning as a state wherein employees continuously enhance their ability to produce results through the creation of new patterns, fostering group aspirations,

and team learning. Central to adaptive learning is the organization's capacity to assess and adapt to market demands (Graham & Nafukho, 2007; Scot, 2011; Norashikin et al., 2014).

Shared Vision

Effective leaders are those who can create a visionary image of the desired achievement of the future situation. Moreover, a shared vision becomes a shared contract that binds the leader and followers 'moral obligation, the vision gives direction and meaning to its managers and their teams building their energies together and participating in transforming the practice. It is also important to note that leaders closely monitor the energy level of the team and organization to maintain a balance between innovation and transformation. Shared vision in an organization helps to minimize the diversity that exists between departments and functional groups.

Shared vision refers to the collective aims and goals embraced by all members of an organization. It embodies the social elements of cooperative relationships and fosters camaraderie, trust, and confidence in relational transactions (Roueche, Baker & Rose, 2014). Shared vision serves as a vital cognitive component of social capital, influencing knowledge transfer and cohesion within organizations (Rodríguez & Wilson, 2000). It encapsulates the extent to which individuals align their long-term goals and visions, thus promoting adaptive unity and direction (Inkpen & Tsang, 2005).

Supportive Leadership

Leadership is the most critical component in an organization and the most important skills the organization leaders uses. It brings direct and indirect impact to the employee's performance. Leaders play a crucial role to foster a culture that encourages knowledge sharing, employee retention and create loyalty to the organization. Currently, many organizations face challenges such as high staff turnover, lack of commitment and work-related stress among employees. Effective leadership is paramount in achieving enhanced adaptive outcomes. Supportive leadership, characterized by behaviors such as consideration, inspiration, guidance, and support, plays a pivotal role in motivating and empowering followers (Dumdum, Lowe, & Avolio, 2002; Rowold, & Schlotz, 2009). Supportive leaders foster an environment where employees feel valued and empowered, leading to improved performance and job satisfaction (Rafferty & Griffin, 2006). Traits such as respect, active listening, and work-life balance are instrumental in nurturing a supportive leadership culture (Oluseyi & Ayo, 2009).

Competitiveness

One of the ways to increase competitiveness is to act in the increase of productivity. Competitiveness and productivity are complementary concepts, and for competitiveness. It is necessary solid bases of productivity. The competitiveness of the company depends on the connection between the competitiveness in country and sector level. In order to be competitive, any company must offer products and services that customers are willing to pay. Competitiveness is measured by the ability of the company to consume the business and guaranteeing future employment. Infact, productivity is an element that significantly impacts competitiveness at the company level.

Competitiveness embodies the relative position of an economic entity, be it a household, firm, industry, or nation, in comparison to others (Reiljan et al., 2000). It encompasses various dimensions, including market share, productivity, and innovation. Porter, Ketels, and Degedo (2007) define competitiveness as a nation's market share in the global marketplace for its products. A country's level of competitiveness is influenced by institutional factors, policies, and other determinants (World Economic Forum, 2015). Productivity, as highlighted by Adebayo (2010), is a cornerstone of competitiveness, reflecting the efficiency of resource utilization and serving as a driver of economic growth.

Cost Reduction

One of the major concerns of the enterprise is to maximize the profit. This is possible only through decreasing the cost of production. Conversely, cost reduction is a technique used to save the unit cost of the product without compromising the quality. Cost control and reduction refers to the efforts business manager make to monitor, evaluate and trim expenditures. In the pursuit of global competitiveness, cost reduction emerges as a pivotal strategy for organizations. McWatters, Morse, & Zimmerman (2001) emphasize the imperative of continual cost evaluation to enhance business efficiency. Cost reduction entails a deliberate effort to streamline expenses and maximize profitability (Adeniyi, 2011). It involves scrutinizing every aspect of the firm to identify areas for optimization and efficiency enhancement.

Innovativeness

Innovation, encompassing administrative and product innovation, drives adaptive growth and competitiveness (Jungwoo, 2004; Sungjoo et al., 2010). Research and development activities serve as catalysts for product innovation, enhancing market penetration and profitability (Fontana, 2009). Innovativeness is reflected in enhanced customer satisfaction, revenue growth, and market expansion (Wibisono, 2006). It constitutes a fundamental driver of economic and social progress, catalyzing transformations in products, services, and processes to meet evolving consumer needs and societal demands.

Empirical Review

Adaptive learning plays a crucial role in shaping the performance and competitiveness of businesses in dynamic environments. Several studies have explored the relationships between adaptive learning, innovation, and performance across different sectors and regions. Bello et al. (2018) delved into these relationships within the context of manufacturing companies in Lagos, Nigeria. They found positive associations between adaptive learning, innovation, and performance, highlighting the importance of knowledge sharing and innovation in achieving adaptive goals.

