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s/n	Contents	Pages
1	Career Development and Employee Job Performance of Deposit Money Banks in Rivers State, Nigeria Nyedah, Barididum Bevlyn and Dr. L.Q. Don-Baridam	1-11
2	Green Human Resource Management and Organizational Social Responsibility in Chemical and Non-Metallic Industries in Rivers State Ben-Whyte Belema Augustyna and Dr. C. Biriowu	12-24
3	Authentic Leadership and Employee Competence in Private Secondary Schools in Rivers State Oarhe, Diepreye Atonye and Dr. S.P. Asawo	25-44
4	Compensation Policy and Employee Productivity of Manufacturing Companies in Rivers State, Nigeria Enyindah, Mcanthony Agburum and Prof. K.B. Bagshaw	45-57
5	Integration Capability and Organizational Competitiveness of Manufacturing Firms in South-South Obuba, Obinna Kalu and Omoankhanlen, Joseph Akhigbe	59-70
6	Buzz Marketing and Brand Performance of Pharmaceutical Companies in South-South, Nigeria Goodie-Okio Jennifer A. (Ph.D)	71-85
7	Olfactory Marketing Strategy and Customer Engagement in Fast food Restaurants in Rivers State Nwachukwu, Darlington, Ph.D & Origbo, Henry, Ph.D	86-102
8	New Product Management and Marketing Performance of Breweries in South-South and South-East of Nigeria Goodie-Okio Jennifer A.	103-111
9	Effect of Operations Management Information System on Employee Performance in Deposit Money Banks in South East, Nigeria Dr. Chimdi Felix Igbudu and Dr. Amakor Iheanyichukwu Godwin	112-135
10	Employee Voice and Workers' Well-Being: Empirical Evidence from the Food and Beverages Manufacturing Companies in Rivers State, Nigeria DON-BARIDAM LETAM QUEEN (PhD) & DIRI TERRY VICTOR	136-153
11	Acceptability of Locally Made Cosmetic Product: A Study of Shea Butter in Ebonyi State Nigeria Nwachi, Lilian Oriema and Prof. Ike-Elechi Ogba	134-175
12	Timber Marketing and Economic Development in Ebonyi State, Nigeria Ejirihugha, Valentine Ikechukwu, Dr. Ozo, Johnson Ubaka & Dr. Egele, Aja Ebeke	176-195

Career Development and Employee Job Performance of Deposit Money Banks in Rivers State, Nigeria

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Abstract: *This study examined the relationship between career development and employee job performance of deposit money banks in Rivers State, Nigeria. The study adopted a cross-sectional survey research design which is explanatory in nature to obtained responses from the deposit money banks, Nigeria, the Taro Yamane sample size derivation formula was used to determine the sample size. After data cleaning, 165 respondents were finally used for data analysis. Data for the study was collected through structured questionnaire while the five (5) point Likert scale was used to measure the responses from the respondents. The reliability of the study was determined using the Cronbach alpha coefficient. Spearman' Rank Order Correlation coefficient Statistics technique was used to test the hypotheses with the aid of statistical package for Social Science Version 25.0 for the purposes of examining the nature and proposed associations. The findings revealed that there is a positive and significant relationship between career development and employee job performance in the deposit money banks in Rivers State. The study concludes that career development has a strong positive and significant influence on the two measures of employee job performance in the deposit money banks in Rivers State, Nigeria. The study therefore recommends that Deposit money banks should implement career development policies towards effective succession planning. Management should exhaust all internal talent before considering external talent especially when making promotion decisions.*

Keywords: *Career Development, Employee Job Performance, Task Accomplishment, Service Quality*

INTRODUCTION

The Nigerian banking system has undergone remarkable changes over the years in terms of the number of institutions ownership, structure, technological innovation, expansion, and number of local and international branches, capital base, among others (Ekerete, 2005). For a long time, financial service providers had presumed that their operations were customer-centric, simply because they had customers and were able to generate profits. However, in the current era of hyper competition, where only a very slight difference exists in the services provided by the major players in this industry, their services need skilled expertise and committed employees to meet customers' demands in the industry.

The need to improve employee job performance in the organization has become universally accepted phenomenon that depends on efficient and effective employee career development. It has become necessary, in view of modern global corporate world to invest in socialization, mentoring and professional skills to build employee confidence in any organizational setting. Oyewumi, Ibitoye and Sanni (2012) stated that skilled, professional, committed and efficient workers play vital role in achieving the goals in an organization. Workforce is long lasting and very important asset of any organization as it manages other assets and activities of the organization. Williams & Anderson (1991) sees employee job performance as a work related outcome or activity that demonstrates how well these activities are accomplished by the individual workers in the organization.

Employee performance has been described in many ways; ability to achieve targets, realize goals, attain benchmarks. Most commonly people immediately talked of job performance as what a person did at work. Different stages of job as well the complexity of a job also affected the overall performance of the jobholder (Adim, Ibekwe & Akintokunbo, 2018). An employee's performance is observed at work and determined during job performance evaluation, with an employer taking into consideration components such as quality of work, quantity of work, cooperativeness or loyalty, resourcefulness and reliability, conduct, self-development or improvement efforts and experience to analyze each employee based on his or her merit. Adeyemo (2010) stated that naturally worker who possesses a high skill level such as unique skills, intelligence and work methods will succeed in his or her job. In banking industry, employees' job performance is very important because it will reflect the organizations' performance. Employee performance standards were designed by the organization to measure the performance of the industry. Therefore, job performance becomes the most important focus of workers and academicians because the performance level will deteriorate if the level of skill of employee drops and it is generally believed that employees are the "backbones" of the corporate world (Fauzilah, Noryati & Zaharah, 2011).

Hence, managers have given more concern about managing task and contextual performance of their employees. Researchers have also identified different factors that can affect job performance. In the last two decades, thus; banking conditions have also changed drastically (Khilji, 2006). Organizations are now promoting a culture of learning and development to improve their human resources to create a competitive edge (Johnson, Pepper, Adkins, & Emejom, 2018). Career management is a system which is organized, formalized and it's a planned effort of achieving a balance between the individual career needs and the organization's workforce requirements (Leibowitz et al., 2006). The rapidly growing awareness makes it obvious that people can give the firm its leading edge in the market place. Career management practices are core function of human resource management which develops the short and long term capacity of employees. Career management practices are key strategic considerations for all organizations regardless of market or profile. The management of the capacity and capability of the organization managers has a fundamental impact on efficiency, effectiveness, morale and profitability of an organization (Armstrong, 2001).

Various alternative components have been advanced as underpinning career development. According to Kaya and Ceylan (2014) career development encompasses development of abilities, maintenance of existing skills, and sharpening skills for the future. The commonality among the various definitions of career development is that, they all focus on empowering an

individual through development of hidden talent and skills. Whereas earlier definitions of career development have tended to place emphasis on activities performed by the individual, later definitions have taken cognizance of the importance of professions in human resource matters in the entire process (Baruch, Szűcs, & Gunz, 2015). Many studies of career development have failed to look fundamentally at how individuals manage their careers vi-a-vis the organizations goals, and how organizations structure members career progress. Therefore, the purpose of the study is to examine the relationship between career development and employee job performance of deposit money banks in Rivers State, Nigeria.

The study was guided by the following research questions:

- i. What is the relationship between career development and task accomplishment of deposit money banks in Rivers state?
- ii. What is the relationship between career development and service quality of deposit money banks in Rivers state?

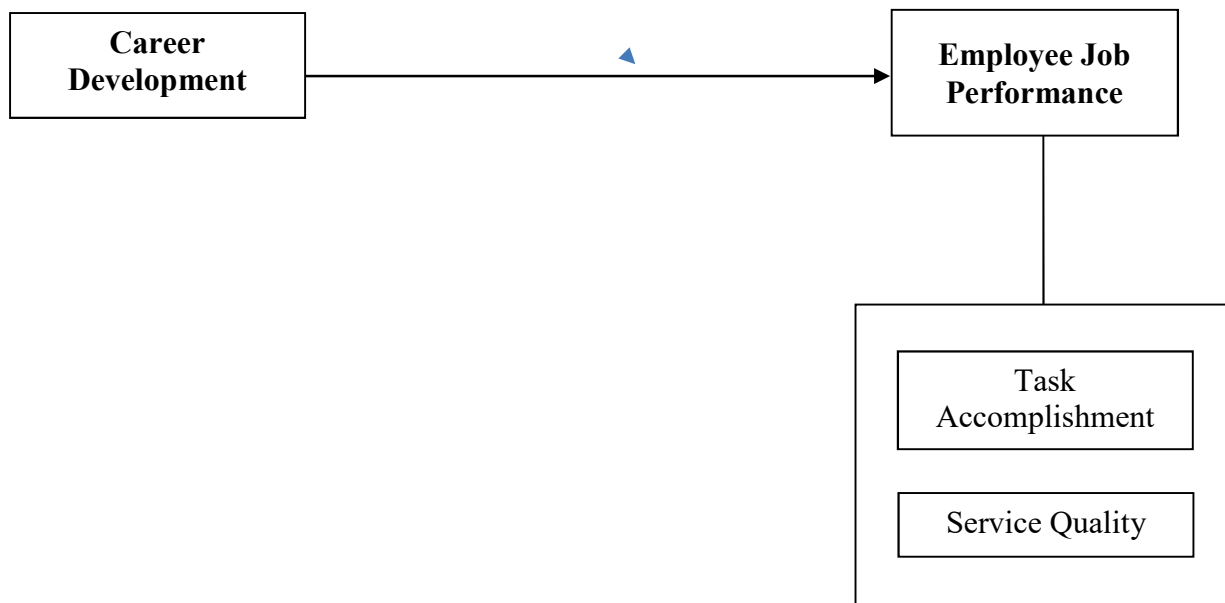


Fig.1: Conceptual framework for career development and employee job performance

Source: Author's Desk Research, 2021

LITERATURE REVIEW

Theoretical Foundation

Human Capital Theory

Human capital theory was proposed by Schultz in 1961 and later developed extensively by Becker in 1964 as cited in his publication titled Human Capital: A theoretical and Empirical Analysis to special reference to education. Human capital theory was developed on the realization that the growth of physical capital was only a small part of the growth of organizational income (Tan, 2014). Economist Theodore Schultz introduced return-on investment, which highlighted the cost-benefit analysis of staff training and education. Based on Schultz's research on return-on-investment, Becker introduced the concepts of general purpose

human capital and firm-specific human capital that are widely used by human resource development practitioners worldwide to date (Josan, 2013).

Human capital theory suggests that employees' education or training raises their productivity by imparting useful knowledge and skills. This theory postulates that expenditure on training and education is costly, and should be considered an investment since it is undertaken with a view to increasing personal incomes. The human capital approach is often used to explain occupational wage differentials (Campbell, Coff & Kryscynski, 2012). In Becker's view, human capital is similar to physical means of production, e.g., factories and machines meaning one can invest in human capital (via education, training, medical treatment) and a firm's output depends partly on the rate of return on the human capital one owns. Thus, human capital is a means of production, into which additional investment yields additional output (Armstrong & Taylor, 2014). Therefore by investing in human capital through staff training and development, the organization is able to retain talented workforce who will feel motivated to be part of the firm hence leading to better organizational performance (Rothwell, 2010).

Career Development

Career development is a critical element that facilitates individual goal achievement (Kraimer, Seibert, Wayne, Liden, & Bravo, 2011). Career development refers to whether people were proud of their work, whether their superiors were satisfied with the work, and whether people felt comfortable in their jobs. Amundsen and Martinsen (2015) argued that employees' development activities and development created a positive career attitude in workers, which in turn could improve worker performance. Career development aims to encourage and build a career path which offers diversified mobility. Holbeche (2009) noted that career development is an individual-focused strategy that enhances individuals as well as organizational performance by providing training opportunities. Hall-Ellis (2015) stated that choosing a qualified and well trained individual for a key leadership position is a critical decision due to its potential influence on current and future organizational outcomes. Moreover, professional development opportunities reinforce succession planning strategies in the organization.

Career development activities are important particularly for new employees who enter the organization to build the capabilities appropriate for the workplace. Career development offers various learning opportunities to perform their jobs better which in turn enable the organization as a whole to enhance performance. Empirical studies such as Ngo, Turban, Lau and Lui (1998); Chand and Katou (2007) have found training & development is positively related with organization performance. Chand and Katou (2007) used sales growth, productivity, profitability, goal achievement, good services; and Ngo (1980) used sales, net profit, and development of new product/services to measure performance in their studies. Performance measures of our model have similarity with the performance measures of these studies.

Employee Job Performance

Employee job performance is now become an everyday watch word in the modern organizations because of the activities and role performed individual workers in the workplace. It is crucial to the welfare of the industrial firm as well as for the economic progress of the country. Today, the term performance has acquired a wider meaning. The Oxford Advanced Learner Dictionary of Current English stressed that the word performance is a coinage of the old French word *parfournir* and it denotes, functioning, implementation, feat, and accomplishment. Timpson

(2011) defined employee performance as the accomplishment of a given task measure against preset known standard of acquiring competences, cost, and speed. In the same vein, O'clan (2012) defined employee performance as the fulfillment of an obligation in a manner that releases the performer from all liabilities under the contract.

The aforesaid definitions lay emphasis on the importance of standard and the fulfillment of a designed task as cardinal issues in performance. However, the yardstick and how it could be measure was ignored. In the word of Abbott (2012) employee job performance is an assessment of how well the process of carrying a task and how successfully its aims are accomplished. It produce assembled and delivered on time and without wastage i.e. the best standard set for an employee to enable the actualization of organization goals and objective. This definition also tally with the view of Kelly (2013) who also see employee performance as an accomplishment expected of employee to stimulate the achievement of organization goals and objectives. Bello (2013) viewed employee performance as the best effort, ability, and capability on a job, the accomplishment of organization task and the relationship between standard and the resources employed.

Task Accomplishment

Task accomplishment is a measure of an employee's job performance which involves their contribution to overall organizational productivity and actions that are part of the formal reward system and addresses the prescription as indicated in the descriptions of the role (Williams & Karau, 1991). It shows the level or the extent an employee achieves a given target. In general, task accomplishment comprises of activities that translates the organizations policies, missions and resources into tangible and intangible goods produced by the organization and to enable efficient operation of the organization (Motowidlo, 1997).

Thus, task accomplishment covers the fulfillment of the requirements that are part of the agreement between the employee and the organization. Borman & Motowidlo (1993) pointed out that task accomplishment is the effectiveness and efficiency with which job incumbents perform activities that contribute to the organization's technical core and assist in moulding the psychological state of the organization (Borman & Motowidlo, 1993). They further suggested that in accomplishing a given task there are two aspects to it, which are interpersonal facilitation and job dedication. Interpersonal facilitation includes cooperative and helpful acts that help the effectiveness of co-employee.

Service Quality

Service quality is known to be based on multiple dimensions (Gronroos, 1990) there is no general agreement as to the nature or content of the dimensions (Brady & Cronin, 2001). However, a review of the service quality studies to date explicitly shows that European scholars have made a great influence on the study of service quality dimensions. That is, the contemporary discussions on the dimensions of service quality have been initiated by European scholars. Lehtinen & Lehtinen (1982) defined service quality in terms of physical quality, interactive quality and corporate quality. Physical quality relates to the tangible aspects of the service. Interactive quality involves the interactive nature of services and refers to the two-way flow that occurs between the customer and the service provider, or the company representative, including both automated and animated interactions. Corporate quality refers to the image attributed to a service provider by its current and potential customers, as well as other publics.

They also suggest that when compared with the other two quality dimensions, corporate quality tended to be more stable overtime.

Physical environment include buildings, offices and interior design affects customer beliefs, attitudes and satisfaction (Zeithaml & Bitner, 2000), and provides an opportunity to tell the correct story about a given service (Berry, 1989). Matters such as how well one's dress up, articulates, writes, designs and presents proposals seems like no meaning because they are intangibles (Levitt, 1981). As tangible input the service personnel, the organization and the marketers, represents the service in the customers' eye (Zeithaml & Bitner, 1996). The management of quality for a service personnel includes such things as motivating, managing information, training, career planning and recruiting and retaining of right people (Normann, 1991); Zeithaml & Bitner, 1996).

Career Development and Employee Job Performance

Ahmad, Mohamed, and Manaf (2017) examined succession planning programs in Malaysian public sector organizations and found that succession planning contributed to individual career development and enhanced confidence in organization management, which in turn improved individual as well as organizational performance. Rothwell, (2010) stated that succession planning plays a role in retaining employees by providing career development opportunities. Kraimer (2011) highlighted that career opportunities strengthen organizational support for employee development and performance. Similarly, Armstrong and West (2001) found that career development enhanced the satisfaction of bank employees, which subsequently improved their performance

Ali and Mehreen (2018) indicated that career attitude is negatively related to employees desire to quit the firm. Hence, succession planning creates career paths for employees which directly enhance individual performance. Lack of advancement opportunities, poor work-life balance, inadequate reward and recognition were identified as common reasons for departure among all employees. Based on the findings of the reviewed empirical works and the operational framework of this present study, the study attempts to ascertain the relationship between retention effort and employee job performance (task accomplishment, service quality) in the Deposit Money Banks in Rivers State, Nigeria by testing the three hypotheses below.

H₀₁: Career Development has no significant relationship with task accomplishment in the Deposit Money Banks in Rivers State, Nigeria

H₀₂: Career Development has no significant relationship with service quality in the Deposit Money Banks in Rivers State, Nigeria

METHODOLOGY

The study adopted a cross-sectional survey research design which is explanatory in nature to obtained responses from the deposit money banks, Nigeria, the Taro Yamane sample size derivation formula was used to determine the sample size. After data cleaning, 165 respondents were finally used for data analysis. Data for the study was collected through structured questionnaire while the five (5) point Likert scale was used to measure the responses from the respondents. The face validity of the survey instrument was achieved through supervisor's scrutiny and approval while the Reliability for the study was determines using the Cronbach alpha coefficient. Data was analyzed using mean and standard deviations with charts to displayed

the study variables, while inferential statistics such as the Spearman' Rank Order Correlation coefficient Statistics technique was used to test the hypotheses with the aid of statistical package for social science version 25.0 for the purposes of examining the nature and proposed associations. The tests were carried out at a 95% confidence interval and a 0.05 level of significance.

DATA ANALYSIS AND RESULTS

Bivariate Analysis

The level of significance 0.05 was adopted as a criterion for the probability of accepting the null hypothesis in ($p > 0.05$) or rejecting the null hypothesis in ($p < 0.05$).

Table 1: Correlations for Career Development and Task Accomplishment

		Career Development	Task Accomplishment
Spearman's rho	Career Development	Correlation Coefficient	1.000
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.981**
		N	.000
	Task Accomplishment	Correlation Coefficient	.981**
		Sig. (2-tailed)	1.000
		N	.000

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

Source: SPSS Output, 2021

Ho₁: Career development has no significant relationship with task accomplishment in the Deposit Money Banks in Rivers State, Nigeria.

Table 1 showed the correlation coefficient (ρ) that there is a significant and positive relationship between career development and task accomplishment. The ρ value 0.981 indicates this relationship and it is significant at $p \ 0.000 < 0.05$. The correlation coefficient represents a strong correlation indicating a strong relationship. Therefore, based on this finding the null hypothesis earlier stated is hereby rejected and the alternate upheld. Thus, there is a significant relationship between career development and task accomplishment in the Deposit Money Banks in Rivers State, Nigeria.

Table 2: Correlations for Career Development and Service Quality

		Career Development	Service Quality
Spearman's rho	Career Development	Correlation Coefficient	1.000
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.988**
		N	.000
	Service Quality	Correlation Coefficient	.988**
		Sig. (2-tailed)	1.000
		N	.000

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

Source: SPSS Output, 2021

Ho₂: Career development has no significant relationship with service quality in the Deposit Money Banks in Rivers State, Nigeria.

Table 2 showed the correlation coefficient (ρ) that there is a significant and positive relationship between career development and service quality. The ρ value 0.988 indicates this relationship and it is significant at $p \ 0.000 < 0.05$. The correlation coefficient represents a strong correlation indicating a strong relationship. Therefore, based this finding the null hypothesis

earlier stated is hereby rejected and the alternate upheld. Thus, there is a significant relationship between career development and service quality in the Deposit Money Banks in Rivers State, Nigeria.

Discussion of Findings

This study examined the relationship between career development and employee job performance in the Deposit Money Banks in Rivers State, Nigeria. The findings revealed that a significant relationship exists between career development and employee job performance in the Deposit Money Banks in Rivers State, Nigeria.

The findings are in line with the conclusion of Prasadi & Morais (2019) who examine the impact of training and development on organizations performance: A study of managerial level employees in the Apparel Industry. The study has found a strong link between training and performance.

The findings of the present research collaborate with the study of Owen's (2006) ON empirical study on the relationship between training and organizational. This study found that training has a positive effect on commitment and turnover cognitions. Training employed by organization which seeks to improve employee asset, upsurge mutuality, enables the employee identify with the organization, and helps to reduce alternative employment options will increase employee's commitment to the organization.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

The study examines the correlation of Career development and the measures of employee job performance (task accomplishment and service quality) in deposit money banks in Rivers State, Nigeria. From the findings, Career development significantly influence the measures of employee job performance. Career development in the deposit money banks is based on policies aimed at addressing the various needs of employee to enhance their job performance, reduce their intention to leave the organization and also to reduce the substantial cost involved in hiring and training new employees. The study concludes that career development influences employee job performance of deposit money banks in Rivers State, Nigeria.

The study recommends that Deposit money banks should implement career development policies towards effective succession planning. Management should exhaust all internal talent before considering external talent especially when making promotion decisions. Clear career paths should be incorporated in the planning policies. Career development opportunities should be availed to all employees and ensure there is continuous skills improvement of the work force.

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Green Human Resource Management and Organizational Social Responsibility in Chemical and Non-Metallic Industries in Rivers State

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Abstract: *This study assessed the relationship between green human resource management and organizational social responsibility of chemical and non-metallic industries in Rivers State. A cross sectional research design was adopted for the study. The study adopted the cross-sectional survey in its investigation of the variables. Primary data was generated through copies of structured questionnaire. The population of this study constitutes nine (9) chemical and non-metallic firms listed in the Nigerian Content and Development Board (NCDMB) Directory. The entire population was adopted as a sample. However, for the purpose of data generation 36 top managers were used as the study respondents. The research instrument was validated through supervisor's vetting and approval while the reliability of the instrument was achieved by the use of the Cronbach Alpha coefficient with all the items scoring above 0.70. The hypotheses were tested using the Spearman's Rank Order Correlation Statistics. The tests were carried out at a 95% confidence interval and a 0.05 level of significance. The findings revealed that there is a significant relationship between green human resource management and organizational social responsibility of chemical and non-metallic industries in Rivers State. It was therefore recommended that measures should be used to push employees to behave more environmentally and strive for green goals in their work, which is key in accomplishing environmental objectives and for the good of the organization should be implemented.*

Keywords: *Green human Resource Management, Green People Procurement, Organization Social Responsibility*

INTRODUCTION

The human capital of organizations in the form of committed and engaged employees is one of the resources which can provide a competitive advantage for organizations. Similarly, the success of any organization is highly dependent on how it attracts, recruits, motivates and retains its workforce. Organizations must mobilize their human resources in pursuing green objectives in order to achieve proactive corporate environmental sustainability (Daily and Huang, 2001), thus linking environmental sustainability to the future of human resource management (HRM)

(Jackson, Schuler and Jiang, 2014). In the current century, a great interest is shown in all the concerns on the environment in a global perspective to all the fields in business. Disposal of waste materials and industrial pollution from toxic chemicals are areas of focus that need the formulation of policies and regulations and its effects to the society. With the current situation, organizations are on the look to find out techniques and ways to mitigate the ecological footprints in addition to handling the pressuring economic issues (Renwick, Redman, & Maguire, 2013).

In addition, the adoption of a management system focused on environmental sustainability is also believed to provide a competitive advantage for companies (Yang Spencer, Adams and Yapa, 2013). A growing need therefore exists for businesses to integrate environmental management into their HRM practices (Paillé, Chen, Boiral and Jin, 2014). Managing corporate environmental sustainability is a complex task, and can be considered one of the major challenges faced by organizations (Dubey, Gunasekaran, and Chakrabarty, 2015). It has become imperative for organizations to not only act responsibly towards the environment, but to behave in a socially responsible manner while trying to achieve its economic goals (Gupta, Dangayach, Singh, Meena and Rao, 2018).

Green Human Resource is conceptualized as the use of the respective Human Resource Management (HRM) policies in promoting the sustainable spending of resources in a business and with the main aim of encouraging the cause of a sustainable environment (Cheema, Pasha, & Javed, 2015). The term “green”, added to the traditional idea of HRM, may include activities and practices that involve the preservation and conservation of the natural environment, avoidance or minimization of environmental pollution and the generation of gardens and natural places (Jackson et al., 2011). The basic elements GHRM are preserving and developing knowledge capital and the application of HR practices that are environmental-friendly. Through an eco-focus drive, the HR function is the epitome of environmental sustainability in a firm via the alignment of its policies and practices with the trajectory sustainability goals (Jabbour & de Sousa, 2016). This study is therefore examined the relationship between Green Human Resource Management and Organizational Social Responsibility.

This study was guided by the following research questions

- i. What is the relationship between green people procurement and economic responsibility in chemical and non-metallic industries in Rivers State?
- ii. What is the relationship between green people procurement and ethical responsibility in chemical and non-metallic industries in Rivers State?
- iii. What is the relationship between green people procurement and philanthropic responsibility in chemical and non-metallic industries in Rivers State?

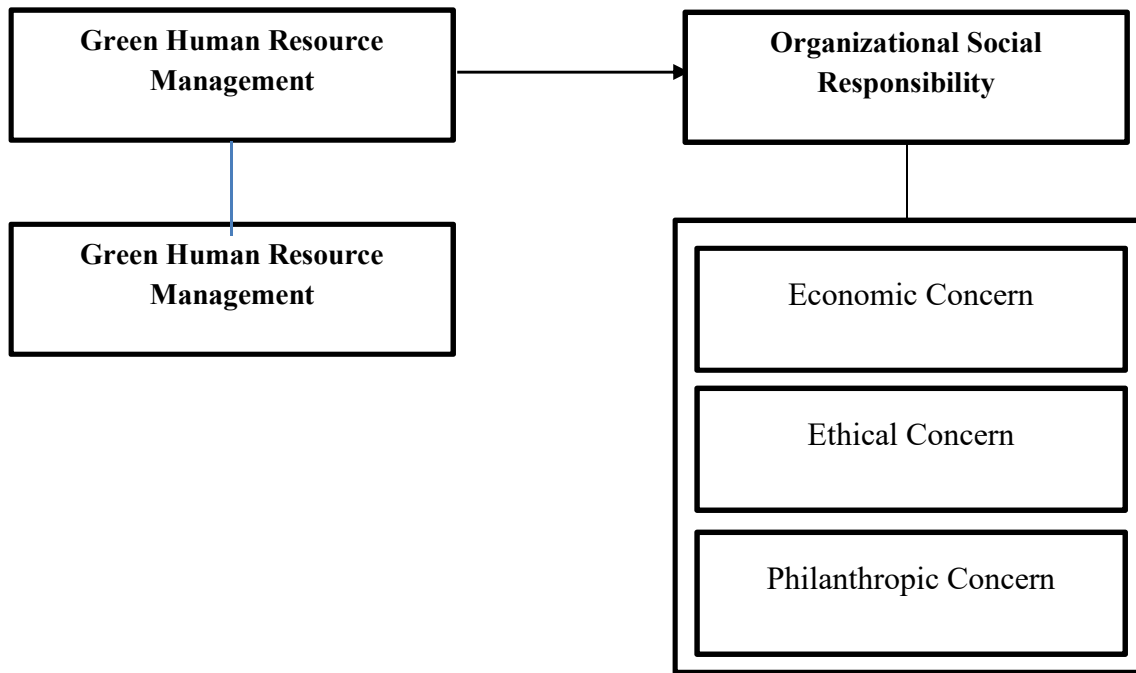


Figure 1: *Conceptual Framework of Green Human Resource Management and Organizational Social Responsibility*

Source: *Desk Research, 2022*

LITERATURE REVIEW

Theoretical Foundation

Social Exchange Theory

Social exchange theory was propounded by Blau in 1964. This theory postulates that social behavior is the result of an exchange process. Social exchange theory views exchange as a social behaviour that may result in both economic and social outcomes. Social exchange theorists advocate that social exchange involve sequences of interaction that within a moment engender commitment, as well as independence amid work environment communal relationship actors (Cropanzano, & Mitchell, 2005; Maurer, Pierce, & Shore, 2002). The societal relationships have a propensity to be reciprocally dependent and conditionally leading to a reciprocal action from the other party. Homans (1961) asserts that social exchange theory assumes that human behaviour and social interaction is essentially in an exchange of both tangible and intangible activities.

This theory compares human interactions to the marketplace where the buyer and the seller try to maximize his gains. Satisfaction is derived when there is a fair return on expenditure. However, the difference between social and economic exchange is the element of exchange. The positive values and outcomes like companionship, support and affection are viewed as the reward while the effort, time, and money invested in the relationship are considered as the cost. The overall

worth of a particular relationship is calculated by subtracting the costs from the rewards of the relationship (Lambe et al., 2001 cited in Unaam, Adim and Adubasim, 2018).

Serving these purposes, green HRM related policies and practices can be used as tools to strengthen outcomes of green HRM and ultimately lead to organizations environmental performance. Human Resources managers should become familiar with the concept of systems and the integrated way of thinking. All managers have to plan structural adjustments to guarantee the survival of the whole system, constantly formulating new interpretations of the business scenarios in order to find adequate positioning, implementing (when necessary) periods of adjustment, transformation and redefinition of the organizational structure. In order to promote sustainable and long-lasting performance, proactive and adaptive behavior should be used upon systems theory conceptual pillars.

Green Human Resource Management (Green HRM)

Sustainability is now a worldwide issue, and organizations increasingly care about the effect of the environmental issues on their competitiveness and long-term success (Paille, Chen & Boiral 2014). It has been argued that human resources are central in achieving environmental management (Daily and Huang 2001). Human resources are important factors in an organization's competitive advantage, due to its rarity, value, and exclusiveness (Wright, Dunford and Snell 2001). In the context of environmental protection, human resource management (HRM) can facilitate the successful formulation and implementation of environmental objectives (Jabbour et al. 2013). Therefore, there is an increasing need to integrate green concepts into HRM. Green means clean and renewable energy to protect the environment and it can be said that various organizations around the world have adopted green initiatives. Facing urgent green needs, organizations have devoted increasing attention to green practices (Liao et al., 2018). There is an ongoing request for ecological modernization and responsible business practices in the midst of issues surrounding climate change across the globe. The human resource department is largely responsible for forging the corporate mission statement based on the environmental awareness and sustainability.

Green Human Resource Management (GHRM) means encouraging employees to promote sustainability and thereby increasing the awareness and role of employees on issues related to sustainability. Green HRM is the use of HRM philosophies, policies, and procedures in promoting sustainable use of resources in business organizations by increasing employees' awareness and commitments on the sustainability practices, produce eco-friendly goods and services to keep a healthier environment. Green HRM reflects a firm's orientation toward environmental protection and includes a series of specific HRM practices (Mishra, Sarkar and Kiranmai 2014), which focuses on the fragility of ecosystems and the ecological effects of an organization's economic activities (Boiral 2002).

Green People Procurement

Aranganathan (2018) argues that HR Departments in organizations particularly have a major role to play in transforming organizations into green environments, since they are responsible for attracting and maintaining a workforce aware of the most serious and current issues including political, social, and environmental. Green people procurement otherwise known as green recruitment means paper free recruitment process with minimal environmental impact

(Wehrmeyer & Parker, 2017). It involves the process of hiring candidates who have green consciousness, conscientiousness, and agreeableness. Organizations are beginning to understand and recognize that gaining a reputation as a green employer is an effective way to attract new talent. Organizations can attract and choose candidates who will commit to environmental issues (Jabbour, Santos and Nagano 2008). According to Obaid & Alias (2015), green selection is the process of hiring or choosing job applicants who behave with knowledge of and competencies and skills in organizational environment management systems. Grolleau, Mzoughi & Pekovic (2012) opined that the skills set of any qualified candidate goes far beyond the basic organizational performance in their area of performance and into their basic understanding of critical sustainability concepts such as recycling, conservation, as well as the creation of a more logical and 'green' world. Green people procurement has been viewed as an important component in Green HRM practices. In addition, in order to attract environmentally concerned people for job vacancies, the job advertisements of some companies express certain environmental values in their job adverts (Arulrajah, 2014). Saini & Shukla (2016) maintain that in green people procurement applications are invited through online medium like e-mail, online application forms or through the global talent pool. It can be argued that when it comes to selection, some organizations consider candidates' environmental concern and interest as selection criteria. Also when interviewing job candidates or evaluating candidates for selection, environmentally related questions form part of the interview questions. This is because a clear message from the advertisement will draw the right person to apply for the vacancy in an environmental concern working culture. According to Wehrmeyer (1996), most firms conduct online recruitment with a view to reducing their carbon footprint. E-recruitment involves a paperless recruitment process with the aim of minimizing the impact on the environment with the result that environmental protection is given more importance within the organization (Aranganathan, 2018).

Organizational Social Responsibility

Scholars have noted various definitions of social responsibility, that is, the responsibility that organizations and businesses have to society (Carroll, 1999; Carroll & Shabana, 2010; Porter & Kramer, 2006). Early discussions of the responsibility of organizations to society considered this a social responsibility rather than organizational (corporate) social responsibility (Carroll, 1999). For example, Bowen (1953) defined social responsibility as: "obligations to pursue those policies, to make those decisions, or to follow those lines of action which are desirable in terms of the objectives and values of our society" (p. 6). In this context, business has a responsibility for the consequences of actions beyond profit-and-loss; in other words, a "social consciousness" (Bowen, 1953, p. 44). It is interesting to note that 93.5% of business managers surveyed at the time agreed with this statement (Bowen, 1953; Carroll, 1999).

In the past, organizations have come under increased pressure to pursue socially responsive behaviour from a variety of stakeholder groups including shareholders, employees, investors, consumers, and managers (Kapstein, 2001; Berman, Wicks, Kotha, and Jones, 1999; Donaldson and Preston, 1995). As the threats and opportunities associated with organizational (corporate) social and environmental responsibilities have become better understood, companies have sought to generate strategic capital from the acceptance of these responsibilities. Scholars have noted various definitions of social responsibility, that is, the responsibility that organizations and businesses have to society (Carroll, 1999; Carroll & Shabana, 2010; Porter & Kramer, 2006).

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Economic Responsibility

The economic contribution of organizations is highly prized by governments and communities alike. All businesses are set up to seek profit. The economic responsibility of business is 'to produce goods and services that society desires and to sell them at a profit' (Carroll 1979, p. 500). By doing so, businesses fulfil their primary responsibility as economic units in society. The critical question is: To what extent should a business pursue profits? Organizations must commit to provide activities to maximize earnings to shareholders, to be more profitable, to achieve a strong competitive position and maintain a high level of efficiency. Economic Responsibilities are "required by society" and mean producing products and services that not only meet customer needs but society's needs as well. A successful organization is one that consistently makes profit, but its profitability must be in the best interests of society. Economic contribution should extend far beyond profits and become economic multipliers for society. These economic multipliers should generate investments and income, create jobs, produce safe products and services, invest in human capital, establish local business linkages, spread international business standards, support technology transfer, and build physical and institutional infrastructure.