Similarly, Ewans et al. (2017) focused on the paint manufacturing sector in Lagos, Nigeria, examining how adaptive learning influences performance. Through a survey design and correlation analysis, they revealed that knowledge sharing enhances operational innovation, leading to product diversification, crucial for staying competitive in the market. Moving beyond Nigeria, Edy et al. (2017) explored the influence of adaptive learning on lecturer performance in higher education institutions in Indonesia. Their study demonstrated a significant and favorable effect of adaptive learning on teaching competency and lecturer

performance, underscoring the importance of continuous learning and development in educational settings.

In the banking sector, Mehmet, Aminu, & Abdurrahim (2014) investigated the impact of adaptive learning capacity on employee performance in Nigeria. Their findings indicated a positive relationship between adaptive learning and performance, emphasizing the significance of continuous skill and knowledge development in achieving adaptive objectives. Furthermore, Yeo (2003) examined the connection between adaptive learning and success across various industries. They discovered that adaptive learning contributes to staff personal development, fosters innovation, and facilitates the introduction of new goods and services, ultimately enhancing adaptive competitiveness.

Methodology

In the pursuit of this study, the researcher adopted a cross-sectional research design to access the population of interest. This choice was informed by the understanding that the subjects under investigation are human beings, whose behavior is inherently dynamic and subject to change. Therefore, a cross-sectional approach was deemed appropriate, allowing for a snapshot of data collection at a single point in time, thereby accommodating the variability inherent in human behavior. The target population consisted of 25 supervisors from each of the 11 property companies situated in Port Harcourt, Rivers State. Consequently, a total of 275 questionnaires were distributed among the supervisors within the selected firms. The selection of respondents was facilitated by employing a simple random sampling technique. This methodological choice was deliberate, as it ensures that each member of the population has an equal chance of being selected for the study. By employing such an approach, the research aimed to mitigate researcher bias and ensure the representation of the entire population, thus enhancing the validity and generalizability of the findings.

The study focused on investigating the impact of adaptive learning, with a specific emphasis on supportive leadership and shared vision as independent variables. These components were chosen based on their recognized significance in shaping adaptive culture and performance. The dependent variable, competitiveness, was operationalized through the dimensions of innovativeness and cost reduction, both critical aspects of adaptive success in dynamic market environments. To gather data on these constructs, respondents were presented with surveys wherein each item was assessed using a 5-point Likert scale. This methodology facilitated the systematic measurement of respondents' perceptions and attitudes towards the variables under scrutiny. Subsequently, the collected data underwent correlation analysis using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) program. By leveraging SPSS for correlation analysis, the study aimed to discern the relationships between the variables of interest and uncover any patterns or associations therein. Such statistical analysis serves to provide empirical evidence regarding the hypothesized relationships between supportive leadership, shared vision, adaptive learning, and competitiveness in property companies.

Results and Discussion

Table 1 Relationship between shared vision and competitiveness of property companies

			Shared Vision	Cost Reduction	Innovativeness
Spearman's rho	Shared Vision	Correlation Coefficient	1.000	.921**	.874**
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.	.000	.000
		N	220	220	220
	Cost Reduction	Correlation Coefficient	.921**	1.000	.883**
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.	.000
		N	220	220	220
	Innovativeness	Correlation Coefficient	.874**	.883**	1.000
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.
		N	220	220	220

Source: SPSS output version 23

Table 1 presents the correlation coefficients between shared vision and two dimensions of competitiveness, namely cost reduction and innovativeness, within property companies. For the relationship between shared vision and cost reduction, the correlation coefficient is 0.921, indicating a strong positive correlation. This suggests that as shared vision within property companies increases, there tends to be a corresponding increase in cost reduction initiatives. The statistical significance of this relationship is supported by a p-value of 0.000, indicating that the observed correlation is unlikely to have occurred by random chance. The strong positive correlation between shared vision and both cost reduction and innovativeness highlights the critical role of shared vision within property companies. It suggests that fostering a shared understanding of the company's goals, values, and direction among employees can lead to tangible benefits in terms of reducing costs and fostering innovation. Companies can leverage the findings to ensure that their strategic objectives are aligned with a clear and compelling shared vision. By articulating and communicating a shared vision effectively throughout the organization, companies can enhance employee engagement, motivation, and commitment to achieving adaptive goals. The positive correlation between shared vision and cost reduction implies that companies with a strong shared vision are more likely to implement and sustain cost reduction initiatives successfully. This could involve streamlining processes, optimizing resource utilization, or identifying inefficiencies to minimize expenses while maintaining or improving quality.

Similarly, shared vision demonstrates a strong positive correlation with innovativeness, with a correlation coefficient of 0.874. This indicates that as shared vision strengthens within property companies, there is typically a concurrent enhancement in innovativeness. The statistical significance of this relationship is supported by a p-value of 0.000. Moreover, the correlation coefficient between cost reduction and innovativeness is 0.883, again indicating a strong positive correlation. This suggests that as property companies engage in cost reduction initiatives, there tends to be an associated increase in innovativeness. The statistical significance of this relationship is supported by a p-value of 0.000. The association between shared vision and innovativeness suggests that companies that prioritize

developing and communicating a shared vision are more likely to foster a culture of innovation. Employees who are aligned with the company's vision are more inclined to think creatively, take calculated risks, and explore new ideas that contribute to adaptive growth and competitiveness. By leveraging shared vision to drive cost reduction and innovation initiatives, property companies can gain a competitive advantage in the marketplace. A clear and compelling shared vision can differentiate the company from competitors, attract top talent, and enhance customer satisfaction by delivering innovative products or services efficiently and effectively.