Ethical Responsibility

Society expects ethical responsibility from organizations. Ethical responsibility involves the activity of organizations to act in accordance with the needs of society and ethical standards, behaving in accordance with societal norms embodied in the law. It means doing what is just and fair while avoiding harm. Business ethics and good governance fall under the ethical responsibility of organizations and they form an integral part of social responsibility. Business ethics concerns the moral judgments and behaviour of individuals and groups within organizations. Stakeholders expect organizations to be accountable for their actions and transparent in their dealings, in addition to respecting the society's norms. The organization should also ensure that it undertakes activities that contribute to the business's success while simultaneously contributing positively to the welfare of society.

Ethical Responsibilities mean going beyond what is legislated or required by law to support social standards and values, preventing ethics from being compromised on the altar of business goals and recognizing that brand-business integrity goes beyond compliance with standards. Crane & Matten (2004) suggest that ethical responsibilities enjoy a much higher priority in Europe than in the USA. Here in Africa, ethics seem to have the least influence on the CSR agenda. All the same, organizations must act in a way that shows integrity and upholds morality as they perform the role of good citizens in the society.

Philanthropic Responsibility

Longman's Dictionary of Contemporary English defined safety as a state of being free from danger, harm, or risk, but Hughes and Ferrett (2005) defined it as the protection of people from physical injury or ill-treatment. They went on to say that "the Longman's Dictionary of Contemporary English defined safety as the state of being free from danger, harm, or risk, whereas Hughes and Ferrett (2005) defined it as the protection of humans from physical injury." They concluded by saying that According to the authors, "the Longman's Dictionary of Contemporary English defined safety as the state of being free from danger, harm or risk. "

Social responsibility entails investing in projects and activities that improve the welfare of the society. Going beyond the profit motives to act as a good corporate citizen and living up to the societal expectations is what the philanthropic responsibility of organizations embodies. As part of the society, organizations can devote some of their vast human and financial resources to address social issues such as sports, health and the environment. Giving back to the community nurtures strong relationships between the society and the organization. Such good relations are important to the organization as the society is both the source of inputs such as labour and raw materials and ultimate market for the organization output. The philanthropic dimension of OSR demands that businesses and organizations operate as good corporate citizens by giving back to the community and the environment in which they operate. Although philanthropy was viewed as a highly desirable and prized component of CSR, it is seen as being less important than the other three components of CSR (Kakabadse et al., 2005).

Green People Procurement and Organizational Social Responsibility

The relevance of green recruiting and selection has been underlined by green groups. The green recruiting process is aimed at influencing the quantity and kind of candidates for a certain job, according to Hussain (2013) in his study of the effects of green recruitment and selection on environmental sustainability in Spain. A total of 100 respondents from manufacturing companies were included in the study. According to the findings, efficient green management may be aided by ensuring that new hires are aware of an organization's green culture and share its environmental value. Owino and Kwasira's (2016) study on the impact of green human resource management techniques on environmental sustainability in Menengai oil in Nakuru backs up these claims, concluding that hiring eco-conscious personnel will help the company achieve its sustainability goals.

Mohammad (2007) aimed to understand the drivers of Purchasing Social Responsibility (PSR). This study replicated and empirically expanded the model developed by Carter and Jennings (2004), and therefore contributes towards the homological validity of the PSR concept. The method used is derived from the previous study by Carter and Jennings (2004). The present study extends the application of that method to an Asian environment. The data was obtained from 197 respondents in Thailand.

Therefore, the study hypothesizes thus that:

- Ho₁** There is no significant relationship between green people procurement and economic responsibility in chemical and non-metallic industries in Rivers State.
- Ho₂** There is no significant relationship between green people procurement and ethical responsibility in chemical and non-metallic industries in Rivers State.
- Ho₃** There is no significant relationship between green people procurement and philanthropic responsibility in chemical and non-metallic industries in Rivers State.

METHODOLOGY

A cross sectional research design was adopted for the study. The study adopted the cross-sectional survey in its investigation of the variables. Primary data was generated through copies of structured questionnaire. The population of this study constitutes nine (9) chemical and non-

metallic firms listed in the Nigerian Content and Development Board (NCDMB) Directory. The entire population was adopted as a sample. However, for the purpose of data generation 36 top managers were used as the study respondents. The research instrument was validated through supervisor's vetting and approval while the reliability of the instrument was achieved by the use of the Cronbach Alpha coefficient with all the items scoring above 0.70. The hypotheses were tested using the Spearman's Rank Order Correlation Statistics. The tests were carried out at a 95% confidence interval and a 0.05 level of significance.

DATA ANALYSIS AND RESULTS

Bivariate Level Analyses

The level of significance 0.05 was adopted as a criterion for the probability of accepting the null hypothesis in ($p > 0.05$) or rejecting the null hypothesis in ($p < 0.05$).

H₀₁: There is no significant relationship between green people procurement and economic responsibility of Nigerian Barites processing companies in Rivers State.

Table 1: Correlation between green people procurement and economic responsibility
Correlations

			Green People Procurement	Economic Responsibility
Spearman's rho	Green People Procurement	Correlation	1.000	.965**
		Coefficient		
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.	.000
	Economic Responsibility	N	32	32
		Correlation	.965**	1.000
		Coefficient		
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.
		N	32	32

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

SPSS output, Version 20 – Field Survey, 2022

Table 1 presents Spearman's rank order correlation run to find out the relationship between green people procurement and the measure of organizational social responsibility (economic responsibility) as reported by thirty-two (32) respondents. A strong positive correlation coefficient value was reported between green people procurement and economic responsibility which was statistically significant, this suggests that there is significant relationship between the variables ($\rho = .965^{**}$, $p = .000 < 0.05$ (alpha value)).

Decision: The null hypothesis (H_{01}) is rejected and we state that there is significant relationship between green people procurement and economic responsibility of Nigerian Barites processing companies in Rivers State.

H₀₂: There is no significant relationship between green people procurement and ethical responsibility of Nigerian Barites processing companies in Rivers State.

Table 2: Correlation between green people procurement and ethical responsibility
Correlations

			Green People Procurement	Ethical Responsibility
Spearman's rho	Green People Procurement	Correlation	1.000	.919**
		Coefficient		
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.	.000
	Ethical Responsibility	N	32	32
		Correlation	.919**	1.000
		Coefficient		
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.
		N	32	32

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

SPSS output, Version 20 – Field Survey, 2022

Table 2 presents Spearman's rank order correlation run to find out the relationship between green people procurement and the measure of organizational social responsibility (ethical responsibility) as reported by thirty-two (32) respondents. A strong positive correlation coefficient value was reported between green people procurement and ethical responsibility which was statistically significant, this suggests that there is significant relationship between green people procurement and ethical responsibility ($\rho = .919^{**}$, $p = .000 < 0.05$ (alpha value).

Decision: The null hypothesis (H_{02}) is rejected and we state that there is significant relationship between green people procurement and ethical responsibility of Nigerian Barites processing companies in Rivers State.

H₀₃: There is no significant relationship between green people procurement and philanthropic responsibility of Nigerian Barites processing companies in Rivers State.

Table 3: Correlation between green people procurement and philanthropic responsibility

			Green People Procurement	Philanthropic Responsibility
Spearman's rho	Green People Procurement	Correlation	1.000	.922**
		Coefficient		
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.	.000
	Philanthropic Responsibility	N	32	32
		Correlation	.922**	1.000
		Coefficient		
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.
		N	32	32

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

SPSS output, Version 20 – Field Survey, 2021

Table 3 presents Spearman's rank order correlation run to find out the relationship between green people procurement and the measure of organizational social responsibility (philanthropic responsibility) as reported by thirty-two (32) respondents. A strong positive correlation coefficient value was reported between green people procurement and philanthropic responsibility which was statistically significant, this suggests that there is significant

relationship between green people procurement and philanthropic responsibility ($\rho = .922^{**}$, $p = .000 < 0.05$ (alpha value)).

Decision: The null hypothesis (H_0) is rejected and we state that there is significant relationship between green people procurement and philanthropic responsibility of Nigerian Barites processing companies in Rivers State.

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

The study examined the relationship between green human resource management and organizational social responsibility of the studied Nigerian Barites processing companies in Rivers State. The result of the tested H_{01} revealed the existence of a significant relationship between green people procurement and economic responsibility; the output $\rho = .965^{**}$, $p = .000$ indicates a strong positive correlation coefficient value between green people procurement and economic responsibility this empirical result is also corroborated with literature; according to Obaid and Alias (2015), green selection is the process of hiring or choosing job applicants who behave with knowledge of and competencies and skills in organizational environment management systems. The result of the tested H_{02} revealed the existence of a significant relationship between green people procurement and ethical responsibility; the result of $\rho = .919^{**}$, $p = .000$ indicates a strong positive correlation coefficient value between green people procurement and ethical responsibility this empirical result is supported by the work of (Arulrajah, 2014), who opined that in order to attract environmentally concerned people for job vacancies, the job advertisements of some companies express certain environmental values in their job adverts. Saini & Shukla (2016) maintain that in green people procurement applications are invited through online medium like e-mail, online application forms or through the global talent pool. The result of the tested H_{03} revealed the existence of a significant relationship between green people procurement and philanthropic responsibility; the output $\rho = .922^{**}$, $p = .000$ indicates a strong positive correlation coefficient value between green people procurement and philanthropic responsibility which agrees with propositions in literature; Deepika and Karpagam (2016) advocate that of the several green HRM practices, selection practices are central to ensuring effective environmental management. This is often achieved by making sure that recruits are made aware of and are familiar with the organization's aim in maintaining its environmental values.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

From literature reviewed, green selection is the process of hiring or choosing job applicants who behave with knowledge of and competencies and skills in organizational environment management systems. Thus, the skills set of any qualified candidate goes far beyond the basic organizational performance in their area of performance and into their basic understanding of critical sustainability concepts such as recycling, conservation, as well as the creation of a more logical and 'green' world.

The study recommends that measures should be used to push employees to behave more environmentally and strive for green goals in their work.

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Authentic Leadership and Employee Competence in Private Secondary Schools in Rivers State

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Abstract: *This study examined the relationship between self-awareness and employee competence in Private Secondary Schools in Rivers State. The study utilized a cross-sectional research survey design. Primary source was sourced through self-administered questionnaire. The population of the study consisted of 4620 full time teachers of all the 154 accredited Private Secondary Schools in Port Harcourt, Rivers State. The sample size of 368 teachers was determined mathematically using Taro Yamane's formula. A well-structured questionnaire was used as instrument of data collection for the study. Spearman's rank order (ρ) correlation coefficient was utilized in testing the stated hypotheses with the aid of Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS version 23.0) at a 95% percent confidence interval and a 0.05 level of significance. Empirical findings from data analyzed predicated that self-awareness, significantly relates to the measures of employee competence (knowledge, skill and attitude). The study thus concludes that authentic leadership significantly influences employee competence in Private Secondary Schools in Rivers State. The study recommends that programmes and avenues that will lead to self-awareness of leaders in the Private Secondary Schools should be created as this will increase employee competence.*

Keywords: *Authentic Leadership, Self-Awareness, Employee Competence, Knowledge, Skill, Attitude*

INTRODUCTION

In recent years, companies have been subjected to increasing levels of competition stress. To achieve strategic competitive advantages, businesses must focus on their core competences, which are heavily influenced by their employees' skills and knowledge (Ong'ango, 2019). The competitive landscape in many industries today is marked by intense competition among existing players and the emergence of many focused competitors targeting specific segments of the market. In addition, the macro environment is characterized by rapid technological progress in many fields resulting in current solutions to customer problems becoming obsolete (Adim & Poi, 2021). Organizations are increasingly cognizant of the fact that human capital is their most precious asset; hence, attracting the best candidates is a main priority for the majority of human resource managers (Girard & Falley, 2010). A business's success is directly connected to the quality of its human capital. Finally, a highly capable human resource will often exhibit superior performance. Employee competency can be enhanced by equipping employees with the required

skills to meet corporate goals. According to Bednárovál and Jergová (2015), employee competency is the most effective strategy for improving corporate performance in a changing economic and educational context defined by global competitive markets. In accord, Ong'ango (2019) stated that the most effective technique for obtaining high workplace efficiency is through staff competencies.

The nature of human resources is strongly intertwined with its capabilities. Organizations around the world depend heavily on the knowledge, expertise, capability, and other characteristics of their employees to accomplish their objectives (George & Zhou, 2007). McClelland (1998) earlier defined competence as a basic personal characteristic that is a determining factor for acting successfully in a job or situation. According to Boyatzis (2018), competence is an individual's capability or ability. Rossilah (2018) added that competency (which could be used interchangeably with efficiency) is a set of characteristics of knowledge, skills, attitudes, intellect and view of one's own interests to carry out their duties efficiently and effectively. It is important for an organization to ensure that employees have the knowledge, skills, and attitude in accordance with the organization's goals, objectives, and values.

Antwi (2015) recommended that competent employees possess the necessary skills, competency, and ability to express their ideas in a high-performing organization. They will excel and perform at their maximum potential if provided with a favorable environment. The performance of an organization as a whole is contingent upon its employees' competencies. Employee competencies can be enhanced through effective training programs, which will ultimately improve employee performance. They can perform their current job more effectively and also prepare for future jobs by acquiring the necessary knowledge, skills, and attitudes through training (Wright & Geroy, 2011).

It has been observed that employee competence can be boosted by authentic leadership, which is a leadership behavior that increases the positive climate in organizations (Walumbwa, Avolio, Gardner, Wernsing & Peterson, 2008). It uses the positive climate in line with organizational purposes, internalizes the moral point of view, acts effectively in the balanced distribution of information, adopts transparency in the relationships with the subordinates in the work environment and contributes to the development of positive self. As a result, the last decade has seen a dramatic increase in scholarly interest in authentic leadership, which is defined as leaders who are guided by strong moral convictions and act in accordance with deeply held values (Avolio, Walumbwa & Weber, 2009; Gardner, Cogliser, Davis & Dickens, 2011). There is mounting evidence that authentic leadership improves new venture performance (Hmieleski, Cole, and Baron, 2012) and employee outcomes, including followers' job performance (Leroy et al., 2012; Wong and Cummings, 2009), voice behavior (Hsiung, 2012), job satisfaction and organizational commitment (Giallonardo, Wong, and Iwasiw, 2010; Jensen & Luthans, 2006), and work engagement (Azanza, Mariano, Molero & Mangin, 2015).

Authentic leadership is defined as a style of leadership behavior that draws on and promotes both positive psychological capacities and a positive ethical climate in order to foster increased self-awareness, internalized moral perspective, balanced information processing, and relational transparency (Davis & Dickens, 2011). Since its potential to explain leaders' effects on human interactions in organizational settings, authentic leadership has become a hot topic in leadership studies (Hsieh & Wang, 2015). Authentic leaders, according to George and Sims (2007), are

genuine individuals who are true to themselves and their beliefs. They do not attempt to coerce or even rationally persuade associates, but rather serve as a model for associate development through the leader's authentic values, beliefs, and behavior (Luthans & Avolio, 2003). According to this definition, authentic leadership does not directly result in high-level management capability; rather, authentic leaders' effectiveness is contingent on boundary conditions such as leader competency.

Recent research indicates that the leader's behavioral integrity and predictability can transmit the effect of authentic leadership on followers' performance (Leroy, Palanski & Simons, 2012). Authentic leaders are individuals who have developed a high level of authenticity in that they are aware of who they are, what they believe and value, and how they act on those values and beliefs while interacting with others in a transparent manner (Avolio & Gardner, 2015). To remain competitive in the face of globalization's consequences, businesses must view change as a constant challenge. Apart from organizational, technological, and process changes, the changes also affect the company's employees. By providing opportunities for individual growth and development, a business can enhance the skills and abilities of its human resources. Employees will be more qualified to perform their duties, which will significantly benefit the company. A skilled workforce that possesses the necessary knowledge, aptitudes, and abilities will result in magnificent organizational outcomes (Ong'ango, 2019).

Despite the indispensability of authentic leadership in stimulating employee competence, there is still not much in the literature to show empirical evidence on how it influences the knowledge, skills, and attitudes of employees. With regards to the observed gap in literature, the purpose of this paper was to examine the relationship between authentic leadership and employee competence in Private Secondary Schools in Port Harcourt, Rivers State.

This study was guided by the following research question:

1. What is the relationship between self-awareness and knowledge in Private Secondary Schools in Port Harcourt, Rivers State?
2. What is the relationship between self-awareness and skill in Private Secondary Schools in Port Harcourt, Rivers State?
3. What is the relationship between self-awareness and attitude in Private Secondary Schools in Port Harcourt, Rivers State?

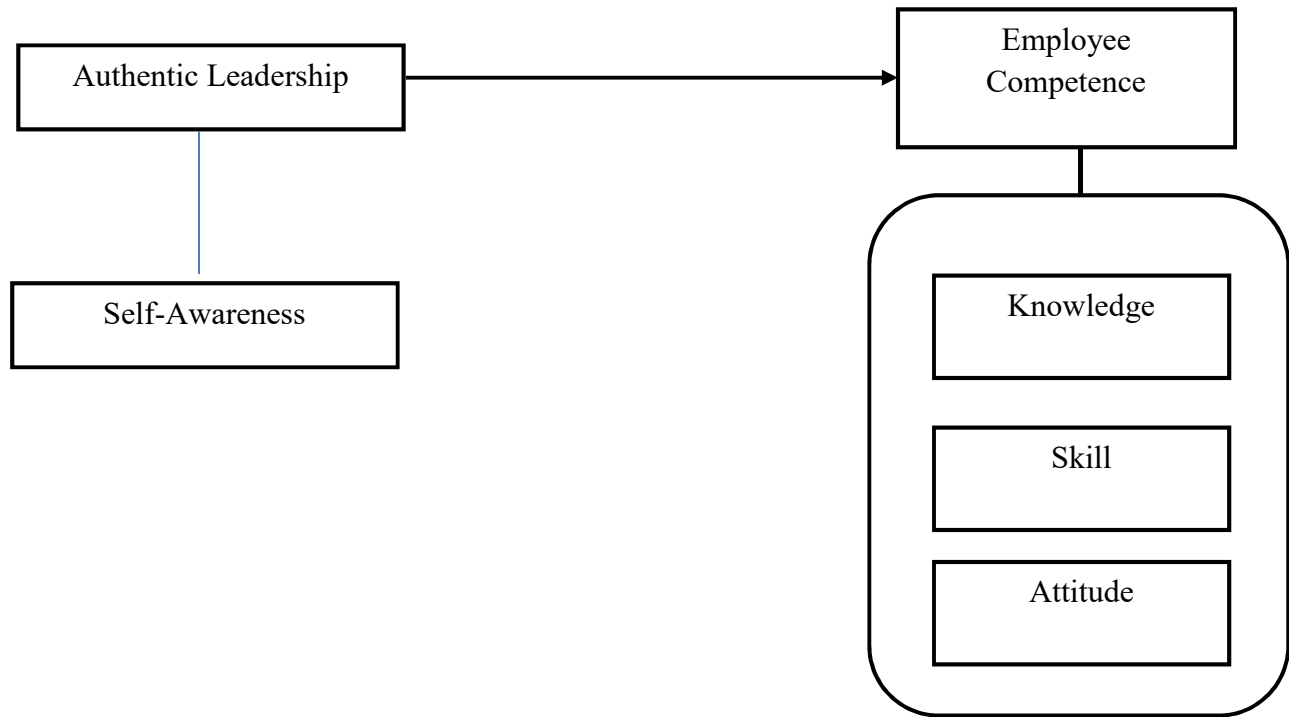


Fig.1 Conceptual framework for authentic leadership and employee competence

Source: Author's Desk Research, 2021

LITERATURE REVIEW

Theoretical Foundation

Self-Determination Theory links personality, human motivation, and optimal functioning. It posits that there are two main types of motivation: intrinsic and extrinsic, and that both are powerful forces in shaping who we are and how we behave (Deci & Ryan, 2000). Self-determination theory (SDT), as reflected in both the scientific research and the applied practices stemming from it, is centrally concerned with the social conditions that facilitate or hinder human flourishing. The theory examines how biological, social, and cultural conditions either enhance or undermine the inherent human capacities for psychological growth, engagement, and wellness, both in general and in specific domains and endeavors. SDT research thus critically investigates factors that promote vitality, motivation, social integration, and well-being, as well as those that contribute to depletion, fragmentation, antisocial behavior, and unhappiness, both intrinsic to individual development and within social contexts.

As a result, authentic leadership, according to SDT, may influence proactive behavior by affecting employees' psychological outcomes (Rosen et al., 2014). When employees work under the supervision of an authentic leader who demonstrates relational transparency, self-awareness, and balanced processing, their basic needs (for example, autonomy) are more likely to be met through the enhancement of their psychological or cognitive conditions (e.g., the enhancement of their psychological empowerment).

The Concept of Authentic Leadership

Authenticity has been defined as a sense of coherence between internal states (such as feelings and emotions) and external manifestations (such as words and behaviors) (Harter, 2002). A simplistic view of authenticity may contribute to the widespread belief that leaders who are "authentic to themselves" are more successful (George & Sims, 2007). However, these perspectives on authenticity may overlook the fact that authenticity is ascribed by others and that authentic self-expression requires control (Goffee & Jones, 2005). For example, authentic individuals may express harmful personal beliefs or undermine organizational values (Ladkin & Spiller, 2013). The conclusion that self-referential authenticity results in more successful leaders is in direct opposition to decades of research demonstrating that self-monitoring and perception management result in increased relational success (Bedeian & Day, 2014).

Authentic leadership, according to Luthans and Avolio (2003) and Javaid, Abdullah, Zeb, and Hussain (2018), is the combination of a leader's positive capacities. Sparrowe (2005) and Zeb, Abdullah, and Hussain (2019) both emphasized another critical aspect of authentic leadership: the process by which an individual's workers identify with the leader. Genuine leadership is an effective strategy for achieving long-term objectives and motivating creative thinking, affective commitment, and work performance (George & Zhou, 2007). According to Avolio and Gardner (2015) and George (2013), authentic leadership is critical to an organization's success because it fosters trust and a social work climate between supervisors and employees. Additionally, authentic leadership is a collection of distinct characteristics that enhances employees' competence and performance (Karatepe & Aga, 2013; Rod & Ashill, 2009).

Authentic leadership refers to a leader's relationship with others in the workplace and a mode of influence in a particular style of leadership. A distinguishing feature of authentic leadership is that it challenges conventional views of leadership as a top-down influence process in which followers align with and carry out the leader's vision (Avolio & Gardner, 2015). Rather than that, authentic leadership is predicated on notions of empowerment and, more precisely, suggests that leaders can exert influence by allowing for the authenticity of other parties (e.g., followers, HR business partners, higher management). Allowing for these alternative "truths" is critical because it enables authentic leaders to collaborate on co-creating a shared vision of what is considered real in the organization (and thus a sense of shared identity). Thus, this dynamic process of influence challenges traditional notions of strategic alignment, in which followers and leaders are compelled to conform to and implement the HR department's or top management's strategic goals.

While externally imposed strategic objectives will always be present, the authentic leader, as described above, will seek to internalize those objectives through a dynamic process (Deci & Ryan, 2010). He or she may openly and transparently criticize a particular human resource practice (e.g., forced bonus distribution), but also demonstrates an openness to external input (self-awareness) and personal feedback (balanced processing) on his or her expressed views. Through these processes, the leader develops a nuanced understanding that serves as the basis for behavior (internalized moral perspective). The net result is neither blind acceptance nor rejection of the HR practice, but rather a deliberate process of consideration and eventual internalization to the extent that the leader is comfortable. Indeed, the process may result in the authentic leader rejecting a policy because it conflicts with other demands. However, such a decision will not be

made lightly (i.e., it will be the result of a thorough calibration process); rather, when an undesirable practice is eventually communicated, it will not be done in an outright defensive or (passive) aggressive manner.

Four subcomponents were identified as components of a higher-order structure relating to authentic functioning in general and authentic leadership in particular. Individuals who operate more authentically are more aware of themselves and their impact on others (self-awareness); they share information openly and express their authentic selves to others (relational transparency); they analyze relevant data objectively while minimizing bias caused by ego-defensiveness prior to making decisions (balanced processing); and they are guided by internal moral values (Ilies, Morgeson & Nahrgang 2005; Walumbwa, Avolio, Gardner, Wernsing, & Peterson, 2008). Together, these components provide a dynamic view of authenticity as individuals who are willing to openly express their "true selves" through their words (relational transparency) and actions (internalized moral perspective), but who are also willing to adapt to relational demands by remaining receptive to input (balanced processing) and seeking feedback (self-awareness) (Kernis, 2013; Kernis & Goldman, 2016). As a result, a dynamic process occurs in which an individual's authenticity is co-constructed through relationships and interactions with his or her external environment. Consistent with the central tenets of self-determination theory (Deci & Ryan, 2010), authentic individuals do not resist external demands, but rather seek to incorporate them into an already existing self.

An authentic leader, in accordance with the first component of authentic leadership, self-awareness, recognizes his or her own potential and talents. Authenticity is a requirement that necessitates the construction of one's own meaning (Algera & Lips-Wiersma, 2012). As a result, an authentic leader is aware of his or her own high moral standards and beliefs. As a result, he acts authentically. The public manager's real leadership behavior has the potential to positively affect his or her public personnel. To begin, the public manager will make prudent decisions as a result of his awareness of his own potential. As a result, the risk of making poor choices and investing time and financial resources in unsuccessful ventures is lowered. Thus, public personnel will be engaged in deserving legal activities, increasing their trust in their boss. Second, the true public manager's behavior has a beneficial effect on the self-awareness of employees. This effect results in a higher level of self-awareness among public employees, which improves their motivation.

Self-awareness

Self-awareness is a necessary construct for an individual to comprehend his or her own self-concept and identify with his or her 'true self' (Govern & Marsch, 2001). Self-awareness is defined in relation to authentic leaders as "understanding how one derives and makes meaning of the world, and how that process affects one's self-concept" (Walumbwa et al., 2008). Existing concepts of self-awareness necessitate extensive philosophical discussion about personal sense making (Walumbwa et al., 2008), which is only truly evident at the construct's apex. Nonetheless, we argue that authentic leaders transcend personal self-awareness. These individuals, like an authentic individual, are aware of others (i.e. social awareness) (Kernis & Goldman, 2016). Self-awareness is defined in social research as the capacity to comprehend one's own emotions and make an accurate self-assessment (Gardner & Stough, 2002).

Self-awareness is a term that refers to demonstrating an understanding of how one derives and makes meaning of the world, as well as how that process affects how one views oneself over time (Sharif & Scandura, 2014). Additionally, it refers to demonstrating an awareness of one's strengths and weaknesses, as well as the multifaceted nature of the self, which includes gaining insight into one's self through exposure to others and being aware of one's impact on others (Kernis, 2013). Self-awareness entails an awareness of one's own nature and desires, as well as how one's character affects others. Self-awareness serves as a foundation for making wise decisions and taking well-planned and beneficial actions in the workplace (Sharif & Scandura, 2014). Additionally, it has an effect on balanced information processing, which refers to the objective collection and interpretation of data (Sharif & Scandura, 2014).

Self-awareness represents awareness of one's own knowledge, values, beliefs, motives and experiences (Ilies et al., 2005). Therefore, it is essential for a leader to know his own potential, to control his own emotions, to act according to his values and to take decisions according to his experience. Self-awareness refers to a leader's behavior, who acts according to his needs and wants, preferences, and motivations (Leroy et al., 2015). The authenticity of a leader, secured by self-awareness, assures acknowledged decisions and genuine behavior. As a result, self-awareness contributes to the development of authentic leadership behavior.

Employee Competence

Essentially, organizations can maximize employee performance by cultivating a diverse set of competencies. According to Spencer & Spencer (1993), a competency is a set of underlying personal characteristics that indicate a person's ways of acting and thinking. Competence can be defined as the capacity to meet an extraordinary need effectively while carrying out an assigned task (Bell, 2007). It refers to the critical or necessary elements required to complete a particular undertaking or mission. Thus, the structure of competence is derived from an individual's level of interest in work and daily life (Weinert, 2011). Individuals, social groups, or foundations may be considered competent if they possess or secure the conditions necessary to accomplish specific formative goals, as well as when they meet significant external needs. Employee competency refers to the characteristics, abilities, and characteristics that employees must possess in order to perform their jobs more effectively (Soderquist, Papalexandris, Ioannou & Prastacos, 2010; Campion, Fink, Ruggeberg, Carr, Phillips & Odman, 2011). A competent workforce, it is believed, results in higher-quality products (Ahuja & Khamba, 2008), fosters innovation (Siguaw, Simpson & Enz, 2016), and lowers turnover costs (Joo & Shim, 2010).

A person is said to be competent if he or she possesses the necessary skills for accomplishing specific job-related objectives (Rychen & Salganic, 2003). Additionally, competence can refer to the manners that are ingrained in a person and manifested through operation (which infers expectations, objectives, and reason). Thus, these examples demonstrate that ability perception is holistic in nature, integrating and identifying with requests from a specific role, characteristics (including morals and values), and contexts as critical components of skillful task execution. Nevertheless, competencies can be deduced from the execution of extremely complex and static tasks. Furthermore, in order to determine a fundamental capability, one may estimate or track output voluntarily (Oates, 2011). Competency characteristics are classified into five categories: motives, traits, self-concept, knowledge, and skills. All of these characteristics were associated with superior job performance (Spencer & Spencer, 1993).

Knowledge

Since the dawn of time, humanity has been concerned with knowledge and how it is managed (Jashapara, 2011). The ability of an organization to manage knowledge effectively is becoming increasingly critical in today's knowledge economy (Dalkir, 2005). Numerous public organizations are reorienting themselves to become truly knowledge-based organizations in the modern era (Willem & Buelens, 2007). Adapting and implementing knowledge management practices is considered beneficial in any type of organization, public or private, and has the potential to significantly improve their operations (Wiig, 2002).

Knowledge is being acquainted with, being aware of, or comprehending someone or something, such as facts (descriptive knowledge), skills (procedural knowledge), or objects (objective knowledge) (acquaintance knowledge). The majority of authorities believe that knowledge can be acquired in a variety of ways and from a variety of sources, including but not limited to perception, reason, memory, witness, scientific research, education, and practice (Paek, 2016). The term "knowledge" can be used to refer to either a theoretical or practical grasp of a subject. It can be implicit (as is the case with practical ability or expertise) or explicit (as is the case with theoretical knowledge of a subject); formal or informal; systematic or specific (Arora, 2011). Effective knowledge management enables organizations to influence public policies by capturing, disseminating, transferring, and implementing knowledge in a more systematic and effective manner (Riege & Lindsay, 2006), and thus has the potential to improve the quality of social work services and programs (Ukil, 2016).

A recently adopted definition of knowledge is that, knowledge is a justified true belief (Nonaka & Takeuchi, 1995; Bolisani & Bratianu, 2018). This definition incorporates three basic conditions, fact for which some authors call it the tripartite account of knowledge. These conditions according Bolisani and Bratianu (2018) are the following:

- a. The truth condition. It requires that if one knows a proposition then that proposition must be true. If the proposition is not true, then that person does not know what he claims to know. The truth condition makes the difference between opinion and knowledge.
- b. The belief condition. That condition demands that if one knows a proposition then he believes that proposition.
- c. The justification condition. That condition requires a practical way of justifying that the belief one has is true.

Skill

A skill is a developed proficiency or dexterity in mental operations or physical processes that is often acquired through specialized training; the execution of these skills results in successful performance (Jensen & Luthans, 2006). Skills are specific learned abilities. They are what a person can (or cannot) do. A skill is the learned ability to perform an action with determined results, often within a given amount of time, energy, or both. Skill pertains to the delivery of tasks by human workers, or simply task performance. Hisham & Siddig (2018) defined skill as "being concerned with all the factors which go to make up a competent, expert, rapid, and accurate performance. Skill in this sense thus attaches, to a greater or lesser extent, to any

performance and is not limited to manual operations but covers a wide range of mental activities as well. “Thus, our starting definition of skill is the delivery of competent, expert, rapid, and accurate behaviors to complete tasks.

According to Joo & Shim (2010), skills come in two forms: soft skills and hard skills. Soft skills are universal and not associated with a particular job or industry. Soft skills are abilities such as written communications, active listening, and collaboration. Hard skills refer to technical abilities that are typically learned through formal education or additional learning. Coding, data entry, product knowledge and operating a forklift are all hard skills. Along this line, Proctor & Dutta (1995) defined skill as being concerned with all the factors which go to make up a competent, expert, rapid, and accurate performance. Skill in this sense thus attaches, to a greater or lesser extent, to any performance and is not limited to manual operations but covers a wide range of mental activities as well.

Some of the critical characteristics of skills, according to Proctor and Dutta (1995), include:

1. A skill is not innate, but must be learned.
2. A skill-based behavior is goal-directed. A skill develops in response to some demand imposed by the task environment.
3. A skill is acquired when the behavior is highly integrated and well organized. Through experience, the components of this behavior become structured into coherent patterns.
4. Cognitive demands are reduced as skills are acquired.

Personality

An attitude is an evaluation of an object of thought. Attitude objects comprise anything a person may hold in mind, ranging from the mundane to the abstract, including things, people, groups, and ideas (Antwi & Owusu, 2015). An attitude, according to Boyatziz (2018), is a positive, negative, or mixed evaluation of an object expressed at some level of intensity. It is an expression of a favorable or unfavorable evaluation of a person, place, thing, or event. These are fundamental determinants of our perceptions of and actions toward all aspects of our social environment. Attitudes involve a complex organization of evaluative beliefs, feelings, and tendencies toward certain actions.

Eagly and Chaiken (2003) defined an attitude as a psychological tendency that is expressed by evaluating a particular entity with some degree of favor or disfavor. Inherent in this definition is the idea that reporting an attitude involves the expression of an evaluative judgement about a stimulus object. In other words, reporting an attitude involves making a decision concerning liking vs. disliking, approving vs. disapproving or favouring vs. disfavouring a particular issue, object or person. An attitude, when conceptualized as an evaluative judgement, can vary in two important ways. First, attitudes can differ in valence, or direction. Some attitudes that a person possesses are positive (like our attitudes towards the Welsh rugby team), others are negative (like our attitudes towards liver), and yet others are neutral (like our attitudes towards eating fried foods). Second, attitudes can differ in strength. For example, while one person might feel very

strongly about a particular topic, a second person might feel much less strongly about the same topic.

According to Patterson, Ferguson and Thomas (2018), attitude can be defined as a proclivity to react positively or negatively to a person or circumstance. Thus, the two main elements of attitude are this tendency or predisposition and the direction of this predisposition. It has been defined as a mental state of readiness, organized through experience, which exerts a directive or dynamic influence on the responses. These can also be explicit and implicit. Explicit attitudes are those that we are consciously aware of and that clearly influence our behaviors and beliefs. Implicit attitudes are unconscious but still affect our beliefs and behaviors.

Authentic Leadership and Employee Competence

Given that authentic leaders foster the positive emotional and cognitive development of their followers (Avolio & Gardner, 2005), employees' self-worth perceptions and self-esteem will be enhanced as they acquire a more positive evaluation of self (Dutton, Dukerich & Harquail, 1994). In addition, perceptions of authentic leadership signal to followers that they are special and worthy of employers' special treatment and trust, which promotes their positive sense of self; followers then seek to maintain this positive self-image by increased effort and goal-directed behavior (Chen, Ferris, Kwan, Yan, Zhou & Hong, 2013). Leroy, Anseel, Gardner and Sels (2015) found that authentic leadership is positively related to followers' affective organizational commitment and work role performance. Wang, Sui, Luthans, Wang & Wu (2014) also found that authentic leadership is positively related to followers' task performance. Wong and Cummings (2009) suggested that authentic leadership improves followers' self-rated job performance.