Table 2 Relationship between supportive leadership and competitiveness of property companies

			Supportive Leadership	Cost Reduction	Innovativeness
Spearman's rho	Supportive Leadership	Correlation Coefficient	1.000	.872**	.886**
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.	.000	.000
		N	220	220	220
	Cost Reduction	Correlation Coefficient	.872**	1.000	.896**
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.	.000
		N	220	220	220
	Innovativeness	Correlation Coefficient	.866**	.896**	1.000
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.
		N	220	220	220

Source: SPSS output version 23

Table 2 presents the correlation coefficients between supportive leadership and two dimensions of competitiveness, namely cost reduction and innovativeness, within property companies. For the relationship between supportive leadership and cost reduction, the correlation coefficient is 0.872, indicating a strong positive correlation. This suggests that as supportive leadership within property companies increases, there tends to be a corresponding increase in cost reduction initiatives. The statistical significance of this relationship is supported by a p-value of 0.000, indicating that the observed correlation is unlikely to have occurred by random chance.

Similarly, supportive leadership demonstrates a strong positive correlation with innovativeness, with a correlation coefficient of 0.886. This indicates that as supportive leadership strengthens within property companies, there is typically a concurrent enhancement in innovativeness. The statistical significance of this relationship is supported by a p-value of 0.000. Moreover, the correlation coefficient between cost reduction and innovativeness is 0.896, again indicating a strong positive correlation. This suggests that as property companies engage in cost reduction initiatives facilitated by supportive leadership, there tends to be an associated increase in innovativeness. The statistical significance of this relationship is supported by a p-value of 0.000.

The results emphasize the critical role of supportive leadership in driving both cost reduction and innovativeness within property companies. This underscores the importance of

investing in leadership development programs aimed at cultivating supportive leadership behaviors among managers and supervisors. Supportive leadership fosters an environment where employees feel empowered and motivated to contribute ideas and take ownership of cost reduction and innovation initiatives. Property companies can benefit from fostering a culture of trust, open communication, and collaboration, where employees are encouraged to voice their opinions and suggestions. The strong positive correlation between supportive leadership and cost reduction suggests that leaders who provide guidance, resources, and encouragement to employees are instrumental in facilitating continuous improvement efforts. Property companies can leverage supportive leadership to identify inefficiencies, streamline processes, and optimize resource allocation to achieve cost savings.

Supportive leadership plays a crucial role in nurturing an innovation culture within property companies. Leaders who demonstrate empathy, understanding, and appreciation for employees' contributions create an environment conducive to creativity, experimentation, and risk-taking. This, in turn, can lead to the development of new products, services, or processes that enhance competitiveness and market differentiation. Property companies should align their leadership development initiatives with the adaptive goals and values to ensure that supportive leadership behaviors are consistent with the company's vision and mission. By integrating supportive leadership practices into performance evaluations and rewards systems, companies can reinforce desired behaviors and drive adaptive performance.

Conclusion

Based on the results and discussions presented, it can be concluded that both shared vision and supportive leadership have a significant positive correlation with cost reduction and innovativeness within property companies. A strong shared vision and supportive leadership are associated with increased cost reduction initiatives and enhanced innovativeness. These findings highlight the critical role of shared vision and supportive leadership in driving competitiveness within property companies. Based on the findings, the following recommendations are offered:

1. Property companies should focus on developing and communicating a clear and compelling shared vision throughout the organization. This shared vision should align with the company's goals, values, and direction. By articulating and communicating the shared vision effectively, companies can enhance employee engagement, motivation, and commitment to achieving adaptive goals. This, in turn, can lead to cost reduction initiatives and foster a culture of innovation.
2. Property companies should invest in leadership development programs aimed at cultivating supportive leadership behaviors among managers and supervisors. These programs should focus on developing skills related to guidance, resource allocation, empowerment, and motivation. By nurturing supportive leadership, companies can create an environment where employees feel empowered to contribute ideas, take ownership of cost reduction and innovation initiatives, and foster a culture of trust, open communication, and collaboration.
3. Property companies should align their leadership development initiatives with the adaptive goals and values. Supportive leadership behaviors should be integrated into performance evaluations and rewards systems to reinforce desired behaviors and drive adaptive performance. By recognizing and rewarding supportive leadership,

companies can encourage managers and supervisors to consistently exhibit behaviors that facilitate cost reduction and innovation.

4. Property companies should create an environment that nurtures an innovation culture. Leaders should demonstrate empathy, understanding, and appreciation for employees' contributions. They should encourage creativity, experimentation, and risk-taking. By fostering a culture of innovation, property companies can encourage employees to think creatively, explore new ideas, and develop innovative products, services, or processes that enhance competitiveness and market differentiation.

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