Authentic leadership behaviour is positively associated with employees' work engagement (Penger & erne, 2014). Therefore, authentic leadership has a positive impact on employees' work engagement, which subsequently increases their level of organizational competence. Other elements, such as positive psychological capital, moral perspective, self-awareness and self-regulation, which are fostered by leaders through their leadership activities, can have a positive influence on the organizational environment (Zhang, Everett, Elkin & Cone, 2012). Hence, authentic leadership behaviour contributes to the development of a productive working environment which in turn promotes employee competence.

Authentic leadership behavior has a positive impact on group activities. Subsequently, the follower maintains a more reliable relationship with collective work under genuine leadership behaviour (Avolio & Gardner, 2015). As a result, their group performance increases. An authentic leader has not just a positive influence on relationships among his followers but on their moods as well (Hsiung, 2012). Therefore, it can be argued that authentic leaders and their leadership activities have an important impact on their followers' activities and performances. Authentic leadership has an essential influence on predicting employees' creativity (Rego, Sousa, Marques & Pina, 2014). This influence can be established directly or through hope, which is identified as an intermediary element in this process (Rego, Sousa, Marques & Pina, 2014). The positive effects of authentic leadership generate employees' creativity, thus competence.

Zeb, Abdullah and Hussain (2019) conducted a study aimed to explore the linkage among authentic leadership traits and job performance via the mediating role of High-Performance Human Resource Practices (HPPHRPs) in a developing country context. Social Exchange theory and Trait theory were seldom applied to job performance among Pakistan Telecommunication Company Limited (PTCL) employees. A cross-sectional design was employed and data was collected from 368 employees via questionnaire. It was an exploratory study; therefore, partial least square–structural equation modeling (PLS-SEM) was employed to answer the research questions. The findings of this study revealed that relational transparency, directly and indirectly, influenced job performance with the partial mediating role of selective staffing and extensive training.

Human capital has always been in line with the concept of competence to build human capacities that are helpful to an organization. Competence is directly connected with the concept of individual performance. Knowledge, Skills, and Character are parts that directly contribute to the performance of an individual. Hameed (2011) suggests that the performance of an employee is determined primarily by their knowledge of their job, their personality, skills, and the effort they put towards their jobs.

According to Mutsotso (2010), talent and skills will in general foresee task execution while character and related components will in general produce logical performance. There are explicit components of logical performance, for example, individual activity that is affirmed to be foreseen by the capacity and occupation fulfillment factors. The qualification in performance between workers will be shown by varieties in a person's capacities, character, and inspiration. Jayan (2006) in an investigation of middle-level supervisors, concluded that the parameters that were used to evaluate managers' performance were competence, personality, and/or motivation.

Empowering employees will contribute to the success of the organization. Researchers have found out the connection linking employee empowerment to employee performance. (Obwoya, 2010). Research has continuously shown that empowering subordinates achieves desired organizational goals and objectives, hence improving overall organizational performance (Rita, 2011). Hence, it is considered as a way to increase the confidence of employees in decision making in both upper and lower levels of the organization. This inevitably leads to the high performance of the employees (Obwoya, 2010).

Cheshire and Kombo (2015) concluded that organizational performance is influenced in a big way by the quality forces in all categories of business. It is majorly looked at in three distinct areas, which are financial performance, commodity market performance, and shareholder return. Employees and teams that are comprised of members that are highly skilled, trained, and motivated will nearly overcome external force difficulties. He asserts that the performance system is built into all human resource activities that include recruitment and selection, training, reward, and relations, among others, and it looks more into the future to improve on challenges and opportunities. Hence, organizations should be geared towards developing employees' competencies to ensure performance is maintained and enhanced.

Yingchuo and Guo (2016) studied the link between ability and job performance of university counselors, moderation the roles of responsibility and cognizance. This study investigated the connections between the ability, responsibility, cognizance, and the activity execution of

university counselors. The findings show that university instructor competency has a positive impact on errand execution, no noteworthy expectations on relationship performance, and the obligation perception of the university counsel not just positively affects both task performance and relationship performance, but in addition, it has a direct impact on competency and both the two relationships.

A study by Friolina, Sudarsih, Endhiarto and Musmedi (2017) sought to know whether competence, communication, and commitment affect the performance of civil servants. From the results, competence was found to have a positive and significant effect on the performance of civil servants in Bondowoso. The interpretation here then was that if civil servants' jobs matched their competencies, there would be improved performance. Friolina et. al. (2017) carried out research on the effect of communication competence on self-efficacy in Kaohsiung Elementary School Directors. He observed that modern schools require educators to participate in continuous growth professionally to keep up with various social changes, and this has put them under immense pressure. Yu and Ko (2017) conducted a survey on communication competency as a mediator in the self-leadership to job performance relationship. The study findings identified communication competence and self-leadership as positively correlated with nursing performance.

A study by Wirano and Perdana (2015) on the effects of competence, motivation, and employee performance in DT POS Indonesia uncovered that skill and motivation have a significant and beneficial outcome on performance at the same time by 54.70%, in part because ability has a positive critical impact on job execution by 65.60%, and work motivation has a positive huge impact on performance by 24.40%. They recommended that frequent training and development can improve skills, whereas motivation can be improved through learning, thankfulness and acknowledgement.

Maripaz and Amran (2016) investigated graduates' competence in employability skills and job performance. Their research was acclimated to draw out the connection between categories of employable and performance elements as indicated by Borman and Motowildos' taxonomy. They found out that graduate skills in employability aptitudes could give them a bit of leeway over their particular nature of work. Subsequently, proper consideration with respect to creating capability in employability abilities by businesses, workers, higher scholarly establishments, work organizations, and policymakers may help address issues of task execution.

Through a survey of the service sector in Turkey, Halil, Mehmet, and Unal (2013) analyzed how personal abilities influence performance through a survey. A research survey was done of 30 companies in the service sector. The discoveries uncovered a positive connection among capabilities and individual task execution. Furthermore, abilities appear to have a significant impact on how an individual performs his tasks. Toroitich, Mburu, and Waweru (2017) did a study on the effects of individual qualifications in the putting in place of procurement systems in some Kenyan counties. The study discovered that workers' capability significantly affects the usage of e-procurement in County Governments. Staff training on the utilization of e-procurement will enhance the execution of e-procurement in county governments.

Wei, Li and Zhang (2016) in their study developed a mediated moderation model to test the interactive effect of authentic leadership and competency on followers' job performance through

work engagement. Based on a sample of 248 subordinate–supervisor pairs, hierarchical regression analyses reveal that (1) authentic leadership positively relates to followers’ task performance and organizational citizenship behavior (OCB); (2) leader competency moderates the relationship between authentic leadership and OCB; (3) and followers’ work engagement mediates the main effect of authentic leadership and the interactive effect of authentic leadership and competency on followers’ task performance and OCB.

The following research gaps were identified after an extensive literature review in the field of employee competence, specifically in the context of private secondary schools in Port Harcourt: Most of the studies on authentic leadership and employee competence have been undertaken in other economic sectors, with minimal attention given to the educational sector. Practitioners agree that there is a growing problem related to authentic leadership and employee competence in the education sector, and therefore, this area merits serious research attention. Furthermore, most of the existing studies on authentic leadership and employee competence in business organizations have been carried out in the Western context. The researcher did not come across any Port Harcourt study, barring a few studies discussed in the above section, which comprehensively investigates the issue of employee authentic leadership and employee competence in table private secondary schools in Port Harcourt. It is against this backdrop that the study focused on the relationship between authentic leadership and employee competence in the private secondary schools in Port Harcourt, Rivers State.

METHODOLOGY

The study utilized a cross-sectional research survey design. Primary source was sourced through self- administered questionnaire. The population of the study consisted of 4620 full time teachers of all the 154 accredited Private Secondary Schools in Port Harcourt, Rivers State. The sample size of 368 teachers was determined mathematically using Taro Yamane’s formula. A well-structured questionnaire was used as instrument of data collection for the study. Spearman’s rank order (rho) correlation coefficient was utilized in testing the stated hypotheses with the aid of Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS version 23.0) at a 95% percent confidence interval and a 0.05 level of significance.

DATA ANALYSIS AND RESULTS

Table 1: Correlation Matrix for self-awareness and Measures of employee competence

		Knowledge				
		Self_Aware		Skill	Attitude	
Spearman's rho	Self_Aware	Correlation Coefficient	1.000	.455**	.602**	.656**
		Sig. (1-tailed)	.	.000	.000	.000
		N	292	292	292	292
	Knowledge	Correlation Coefficient	.455**	1.000	.590**	.565**
		Sig. (1-tailed)	.000	.	.000	.000
		N	292	292	292	292
	Skill	Correlation Coefficient	.602**	.590**	1.000	.807**
		Sig. (1-tailed)	.000	.000	.	.000
		N	292	292	292	292

	N	292	292	292	292
Attitude	Correlation Coefficient	.656**	.565**	.807**	1.000
	Sig. (1-tailed)	.000	.000	.000	.
	N	292	292	292	292

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

Source: Research Data, 2021 (SPSS Output, Version 23.0)

Table 1 presented the Spearman's rank order correlation matrix for the relationship between self-awareness and the measures of employee competence in deposit money banks in Port Harcourt. From the data given in the table, the correlation results for **Ho₁**, **Ho₂**, and **Ho₃** were given as below:

Ho₁: There is no significant relationship between self-awareness and knowledge in Private Secondary Schools in Port Harcourt, Rivers State.

The study reported a positive correlation coefficient value of $\rho = .455^{**}$, $p = .000 < 0.05$ (alpha value) between self-awareness and knowledge in Private Secondary Schools in Port Harcourt, Rivers State. This shows a moderate positive relationship between self-awareness and knowledge in Private Secondary Schools in Port Harcourt, Rivers State.

Decision: The null hypothesis **Ho₁** was rejected since the p-value obtained is less than the alpha value of 0.05. Therefore, we state that there is significant relationship self-awareness and knowledge in Private Secondary Schools in Port Harcourt, Rivers State.

Ho₂: There is no significant relationship between self-awareness and skill in Private Secondary Schools in Port Harcourt, Rivers State.

The study reported a positive correlation coefficient value of $\rho = .602^{**}$, $p = .000 < 0.05$ (alpha value) between self-awareness and skill in Private Secondary Schools in Port Harcourt, Rivers State. This shows a strong positive relationship between self-awareness and skill in Private Secondary Schools in Port Harcourt, Rivers State.

Decision: The null hypothesis **Ho₂** was rejected since the p-value obtained is less than the alpha value of 0.05. Therefore, we state that there is significant relationship between self-awareness and skill in Private Secondary Schools in Port Harcourt, Rivers State.

Ho₃: There is no significant relationship between self-awareness and attitude in Private Secondary Schools in Port Harcourt, Rivers State.

The study reported a positive correlation coefficient value of $\rho = .656^{**}$, $p = .000 < 0.05$ (alpha value) between self-awareness and attitude in Private Secondary Schools in Port Harcourt, Rivers State. This shows a strong positive relationship between self-awareness and attitude in Private Secondary Schools in Port Harcourt, Rivers State.

Decision: The null hypothesis **Ho₃** was rejected since the p-value obtained is less than the alpha value of 0.05. Therefore, we state that there is significant relationship between self-awareness and attitude in Private Secondary Schools in Port Harcourt, Rivers State.

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

The study findings reveal that there is strong positive relationship between self-awareness and employee competence of Private Secondary Schools in Port Harcourt, Rivers State. The P-value (0.00) is less than the level of significance at (0.05). This finding agrees with the position of Leroy et al. (2015) that self-awareness refers to leader's behavior, who acts according to his needs and wants, preferences and motivations. According to their claim, it can be argued that self-awareness supposes that a leader comprehends his own needs and wants. He has a high self-

esteem level and he is capable to accomplish his main objectives. Consequently, authentic leader understands his own purposes and acts according to his motivations. Self-awareness also relates how often a leader acknowledges his influence on other people (Peterson et al., 2012). Therefore, self-awareness ensures that a leader takes full responsibility for his own actions and he is aware of his impact on people around him. Authenticity of a leader, secured by self-awareness, assures acknowledged decisions and genuine behavior. As a result, self-awareness contributes to the development of authentic leadership behaviour.

This finding agrees with previous findings of Hoffman (2013) who opined that Persons with high conscientiousness are more likely to have better performance by improving their personal traits to suit the tasks at hand and choose the right moments for handling them. It is vital to note that job performance is great and improved in the early stages of a job tenure due to the need to concentrate one's focus and energy to achieve a certain level of satisfaction however, the detrimental side is that the more time spent on achieving tasks or at the same place of work, the less and less the effect of proactive personality thus care needs to be taken by employers to ensure that this issue has a solution if they are to maintain staff productivity and curb turnover rate (Hoffman, 2013).

More so, the outcome of this work further aligns with the findings of Victoroff and Boyatzis (2012) who reinstated the fact that Students or people rated highly in self-management are more likely to perform very well in their tasks due to their positive attitudes, self-motivation, willingness to learn and ability to adapt and initiate in times of changes and therefore it's paramount to focus and improve on self-management before thinking of relationships. It's very important to know that possessing the achievement orientation and conscientiousness competences have the limitation of over concentrating or persisting on tasks with the intention of perfecting it which in turn consumes a lot of time for the mastery/perfection process while others simply to it to the adequate level (Victoroff and Boyatzis, 2012).

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The study concludes that self-awareness significantly relates to employee competence in Private Secondary Schools in Port Harcourt, Rivers State.

The study recommends that programs and avenues that will lead to self-awareness of leaders in the Private Secondary Schools should be created as this will increase employee competence.

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Compensation Policy and Employee Productivity of Manufacturing Companies in Rivers State, Nigeria

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Abstract: *The purpose of this study was to examine the relationship between compensation policy and employee productivity of manufacturing companies in Rivers State, Nigeria. The study adopted a cross-sectional survey research design and the target population elements of the study was (1,809) one thousand eight hundred and nine employees from the 27 functional manufacturing companies under study which was source from the human resource department in each company using Taro Yamen's formula to determine the sample size. However, after data cleaning, 287 respondents were finally used for data analysis. Primary data was generated through structured questionnaire. Reliability was testes using Cronbach Alpha Coefficients and all the values were above the bench mark of 0.7. Spearman's Rank order correlation coefficient was used to test the hypotheses with the aid of Statistical Package for Social Science Version 23.0. The study findings revealed that there is a positive and significant relationship between compensation policy and employee productivity of manufacturing companies in Rivers State, Nigeria that were studied. The study thus, concluded that compensation policy has a strong influence on employee productivity. The study therefore, recommends that human resources managers in the organizations notably the manufacturing companies should ensure to incorporate an effective compensation policy to improve employee productivity in the organizations*

Keywords: *Compensation policy, Employee Productivity, Timeliness, Quality of Output, Quality of Service*

INTRODUCTION

Business organizations crave for the best of employee productivity just as employees expect to accomplish their numerous desires and needs. But, unfortunately, a radical departure from this primary goal has become a peculiar and permanent feature that some business organization persistently complain of discouraging employee time overlooking the displeasure of employees with poor work characteristics (Sajuyigbe, Bosede & Adeyemi, 2013). Brockner (1992) recommended that the ability of an organization, to successfully implement business strategies, to gain a competitive advantage and optimize human capital, largely depends, among other factors on the strategic human resource management practices.

Ashraf and Hussain, (2020) depict that employee productivity reflects the quality of high performance work systems in terms of employee involvement, extensive training programs, reward based compensation in the organization. There are many factors affecting the productivity of employee in organisation such as training, salary, organizational culture, structure, hierarchies, positions and compensation policy.

Today, organizations are under intense pressure to identify and implement programs that will prove effective in improving employee productivity (Deci, 2013 cited in Adim & David, 2020). It is no longer enough to increase salaries and expect increased performance; it is more complex than that (George & Jones, 2013). Employees not only want good extrinsic compensation on the work but also want to be praised and valued for the efforts they put in on the work (Adim & David, 2020). Compensation is arguably one of the most critical factors influences the quality and effectiveness of human capital (Dineen & Williamson, 2012). An operative reward system is another key to encourage individuals to join a firm and perform well continuously besides, important for firms to retain and strengthen human resources with fair and competitive compensation (Geiger & Cashen, 2007; Yang & Lin, 2009). Furthermore, compensation effects the excellence of the people who apply, the probability of job acceptance, the quality of those who are employed, the motivation and performance, number and level of the employees and the quality of who stays with the organization (Shah, Mohd, & Khairudin, 2018). According to Dessler and Tan (2009) compensation is all forms of pay or rewards given to the employee for their employment relationship with the organization. Milkovich and Bloom (1998) define compensation as all forms of financial reward and tangible benefits that an employee receives as part of an employment relationship. Compensation issues affect most HR practices or functions either directly or indirectly (Tessema & Soeters, 2006). Compensation practice has a positive association and impact on financial performance of banks (Quresh, Akbar, Khan, Sheikh & Hijazi, 2010). An organization's attitude to compensation is a key indicator of its broader human resource management policies and practices and is essential to the employment relationship (Berber, Morley, Slavić, & Poór, 2017). A well designed compensation package supports to retain the qualified employees and increases the efficiency of an organization (Nabi, Ahmed & Rahman, 2017).

The purpose of this study is to examine the relationship between compensation policy and employee productivity of manufacturing companies in Rivers state.

The following research questions guided this study:

- i. What relationship does compensation policy have with employees' timeliness of manufacturing companies in Rivers state?
- ii. What relationship does compensation policy have with employees' quantity of output of manufacturing companies in Rivers state?
- iii. What relationship does compensation policy have with employees' quality of service of manufacturing companies in Rivers state?

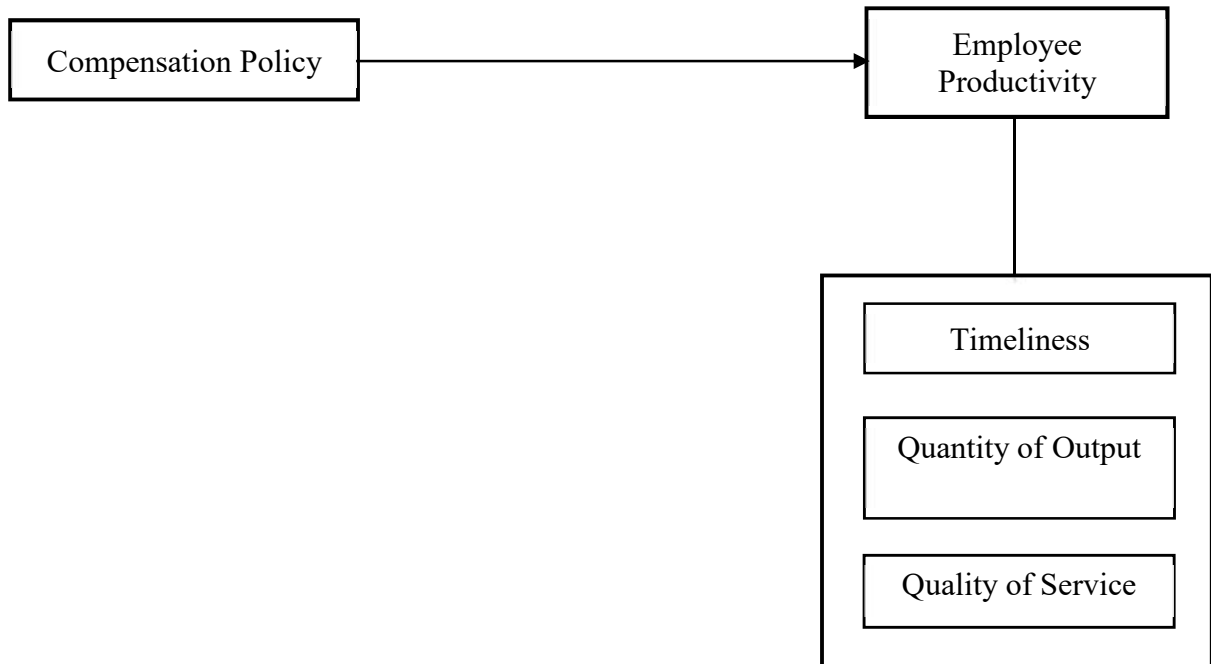


Fig.1 Conceptual framework for compensation policy and employee productivity

Source: Author's Desk Research, 2021

LITERATURE REVIEW

Theoretical Foundation

Social Exchange Theory

The study adopted social exchange theory developed by (Blau (1994) as the theoretical foundation of the present study. Blau (1994) assert that social exchange theory is characterized by unspecified personal obligations and trust as well as intrinsic, in association with extrinsic rewards, thus occupying the middle ground between pure calculation of advantage and pure expression of love. Blau (1994) further stated social exchange theory is based on less formal and legalistic social relations. It can thus be argued that people in organizations engaged in self-interested exchange process with the owners of the organization and among themselves, strive to maximize the benefits of such an exchange process.

This is the point where the theory relates best with the research topic i.e. if the management of organizations, effectively manage the social relations, stress level and skills of the employees, the employees' will reciprocate with commitment, productivity in the organization by putting in their best which is an exchange that benefits both parties involved. The above statement by the researcher corroborates with the general statement of social exchange theory, posited by Zafirovski (2005) that social exchange is composed of actions of purposive actors that presuppose constellations of their interest and resources, since these processes are assumed to be governed by reciprocal relations. Exchange is defined as social interaction characterized by reciprocal stimuli-they would not continue in the long run if reciprocity were violated in consequence, exchange theory examines the process establishing reciprocity in social relations or the mutual gratifications between individuals.

Compensation Policy

Compensation policy is an important element of human resource practice that influences decision of potential employee to join an organization and determines employer-employee relationship after employee joins the organization (Ira, 2010). Compensation policy as an area of research has outcomes which are of interest to the organization and to the employee. Compensation policy is an integral component of organization's reward systems and corporate strategy which when effectively utilized influences the level of employee commitment to the company and work positively (Armstrong and Murlis, 2007). Compensation is defined as the different types of financial incomes and benefits that employees receive based on the employment relationship. Direct compensation includes the basic pay that the employee is entitled for his or her job. It includes all forms of salary, wages, overtime pay, and bonuses. Indirect compensation includes protection programs, insurance plans, insurance plans, educational assistance and pay for time not worked, feeling of advancement, achievement opportunity, opportunities for recognition and other forms of benefits (Adeniji and Osibanjo, 2012).

Compensation policies are the collection of rules that govern the calculation of the net pay for all individuals employed in an organization. Compensation policy is composed of reward structure together with the values and philosophies which serve to determine the policy (Armstrong & Murlis 2007). Elements of compensation policy therefore reflect the wholesomeness of the policy when viewed from the perspectives of: grade and pay structure; total reward; philosophies and values upon which the compensation policy is grounded. Compensation policy provides guidelines or approaches which the organization uses in reward management. The policy apart from serving as an implementation tool for reward strategy is a reflection of organization's values, culture and philosophy in regard to compensation. Compensation policy helps in defining employment relationships, contractual obligations and the implied psychological contract between the employer and the employee (Zacher *et al.*, 2015). The policy promotes employer employee relationship by having committed employees who have trust with the organization, are willing to go an extra mile in their duties and have readiness to assist other employees. Policy on compensation incorporates the following key components; level of rewards, equity in pay, remuneration, contingent pay, competitiveness and transparency in rewards management (Armstrong & Murlis, 2007). Benefits refer to non-cash allowances which are part of total reward. Benefits policy addresses issues of, pension schemes; personal security through illness, health or accident insurance covers; safety in work environment, financial assistance for loans in house purchase schemes or purchase of organizational products; work life balance, holidays, career breaks, counseling; and employee development (Adler, 2015).

Employee Productivity

Productivity is the extent to which an organization's resources are brought together and effectively utilized for attainment of set goal (Bayo & Redwell, 2020). Apparently, productivity increase is reaching the highest level of performance with the least expenditure of resources. Productivity is an overall measure of the ability to produce a good or service. More specifically, productivity is the measure of how specified resources are managed to accomplish timely objectives as stated in terms of quantity and quality. Productivity may also be defined as an index that measures output (goods and services) relative to the input (labor, materials, energy, etc., used to produce the output). Hence, there are two major ways to increase productivity: increase the numerator (output) or decrease the denominator (input). However, a similar effect would be seen if both input and output increased, but output increased faster than input; or if

input and output decreased, but input decreased faster than output. Organizations have many options for use of this formula, labor productivity, machine productivity, capital productivity, energy productivity, and so on.

Awan & Mahmood, (2009) cited in Bayo & Redwell (2020) posits that productivity and output are two indispensable elements of an organizational life, because without increased and sustained output on the part of the employees, the organization risk poor performance outcome in general and if not controlled or corrected will lead to extinction of that organization. As such, organizations can monitor productivity for strategic reasons such as corporate planning, organization improvement, or comparison to competitors. It can also be used for tactical reasons such as project control or controlling performance to budget. Productivity is also a scientific concept, and hence can be logically defined and empirically observed. It can also be measured in quantitative terms, which qualifies it as a variable. Therefore, it can be defined and measured in absolute or relative terms. However, an absolute definition of productivity is not very useful; it is much more useful as a concept dealing with relative productivity or as a productivity factor.

Timeliness

This measures the speediness in the completion of tasks or provision of services. For example, in a manufacturing company; a time based indicator is the time frame used to produce a product or cycle time for a specific operation. Time is the most crucial resource to be considered in the performance of any activity. Time determines the imperativeness of any other resources in accomplishing organizational set out objectives and goals (Ugwulashi, 2011). It is an essential resource every manager needs to achieve the goals and objectives of an organization (Adejo, 2012). Time, according to Nwaiwu (2000), is the interval between the beginning and the end of an operation. It is so delicate that it cannot be saved but can only be spent and once misused it can never be regained. According to the Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary time is defined as a period either long or short, during which you do something or something happens. Time is an immaterial resource, inelastic, scarce and erodes fast and once spent, cannot be won back, stored or recalled for use (Kalu, 2012). It is an essential resource; it's irrecoverable, limited and dynamic. Irrecoverable because every minute spent is gone forever, limited because only 24hours exist in a day and dynamic because it is never static (Adejo, 2012). Managing time appropriately leads to achieving results easily with limited resources. Consequently, any productive system, whatever its structure, human, technology or financial support requires efficient and effective time management procedure. Consequently, Mullins (1999) refers time as one of the most valuable, but limited resources and it is important that administrators utilise time to the maximum advantage.

Maduagwu & Nwogu (2006) notes that, every activity is allocated some frames within which the activities are to be accomplished in educational institutions. Time is utilized to maintain facilities, delegate functions or even spend fiscal cash. Time management is also important for effective inspection and supervision in the academic workplace in bringing the much needed quality. Effective time process ensures unambiguous objectives, proactive planning, well defined priorities and actions; participatory and successful delegation of activities. Nevertheless, time is continuum and all activities or roles performance depend on it whether voluntary or involuntary in avoiding conflicts.

Quantity of Output

This indicator highlights the amount of items produced, or sold in comparison to the fixed standard i.e. the amount of items earmarked for production, processing and sale. Quantity of output measures relationship between inputs and outputs or how successfully the inputs have been transformed into outputs to achieve the organizational goals (Kalu, 2012). Quantity of output is defined as the real value or volume of the final goods and services produced in the organization or nation's economy. Industry output measures are likewise conditioned by industry classifications and output definitions, particularly as regards the distinction between gross and net output. The labor productivity ratios differ depending on whether the input is defined and measured in terms of employment, or manhours, or manhours weighted by relative average hourly earnings in the various occupations or industries.

The standard definition of quantity of output is actually what is known as a partial factor measure of productivity, in the sense that it only considers a single input in the ratio. The formula then for partial-factor productivity would be the ratio of total output to a single input. Managers generally utilize partial productivity measures because the data is readily available. Also, since the total of multifactor measures provides an aggregate perspective, partial factor productivity measures are easier to relate to specific processes. Labor-based hours (generally, readily available information) is a frequently used input variable in the equation (Hisrich & Peters, 2002). When this is the case, it would seem that productivity could be increased by substituting machinery for labor. However, that may not necessarily be a wise decision. Labor-based measures do not include mechanization and automation in the input; thus when automation replaces labor, misinterpretation may occur.

Quality of Service

Several Indicators are used to measure the quality of a completed task. The ratio of work output repeated or rejected is an indicator. In a sales environment, a key indicator of quality salesmanship is the proportion of enquiries converted to sales. Service quality is known to be based on multiple dimensions; there is no general agreement as to the nature or content of the dimensions (Brady & Cronin, 2001). However, a review of the service quality literature to date explicitly shows that European scholars have made a great influence on the study of service quality dimensions. Lehtinen & Lehtinen (1982) defined service quality in terms of physical quality, interactive quality and corporate quality. Physical quality relates to the tangible aspects of the service. Interactive quality involves the interactive nature of services and refers to the two-way flow that occurs between the customer and the service provider, or the company representative, including both automated and animated interactions. Corporate quality refers to the image attributed to a service provider by its current and potential customers, as well as other publics.

The success of an organization depends on how productive the organization is. More specifically, productivity is the measure of how specified resources are managed to accomplish timely objectives as stated in terms of quantity and quality. Productivity may also be defined as an index that measures output (goods and services) relative to the input (labor, materials, energy used to produce the output). Hence, there are two major ways to increase productivity: increase the numerator (output) or decrease the denominator (input). Of course, a similar effect would be seen if both input and output increased, but output increased faster than input; or if input and output decreased, but input decreased faster than output.

Compensation Policy and Employee Productivity

Oladejo and Oluwaseun (2014) examined the effect of compensation plan on workers performance in the Nigerian food and beverage manufacturing companies using a sample of 125 questionnaires administered and distributed to the staff of the selected food and beverages companies in Lagos state. Analyses from frequency table and percentage and Chi-square test showed that compensation plan has significant and positive effect on workers performance.

Hameed, Muhammad, Hafiz, Ghazanfar and Muhammad (2014) examined the impact of compensation on employee performance of banks in Pakistan. A questionnaire was designed to collect the data on the factors related to compensation like salary, rewards, indirect compensation and employee performance. Findings from correlation and regression analyses showed that compensation has positive impact on employee performance.

Nnorom, Akpa, Egwuonwu, Akintaro, Shonubi and Herbertson (2016) examined the effect of compensation administration on employee productivity. The data gathered from the structured questionnaire on 50 respondents in Dangote Nigeria Headquarters in Lagos Nigeria, revealed that effective compensation administration has significant positive effect on employee productivity.

Obasan (2012) linked compensation with performance using three selected conglomerate firms in Nigeria. The Likert-type questionnaire response generated was regressed using a simple OLS technique. The findings revealed that compensation strategy has significant and positive effects on work productivity and organizational strategy is a veritable option for attracting, retaining, and motivating employees for improved organizational productivity. The following hypothesized relationship was drawn from the empirical literature reviewed in the subject matter.

H₀₁ There is no significant relationship between compensation policy and timeliness of manufacturing companies in Rivers State, Nigeria

H₀₂ There is no significant relationship between compensation policy and quantity of output of manufacturing companies in Rivers State, Nigeria

H₀₃ There is no significant relationship between compensation policy and quality of service of manufacturing companies in Rivers State, Nigeria

METHODOLOGY

The study adopted a cross-sectional survey research design and the target population elements of the study was (1,809) one thousand eight hundred and nine employees from the 27 functional manufacturing companies under study which was sourced from the human resource department in each company using Taro Yamen's formula to determine the sample size. However, after data cleaning, 287 respondents were finally used for data analysis. Questionnaire method of data collection was used, while the validity of research instrument was achieved through face validity by supervisor vetting and peer review by expert in the field of study. Reliability was tested using Cronbach Alpha Coefficients and all the values were above the benchmark of 0.7. Spearman's Rank order correlation coefficient was used to test the hypotheses with the aid of Statistical Package for Social Science Version 23.0.

DATA ANALYSIS AND RESULTS

Bivariate Analysis

The level of significance 0.05 was adopted as a criterion for the probability of accepting the null hypothesis in ($p > 0.05$) or rejecting the null hypothesis in ($p < 0.05$).

Compensation Policy and Timeliness

Table 1: Correlation of Compensation Policy and Timeliness

			Compensation Policy	Timelines s
Spearman's rho	Compensation Policy	Correlation	1.000	.574**
		Coefficient		
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.	.000
	Timeliness	N	287	287
		Correlation	.574**	1.000
		Coefficient		
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.
		N	287	287

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

Source: SPSS Output, 2021

H₀₁ There is no significant relationship between compensation policy and timeliness of manufacturing companies in Rivers State, Nigeria.

Table 1 showed the relationship between compensation policy and timeliness using Spearman's Rank-order Correlation Coefficients techniques. From the analysis the result showed that compensation policy has a strong positive and significant relationship with timeliness at ($r = 0.574$, and $P-v = 0.000 < 0.05\%$). The null hypothesis was therefore rejected and restated that there is a strong positive and significant relationship between compensation policy and timeliness in the manufacturing companies in Rivers State, Nigeria.

Compensation Policy and Quantity of Output

Table 2: Correlation of Compensation Policy and Quantity of Output

			Compensation Policy	Quantity of Output
Spearman's rho	Compensation Policy	Correlation	1.000	.628**
		Coefficient		
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.	.000
	Quantity of Output	N	287	287
		Correlation	.628**	1.000
		Coefficient		
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.
		N	287	287

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

Source: SPSS Output, 2021

H₀₂ There is no significant relationship between compensation policy and quantity of output of manufacturing companies in Rivers State, Nigeria

Table 2 showed the relationship between compensation policy and quantity of output using Spearman's Rank-order Correlation Coefficients techniques. From the analysis the result showed that compensation policy has a strong positive and significant relationship with quantity of output at ($r = 0.628$, and $P-v = 0.000 < 0.05\%$). The null hypothesis was therefore rejected and restated that there is a strong positive and significant relationship between compensation policy and quantity of output in the manufacturing companies in Rivers State, Nigeria.

Compensation Policy and Quality of Service

Table 3: Correlation of Compensation Policy and Quality of Service

			Compensation Policy	Quality of Service
Spearman's rho	Compensation Policy	Correlation Coefficient	1.000	.678**
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.	.000
		N	287	287
	Quality of Service	Correlation Coefficient	.678**	1.000
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.
		N	287	287

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

Source: SPSS Output, 2021

H₀₃ There is no significant relationship between compensation policy and quality of service of manufacturing companies in Rivers State, Nigeria

Table 3 showed the relationship between compensation policy and quality of service using Spearman's Rank-order Correlation Coefficients techniques. From the analysis the result showed that compensation policy has a strong positive and significant relationship with quality of service at ($r = 0.678$, and $P-v = 0.000 < 0.05\%$). The null hypothesis was therefore rejected and restated that there is a strong positive and significant relationship between compensation policy and quality of service in the manufacturing companies in Rivers State, Nigeria.

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

The first, second and third hypotheses sought to examine the relationship between compensation policy and employee productivity. Hence it was hypothesized that there is no significant relationship between compensation policy and employee productivity. Three hypotheses were tested using the spearman rank order correlation technique. The study findings reveal that compensation policy has a strong positive and significant relationship with timeliness, has a strong positive and significant relationship with quantity of output and also a strong positive and significant relationship with quality of service. This finding agrees with previous finding by Hameed, Muhammad, Hafiz, Ghazanfar and Muhammad (2014) the study examined the impact of compensation on employee performance of banks in Pakistan. Findings from correlation and regression analyses showed that compensation has positive impact on employee performance.

The findings of the study agree with the conclusion of Nnorom, Akpa, Ekwuonwu, Akintaro, Shonubi and Herbertson (2016). The findings revealed that effective compensation

administration has significant positive effect on employee productivity. This study collaborates with the findings of Ibojo and Asabi (2014). The results showed a significant relationship between good welfare service and employees performance; compensation management and improved productivity; and compensation management and employees performance. The study thus posits that compensation management has positive effect on employee performance.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

Findings from the analyses and test of research hypotheses revealed that compensation policy has a strong influence on employee productivity in manufacturing companies in Rivers State, Nigeria. The study therefore concludes that compensation policy has strong influence on employee productivity in manufacturing companies in Rivers State, Nigeria.

The study recommends that human resource managers in the manufacturing companies should ensure to incorporate an effective compensation policy in the organization. This will greatly increase the employees' productivity level in the organization.

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Integration Capability and Organizational Competitiveness of Manufacturing Firms in South-South

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Abstract: *This study examined the relationship between integration capability and organizational competitiveness of quoted manufacturing firms in South-South, Nigeria. The cross-sectional survey was adopted. The study population was managerial staff of quoted manufacturing firms in South-South, Nigeria. A sample size of two hundred and twenty-one (221) managers and supervisors were drawn from the population. The simple random sampling technique was utilized in the study. However, only one hundred and ninety-eight (198) copies of questionnaire retrieved were completely filled and used for the study. The Spearman Rank Correlation was used to analyse the relationship between integration capability and organizational competitiveness. The result of the bivariate analysis revealed that integration capability had a significant positive relationship with the measures of organizational competitiveness (product quality and client satisfaction). The findings led to the conclusion that integration competence is important in improving the competitiveness of manufacturing enterprises in Nigeria's South-South. The study suggested, among other things, that manufacturing companies should regularly exchange fresh knowledge internally within the business in order to improve their competitiveness.*

Keywords: *Integration Capability, Organizational Competitiveness, Product Quality, Client Satisfaction*

Introduction

The manufacturing sector which has the potential of contributing more than 25 per cent to Nigeria's GDP, is currently doing less than 10 per cent (Ekugbe, 2021). There is need to strengthen competition among manufacturing firms in this recent time so as to ensure high performance of the sector. One of the basic conditions for an organization to exist and ensure its long-term sustainable success is the ability to renew its sources of competitive advantage (Cyfert, Chwiłkowska-Kubala, Szumowski and Miśkiewicz, 2021). If a manufacturing firm wants to survive and be superior, Zuñiga-Collazos, Castillo-Palacio, and Padilla-Delgado (2019), contended that obtaining sustainable competitive advantage and superior performance over competitors is crucial. Organizations' long-term competitive advantage is rooted in the development of their dynamic capabilities to address external changes by purposely reconfiguring their internal resources and capabilities (Karman and Savaneviciene, 2021). Therefore, the survival and success of businesses in this turbulent times depends on competition,

(Ambastha & Momaya, 2004). Porter (1987) and King (2007), defined Competitiveness as capability that is difficult to imitate and valuable in helping a firm outperform its competitors. To this end therefore, firms are expected to develop the competence required to adapt to environmental changes, as effective strategies help organizations to position themselves well in the marketplace, while poor strategies can undermine a firm's performance (Wang, 2012).

Claude (2018) investigated the relationship of organizational factors on competitiveness of firms in Rwanda. The result of the study shows that organizational factors positively correlate with organizational competitiveness. Karma and Savaneviciene, (2021), investigated ways of enhancing dynamic capabilities to improve sustainable competitiveness. The study found a relationship between dynamic capabilities and sustainable competitive advantage. Kaur and Mehta, (2017), conducted a study on dynamic capabilities for competitive advantage. The results show that dynamic capability significantly impacts competitiveness of a firm. Ofoegbu and Onuoha, (2018), in their study examined the relationship between Dynamic Capabilities and Competitive Advantage. The study found that dimensions of dynamic capabilities positively correlate with a competitive advantage of the firms. Kinuthia and Deya, (2019) examined the influence of dynamic capabilities on competitiveness of organization. The study found a positive significant effect between knowledge management capabilities and the competitiveness of firms. Despite the various attempts to address the exit, corporate collapse and low competitiveness of organization using different constructs, there exist dearth of work by scholars on how dynamic capability relates with organizational competitiveness among manufacturing firms in South-South, Nigeria. Literatures as regards the relationship between integration capability and organizational competitiveness is scant. This study thus bridges these observed gap.

Aim and Objectives of the Study

The aim of this study was to examine the relationship between integration capability and organizational competitiveness of manufacturing firms in South-South, Nigeria, while the study objectives are:

1. Evaluate the relationship between integration capability and product quality of manufacturing firms in South-South, Nigeria.
2. Examine the relationship between integration capability and client satisfaction of manufacturing firms in South-South, Nigeria.

Research Questions

The following research questions guided the study

1. What is the relationship between integration capability and product quality of manufacturing firms in South-South, Nigeria?
2. What is the relationship between integration capability and client satisfaction of manufacturing firms in South-South, Nigeria?

Research Hypotheses

The following research hypotheses were formed to guide the study:

H₀₁: There is no significant relationship between integration capability and product quality of manufacturing firms in South-South, Nigeria.

H₀₂: There is no significant relationship between integration capability and client satisfaction of manufacturing firms in South-South, Nigeria.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Theoretical Framework

Resource Base Theory

Resource base theory proposes that firms are heterogeneous, simply because they possess heterogeneous resources. This means that they can have different strategies as they have different resource mixes. This resource base view focuses attention on the internal resources of the organization in order to identify those assets, capabilities and competencies within the organization that has the potential to deliver superior competitive advantage (Wikipedia, 2021). Resource base view according to Wikipedia, is a management term used in determining the strategic resources an organization can exploit to achieve competitive advantage. Barney, (1991) in an article titled "firm resources and sustained competitive advantage" which is cited widely as being a pivotal work in the emergence of the resource base view, the theory tries to tackle issues relating to the identification of elements that have to do with competitive advantage of an organization. The view holds that firms must develop unique firm and specific core competencies that will allow them to perform more than the other competitors in the industry.

Concept of Integration Capability

Integration here is viewed as organizational activities that open learning pathways, sharing of know-how and expertise via transfer of knowledge, technology and technical knowhow within an organization (Teece, 2016). Integration capability includes internal coordination between different specialized subunits within an organization and also involves the capacity to integrate external resources of the organization. (Zhou, 2017), examples of such external resources integration activities are: integration of market and customer knowledge, and that of technologies that are emerging in the market (Iansiti & Clark, 1994). It facilitates firms to share knowledge internally, help to facilitate both technological and market innovations, help firms in adopting technologies from different areas.

Prencipe, (1997) argued that organizations should build logics for vertical integration, outsourcing, and R & D strategies to integrate both internal and external resources. Effective integration of internal and external technological knowledge helps a firm to incorporate the necessary characteristics for sources in the new products (Marsh & Stock, 2006). Integration capability is rooted in the idea and method that organizations should be able to forecast the requirements of their customers. With integration capability comes the ability to interpret current market information to prepare for the future market. Iansiti and Clark, (1994); posit that integration capability helps organizations to translate vision of the organization into market innovation that fits future market expectations. Dutta et al., (2005), agree that external integration capability enables organizations to strengthen their competitiveness by transforming and converting their resources into innovative outputs.

Concept of Organizational Competitiveness

In literature, it has been established that meeting the expectations of firms, such as making consistent profits by satisfactorily resolving the inherent business uncertainties, rest on being

competitive. The ability to compete means staying alive in the market (Roman et al., 2012). Contemporary organizations face globalization's faster environmental changes, higher competition and complex requirements of clients. In the last decades, the rapid rate of technology change, the shortened product life cycles, the process of globalization, and the blurring industry boundaries make the global business environments increasingly competitive. The twenty-first century brought with it exciting new and cutting-age technologies, changing the way businesses operate. These increase competitive pressure around all the firms that participate in the industry, and also leads to introduction of concepts such as innovation, flexibility and differentiation from competitors (Baker & Sinkula, 1999), it is increasingly becoming difficult for organizations to achieve, maintain, and improve business competitiveness (Tech-blog, 2019) in this turbulent period, thus the rate at which organizations are closing down is a major concern to all stakeholders. Ambastha and Momaya (2004), stated that the competitiveness of a firm is represented by its share in the market. Globalization on its own brought significant benefits to the business world, for example, it gave different organizations the opportunity to explore new markets, benefit from falling trade barriers, and has made them adapt more quickly to technological progress. Therefore, the survival and success of businesses in this turbulent times depends on competition (Ambastha & Momaya, 2004). Similarly, competitiveness has been interpreted as the ability to achieve or maintain a competitive advantage in the aspect of the concept identical to competitive capabilities (Balkyte et al., 2010). Competitiveness is evidently a decisive factor for survival in the business world. To achieve it requires setting priorities, which can be defined as a set of options of varying importance that a firm need to have to compete in the market over a determined time frame (Santos, Pires & Gonçalves, 1999).

Concept of Product Quality

According to Skool Team, (2018), product quality can be viewed as the ability of the product to fulfil and meet the consumer requirements. It is a collection of features and characteristics of a product that contribute to its ability to meet the perceived requirement. They stated five techniques for improving product quality, process control, product control, quality control, and total quality maintenance. Bhasin, (2020), posits that product quality as a characteristic that is a further conglomerate of different feature for fulfilling's the customer needs and maintaining the industry-standard so the product does not include any deficiency. He added that factors such as raw materials, implementation of product technologies, workforce expertise and production-related overhead help to decide the product quality. Consumer's inclinations preferences and loyalties to a product make product quality essential to company.

Concept of Client Satisfaction

Kierczak, (2021) define client satisfaction as a measurement that determines how a firm products or services meet the expectations of the customer. High standard customer service can win a client heart, and also make an organization recognizable within their target group. It is important for a company to track the factor of customer's satisfaction and work on improving it so as to make client more loyal and eventually turned them into brand ambassadors. Kierczak, (2021), listed benefits of client satisfaction as: when a loyal customer is a treasure you should keep and hide from other rival firms, your customer can stop being your client in a heartbeat, it is all about the money, their opinion and feeling about the brand can affect films revenues in both positive and negative ways, customer satisfaction helps a film stand out of the competition, High client satisfaction experience can take an organization's brand places. Certified clients are more likely

to share your content across. Providing great customer service will not only satisfy the client but also the firm that gives such services.

Hatane and Tarigan, (2019) argued that increases customer satisfaction will potentially lead to sales growth in the short and long time while customer dissatisfaction will bring risk like decrease in the level of sales because of protest from consumer organizations, government intervention and the competitors reaction, and also the rise of new substitution product to the market. Kotler and Keller, (2009) argue that there are four methods that are widely used to ensure the level of customer satisfaction: the complaint system and suggestion, ghost shopping, lost customer analysis survey and customer satisfaction surveys.

METHODOLOGY

A cross sectional survey which is an aspect of quasi experimental design was adopted in this study. The cross sectional survey provides a snap-shot of the outcome and the characteristics associated with it at a given point in time. In line with the assertion of Cooper and Schindler, (2006), this design is most appropriate for research in the field of administrative sciences, where, manipulation of the variables limited, since the researcher has no control over them. The target population of this study are the fourteen (14) quoted manufacturing firms in south-south Nigeria according to the Nigerian Stock Exchange (<https://ngxgroup.com/exchange/trade/equities/listed-companies/>). The six states that make up the south-south include Akwa Ibom state, Cross River State, Rivers State, Bayelsa State, Delta State and Edo State. However, the accessible population will cover 496 managers and supervisors of the fourteen (14) quoted manufacturing firms.

Table 1: Names of Quoted Manufacturing firms and Sample Size of Each Manufacturing firm

S/N	Names of Quoted Manufacturing Firms	Population	Sample Size
1	BUA FOODS PLC	54	24
2	CHAMPION BREW PLC	32	14
3	GUINNESS NIG PLC	32	14
4	INTERNATIONAL BREWERIES PLC	61	27
5	VITAFOAM NIG PLC	54	24
6	AUSTIN LAZ	39	18
7	BERGER PAINTS PLC	46	20
8	BETA GLASS PLC	28	12
9	BUA CEMENT	23	10
10	CUTIX PLC	42	19
11	DANGOTE CEMENT PLC	15	7
12	LAFARGE AFRICA PLC	22	10
13	NOTORE CHEMICAL IND. PLC	17	8
14	JOHN HOLT	31	14
	TOTAL	496	221

Source: Research Data, 2021

The sample size for this study was deduced using the Taro Yamane sampling formula (1968). Hence, 221 managers and supervisors are chosen as representatives of the 14 manufacturing

firms. However, a sample of 221 were drawn from the 496 representatives of the firm using the Taro Yamane sampling formula, (1968).

Spearman's Rank Correlation was used to analyze the data for this study with the aid of Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 21. The spearman's rank order was utilized to test the relationship between integration capability and the measures of organizational competitiveness. The spearman is considered appropriate owing to its flexibility across both interval and ordinal scaled data, as well as its non-parametric quality. Spearman Rank order correlation coefficient (Rho) is the statistical technique for the bivariate hypotheses testing; it is a non-parametric test and is symbolized as "rho" or "p". The Spearman's rank-order correlation was used in this study because it tests the strength of relationship between two ranked variables. The tool is used where the two variables are presented in an ordinal scale. This study instrument adopts the ordinal scale, thus the use of the Spearman's rank-order correlation.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

A total of two hundred and twenty-one (221) copies of the questionnaire were administered, of these 221 copies distributed, only 204 copies, representing 92% of distributed copies of the questionnaire, were retrieved. Out of the 204 copies collected, 6 copies (3%) were observed to be invalid by the nature of responses, which were linked to duplicated options, omissions of key questions in the questionnaire. Only 198 copies (90%) of the questionnaire were observed to be properly filled and valid for subsequent usage in the study.

Demographic (Descriptive) Data Analysis

Gender Distribution of Respondents

Table 2: Gender of Respondents

		Gender			
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Male	140	70.7	70.7	70.7
	Female	58	29.3	29.3	100.00
	Total	198	100.0	100.0	

Source: Research Data, 2021

Table 2 show the gender characteristics of the respondents. The respondents comprised of more males than female participants. The male participants occupied 70.7% (140 respondents) of the population, while the female participants occupied 29.3% (58 respondents) of the population. This implies that most workers of quoted manufacturing firms in South-South, Nigeria are male. A significant gender disparity is observed.

Age Distribution of Respondents

Respondents were required to indicate their age and the responses are hereby presented in table 3.

Table 3: Age of Respondents

		Age of Respondents			
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Less than 35 Years	41	20.7	20.7	20.7
	36-45 Years	63	31.8	31.8	52.5
	46-55 Years	75	37.9	37.9	90.4
	Above 55 years	19	9.6	9.6	100.0
	Total	198	100.0	100.0	

Source: Research Data, 2021

In Table 3 the age distribution of the respondents is presented. It shows that respondents between the ages of 46-55 years and those 36-45 years occupy a greater percentage of the participants occupying 37.9% (75 respondents) and 31.8% (63 respondents) respectively, then those less than 35 years (41 respondents; 20.7%), and finally those above 55 years (19 respondents, 9.6%). Overall, the study observed that the study respondents are largely between the ages of 36-55 years.

Educational qualification distribution of respondents

The level of education may affect the respondents' attitudes and understanding of the study context. Thus, the educational qualification was assessed using categorical measurement. The respondents' profiles based on their educational qualification are presented in Table 4.

Table 4: Educational qualification of respondents

		Educational Qualification			
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	HND/OND	5	2.5	2.5	2.5
	First Degree	94	47.5	47.5	50.0
	Masters	92	46.5	46.5	96.5
	Ph.D	7	3.5	3.5	100.0

Total	198	100.0	100.0
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Source: Research Data, 2021

Table 5 show the educational qualification of the respondents. The illustration shows that most respondents (94 respondents; 47.5%) have First Degree; following this is the respondents having Master's Degree (92 respondents; 46.5%); followed by respondents having PhD (7 respondents; 3.5%); then those with HND/OND (5 respondents; 2.5%). Overall, the study discovered that a majority of the study respondents have significant educational experience especially First Degree.

Hypotheses Testing

The Spearman Rank Order Correlation was used to test the correlations and strength of relations. This technique is valid in light of the need to determine how Integration Capability relates with Organizational Competitiveness in an organization. The criteria used are the coefficient to determine the direction of relationship (where > 0.5 is positive and < 0.5 is negative) and the significance level to know how significant this observed relationship is.

The decision rule is:

$p < 0.05$ significant level = accept the alternate hypotheses

$p > 0.05$ significant level = accept the null hypotheses

A total of twelve bivariate hypotheses were tested.

Ho₁: There is no significant relationship between Integration Capability and Product Quality of quoted manufacturing firms in South-South, Nigeria.

Presented in table **Table 5** is the result for the tests for the hypothesis of the study. The hypothesis 1 assessed the extent to which integration capability relates with product quality.

Table 5: Integration Capability and Product Quality Correlations

			Integration capability	Product Quality
Spearman's rho	Integration capability	Correlation Coefficient	1.000	.466**
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.	.000
		N	198	198
	Product Quality	Correlation Coefficient	.466**	1.000
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.
		N	198	198

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

Source: SPSS Output, 2021

The result of the analysis in Table 5 shows a significant level $p < 0.05$ ($0.002 < 0.05$), this means that there is a significant relationship between Integration Capability and Product Quality. A correlation value of $r = 0.466$ implying that there is a strong positive relationship between Integration Capability and Product Quality. This entails that as one variable increases the other increase, that is, an increase in Integration Capability will lead to a corresponding increase in the

level of Product Quality. The study therefore observes that there is a strong positive and significant association between Integration Capability and Product Quality. In light of this, the study therefore rejects the null hypothesis and accept the alternate hypothesis that *there is a significant relationship between Integration Capability and Product Quality of quoted manufacturing firms in South-South, Nigeria.*

Ho₂: There is no significant relationship between Integration Capability and Client Satisfaction of quoted manufacturing firms in South-South, Nigeria.

Table 6: Integration Capability and Client Satisfaction

Correlations			Integration capability	Client Satisfaction
Spearman's rho	Integration capability	Correlation Coefficient	1.000	.457**
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.	.000
		N	198	198
	Client Satisfaction	Correlation Coefficient	.457**	1.000
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.
		N	198	198

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

Source: SPSS Output, 2021

The result of the analysis in Table 6 shows a significant level $p < 0.05$ ($0.000 < 0.05$), this means that there is a significant relationship between Integration Capability and Client Satisfaction. A correlation value of $r = 0.457$ implying that there is a moderate positive relationship between Integration Capability and Client Satisfaction. This entails that as one variable increases the other increase, that is, an increase in Integration Capability will lead to a corresponding increase in the level of Client Satisfaction. The study therefore observes that there is a positive and significant association between Integration Capability and Client Satisfaction. In light of this, the study therefore rejects the null hypothesis and accept the alternate hypothesis that *there is a significant relationship between Integration Capability and Client Satisfaction of quoted manufacturing firms in South-South, Nigeria.*

Discussion of Findings

Positive Relationship between Integration Capability and Product Quality of Quoted Manufacturing firms

The outcome of the analysis on how Integration Capability relates with Product Quality revealed that there is a noteworthy relationship between Integration Capability and Product Quality, given the p-value of 0.000 which is less than the level of significance of 0.05 ($p = 0.000 < 0.05$). The hypothesis which was given in null form was thus rejected and the alternate hypothesis was accepted. The correlation value (rho) was 0.466. This indicates a strong positive relationship between Integration Capability and Product Quality among employees of manufacturing firms in South-South, Nigeria. The positive relationship implies that the Product Quality increases when there is an increase in Integration Capability. In essence, when Integration Capability is low,

such could hinder Product Quality in manufacturing firms. Furthermore, the coefficient of determination (r^2) was 0.217. This denotes that a unit change in Integration Capability in manufacturing firms will account for up to 21.7% total variation in Product Quality among the employees. Hence, Integration Capability is an essential factor in organisations that help increase Product Quality. This finding concurred with that of Bhasin (2020), who argued that product quality is a practice of integrating various processes thereby making the product flawless and useful in order to meet expectations of the consumers. This has extended the argument by clearly demonstrating that with increase in integration capability organization is sure of increasing their product quality and meet their customer's expectation, by extension increase their competitiveness.

Positive Relationship between Integration Capability and Client Satisfaction of Quoted Manufacturing firms

The outcome of the second hypothesis on how Integration Capability relates with Client Satisfaction showed that the p-value was 0.000 which was less than 0.05 level of significance ($p = 0.000 < 0.05$). This connotes that Integration Capability relates significantly with Client Satisfaction among the employees in manufacturing firms in South-South. The null hypothesis in accordance with the decision role was rejected and the alternate hypothesis was accepted. When the Integration Capability is high, they will work to meet customers' needs and expectations. The correlational value (r) was 0.457. This is to say that Integration Capability has a moderate positive relationship with Client Satisfaction among employees in the manufacturing firms. An increase in Integration Capability will thus result in high increase in Client Satisfaction. Furthermore, the coefficient of determination between Integration Capability and Client Satisfaction was 0.209. By implication, a unit change in Integration Capability will account for 20.9% total variation in Client Satisfaction among the employees in manufacturing firms. Thus, one can assert that higher Integration Capability is a contributory factor to higher level of Client Satisfaction in organisation. This finding agrees with that of Kursunlouglu (2014) who submitted that customer loyalty can be created through service improvement to meet customer needs and expectations, and this is achieved through the integrating capability of the firm. Thus this study provides empirical support for Marsh & Stock (2006), who argue that effective integration of internal and external technological knowledge helps a firm to incorporate the necessary characteristics for sources in the new products, which helps them to increase their competitiveness. This study has also extended the argument by revealing that effective integration of internal and external technological knowledge help an organization to incorporate in their products those characteristics that help to achieve customer loyalty.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Manufacturing enterprises' organizational competitiveness is critical for ensuring that they compete favorably with competitors. Because the many firms in the listed manufacturing sector compete not just with companies in Nigeria but also with companies all over the world as a result of globalization, improving their competitiveness is a never-ending goal to ensure that they survive the test of time. The ability of these companies to integrate is a significant aspect in gaining a competitive advantage over competitors. This is due to the fact that there is a clear link between integration capability and product quality and customer satisfaction.

This study proposes the following in light of its results and perspective on the relationship between integration capability and organizational competitiveness of quoted manufacturing firms in South-South, Nigeria:

1. Manufacturing company executives should invest in their employees' capabilities in order to improve their ability to deal with unprecedented problems, which will help them become more competitive.
2. Manufacturing business management should continually ensure that their processes and products are enhanced in order to provide optimal customer satisfaction, as this will assist the firms improve their competitive position.

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Buzz Marketing and Brand Performance of Pharmaceutical Companies in South-South, Nigeria

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Abstract: *This study determined buzz marketing and brand performance of pharmaceutical companies in South-South, Nigeria. Data for the study was collected through questionnaire from the sixty (60) respondents, however, fifty four (54) of the distributed copies of questionnaire were valid and used for the analysis. The hypotheses were tested through Spearman Rank Order correlation coefficient. The findings revealed that, there is a significant relationship between buzz marketing and brand performance. A significant and positive relationship also exists between buzz marketing and measures of brand performance. Based on that, the study recommends that, companies should include buzz marketing techniques in their marketing plan so as to make improvements in their brand performance.*

Keywords: *Buzz Marketing, Brand Performance, Brand Awareness, Brand Preference, Brand Reputation*

INTRODUCTION

Buzz Marketing is a viral marketing concept that tries to meet customers who seem to be different, with automated data exchanges as opposed to an organized marketing platform presented by professional advertisers. Buzz's advertising campaigns are designed to be the most historic in history. The advertiser makes the product information available to only a few people in the target audience, and then creates an outstanding oral campaign where consumers are influenced by the placement of those who already know and voluntarily voice the word to their closest friends. This is done by intentionally seeking out close conversations influencers. Rosen (2000) explained that in buzz marketing, people don't only receive information through mass media, but they interact and exchange information. An individual feels more addressed if recommendations are made from his network instead of getting it from a mass media. Cherkoff (2005) gave a nod on this when he asserted that individuals today prefer interacting with the source of the brand and having an experience with the brands instead of only reading about it. More so, people are now known to be in the habit of sharing their experiences (Balter2004).

Being Africa's largest consumer market, Nigeria is seen as the next frontier for pharma after South Africa (Tania, et al 2017). In the midst of the economic downturn that has cast a different light on the prospects of the pharmaceutical industry, Nigeria still offers an attractive opportunity for firms that have realistic expectations together with the ability to tailor creative strategies in the local context that suits patient's journeys.

However, the economic setbacks and the sensitive nature of consumers have made some firms in the industry wonder if robust growth is still attainable. This comes as a result of the low patronage experienced by some firms in the industry. In 2019, Ogundipe and Obinna's report in the Vanguard Newspaper indicates that most pharmaceutical companies are not successful today because of customer's preference on foreign-made drugs over locally made ones. In the report, Pharmatex Company explained how the low performance by brands in the pharmaceutical industry in Nigeria is described as a big threat to the survival of the industry.

According to Yasin and Ozen (2016), despite the increasing level of health-related information available on the internet, it still appears that many health care consumers need assistance in understanding product information as consumers are seen to be confused and sometimes afraid when presented with drugs that are unpopular and yet to be experienced. Delorme (2017) claimed that though TV, radio, newspaper, product leaflets, and in store adverts help consumers in gaining product information, it has limited impact on pharmaceutical brand choices and level of exposure. That notwithstanding, studies (Nigam, 2012; Mehran et al 2013; Lawrence, 2014; Olanye & Onobrakpeya, 2017) have shown how buzz marketing strategy is improving brand performance if properly applied. This however, has not ruled out the evidence of poorly performed pharmaceutical companies despite having some of these firms engaging the strategy. This could be a failure that is hinged on treading on the wrong part in creating and disseminating buzz campaigns into online networks. The prevalent low performance may also not be unconnected with firm's inability to inculcate buzz marketing strategy in their marketing plan. These assumptions are based on the conviction that buzz marketing help firms stand out even in fierce competition as it is effective in creating awareness, building interest and triggering the adoption of products as pointed out by Granata & Scoozzeze (2017). Buzz marketing help customers get information about a brand even from his family and close associates. This builds trust and subsequently adoption of products. Based on the foregoing, the study sought to find out the association between buzz marketing techniques and brand performance of pharmaceutical companies in South-South, Nigeria.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Theoretical Foundation

This study is based on **The Uses and Gratifications Theory (U&G Theory)**

This theory was developed by Elihu Katz and Jay Blumler in 1974. It focuses on interactive communication as emphasis is laid on the sender and the message. This theory is used to understand different media ranging from newspaper to internet, and motivations for using a media. It focuses on individual's use and choice of media (Blumler & Katz, 1974), it sees individuals as purposive and active, and that they select media basis of their needs. It seeks to know the reason behind people's attention to media contents and what they derive from it. The theory shows that motivations influence individual behavioral intention through attitude (Miller & Berry, 1998), and consumer needs and motivations induces message virility (Jensen, 2011). When individuals are faced with different media choices, they tend to choose the ones that gratify their needs the best, especially for core needs like getting information, entertainment, and social interactions. Today, the significance of uses and gratifications theory is made bare by the appearance of computer-mediated communication.

When there is a good match between media and content to motivation, consumer needs and interest can be met better since the traits of individuals have an influence on their habits of media use as well as attitudes and expectations about the benefits presented by the media. Blumler and Katz, 1974 emphasized that this is a determinant of media choice and consumption. The understanding of the motivations that drives consumer behaviors will help marketers seek effective messages that can please targeted or desired motivations and thereby influence forwarding behaviors that will birth positive brand performance on the long run, given that the content of the viral marketing campaigns may likely encourage transmission and consumers may vary in their motivations to pass on buzz marketing campaigns.

Conceptual Review

Concept of Buzz Marketing

Buzz Marketing is a promotional tool aimed at increasing verbal communication through technology, in personal conversations or in large collaborations on social media. According to WOMMA (2005) buzz marketing is defined as “Using high entertainment or news to get people to talk about your product”. Compared to traditional advertising, buzz marketing has emerged as a more efficient and less expensive tool in this connection period (Ahuja et al., 2007). Conducted orally (WOM), buzz marketing involves a process in which actions and attitudes are influenced by others. By using technology in a creative manner, people are drawn into talking, sharing, and spreading messages about brands to the extent of making such messages to be viewed as fascinating, entertaining, and even newsworthy. This tool makes the communication appear dramatically different from the norm and as it turns out to be an amusing experience to share. With this, creating interesting, enjoyable, intelligent and catchy messages that will make WOM spread quickly so as to create a buzz becomes vital. According to Mohr (2007), smart marketing and digital tools are required if messages must go viral. While buzz marketing can primarily be used for any brand, having something exciting to start with will help greatly. In a case where a brand is truly innovative, visible, original, well connected to target audience, there will automatically be a need to talk about it.

Buzz marketing can also be defined as “a technique formerly known as street marketing which aims at promoting products in a bid to initiate a word of mouth while focusing on a large population” (Chebli & Gharbi, 2013). Buzz marketing is seen to be a good alternative to war trust in a world where a growing number of consumers are beginning to belittle the regular advertisements. According to Belyh (2015), buzz marketing recently appeared on the internet and has gotten an exponential spread. It is hinged on verbal exchange making a buzz around a product or a happening (Bhasin, 2020), and permits fast diffusion and mass information that will in this way be transferred by consumers. It can also be viewed as a point of basic communication, that helps in drawing or inducing the attention of the target audience and completely including potential consumers and turning them into actors of the brand themselves.

Arminen (2010) argued that Buzz marketing has not gotten a clear definition like word-of-mouth marketing. He however explained that it is “infectious chatter; genuine, street-level excitement about a hot new person, place or thing”. Fundamentally, buzz marketing involves uncommon methods of marketing that ushers in good results with little input. Most importantly, it demands that a marketer employs more creativity, energy, and time as against the use of money. This calls for the need to study and know the behavior of customers, in order to design successful

campaigns, effectively reach the target audience, and satisfy the needs of customers (O'Leary & Sheehan, 2008). For buzz marketers, it is evident that following the core competencies of the organization so as to deliver clear messages to customers is vital. They strive for good results and business associations instead of the big sales immediately expected by traditional marketers. They believe that each new association may eventually lead to several sales. The unique aspect of buzz marketing is that, instead of forcing messages and products to the audience, they are provided with knowledge, guide, and ideas. This makes the customers desire the campaigns. Sometimes buzz marketing does not even look like marketing to customers since they experience no irritation by it.

According to Thomas (2004), buzz marketing can be defined as “the amplification of initial marketing efforts by third parties through their passive or active influence”. The third parties are not just consumers but also media outlets among others. Kraus et al., (2010) made clarifications on the opportunities media offer for buzz marketers by revealing that “buzz is not only initiated by media campaigns; media coverage itself is a part of buzz. In the ideal case, a cleverly designed buzz marketing action is covered by the media and further distributed at no costs for the marketer”. Buzz marketing makes conversations unique and different from everyday conversation by commercializing WOM communications.

Buzz marketing can also be viewed as a conscious marketing activity geared towards reaching consumers directly, apparently unintentional manner, and bringing positive relationship with the offering. It is considered in the text of the article as “a skilled and well-thought-out interpersonal relationship” (Rosen, 2008). When that relationship is artfully used, it serves as a powerful tool for communication between the organization and its audience, regardless of its integrity and its power or its current status. The basis of buzz marketing is to disseminate information based on your contacts and thus be known as reliable, accurate and validated as products recommended by family and friends are trustworthy and may be tested. When a trustworthy person that is well known sends a message, there is every tendency for such messages to be more effective compared to other types of advertising.

Concept of Brand Performance

Going by studies that have been carried out in the field of marketing, it is seen that “performance is often used as a dependent variable in most marketing literature” (Tran Quan Ha Minh, 2006). The brand performance can be seen as a factor that is in line with the evaluation of the success of a brand, this can assist brands achieve their goals in the market place. The performance of a brand points out how successful a brand is in the marketplace and seeks to evaluate the strategic successes of a brand (Kapferer, 1997). It was stressed that brand performance describes how well the product or service meets customers' more functional needs. In other words, the performance of a brand is seen in terms of meeting the primary or basic need of the customers. In reality, brands may be on top notch in terms of functionality in the marketplace, and still be lagging behind when returns are expected. These returns can be in the form of customer satisfaction, brand preference, sales volume, return on investment (ROI), profitability etc. Some researchers (Baldauf et al., 2003) looked at the performance of brand in two parts. They are; the brand market performance and brand profitability performance. The brand profitability performance is an exposition of the financial share of a brand in relation with the retailing profits. This is evaluated using the profit and the margin of profit. On the other hand, brand market performance considers the market demands and assesses areas such as sale levels and market share.

The concept “brand” is often seen to have a distinct identification. On one part it is seen as a name, a trademark, a symbol, a logo, or an identity, and at the other part, brand includes both tangible and intangible attributes of an organization (Prasad & Dev, 2000). According to Franzen and Bouwman (2001), “via branding, a product’s functional and sentimental values are effectively encoded in customers’ perceptions”. While some brands meet or exceed their functional expectations, for one reason or the other, negative sentiments might becloud the customers’ sense of judgment regarding the functional capabilities of a brand.

According to Chaudhuri, and Moris (2001), brand performance is the result of desirability and profitability in a brand. For a brand to be termed successful, customers need to long for or desire to possess a brand in a manner that enables the brand to generate revenue in excess of its expenses. Brand performance shows the strength of a brand in the market and is also defined as the relative measurement of the success of a brand in the marketplace (O’Cass & Weerawardena, 2010). It is mirrored in its attainment of a firm’s strategy and goals. This can be done through its market share, sales growth or profitability. With this a brand is termed weak when it doesn’t achieve its set objective and strong when objectives are met. It is known that no two firms can have the same brand goals and objectives in a particular period of time, and objectives of a firm can also change from time to time. It can be brand awareness at one point, and top of mind or brand loyalty at another time. For example, ‘Brand A’ might be gaining awareness while ‘Brand B’ will be recording massive number of loyal customers. The details here doesn’t make ‘Brand A’ a failure if the objective is to gain awareness at that period of time.

Luu (2017) revealed that “Brand performance is reflected in its attainment of organizational strategy and goals as it can be measured through its sales growth, profitability, and market share”. This shows that brand performance involves how a brand succeeds in the marketplace financially and non-financially. On their part, Styles and Ambler (1997) looked at the performance of a brand as comprising functional, psychological and economic benefits for customers. They stressed that economic metrics alone shows inadequacy for the construct “brand performance”. In other words, brand performance shows how a brand financially and non-financially succeeds in the marketplace. Overwhelmed with myriads of choices, customers tend to fall back on brands that give them extra satisfaction.

Adding to the measures of brand performance established by academics, commercial research organizations have also come up with brand performance models on the basis of financial performance measures like return on investment and revenue employed by Forbes (Badenhausen, 2017). When comparing brands with competitors, some researchers emphasized on the efficacy of consumer-based measures because of its accuracy in getting consumers opinions about when compared against financial data of that brand. An example of this can be seen when Johansson et al (2012) exposed how consumer-based brand equity outperform financially-based brand performance measures in determining the performance of GBs in the financial crisis of 2008. According to Rust et al (2004), as far as marketing productivity is concerned, financial metrics have proven to be inadequate. This birthed and increased the use of non-financial metrics. It was further seen that academic studies (e.g. De Chernatony et al 2004, Dawes 2009; Çifci, et al 2016; Dawes 2009) and commercial research organizations (e.g. EquiTrend, Brand Asset Valuator, the Global Brand Simplicity Index and the Future Brand,) advocate consumer-based brand performance measures. This study focused on brand awareness, brand preference, and brand reputation as the measures of brand performance.

Brand Awareness

Hussein (2012) opined that “brand awareness is the probability that consumers recognize the existence and availability of a company’s product or services”. It goes beyond information on the existence of products, and extends to its availability as well. Going further, Haughey (2020) defined brand awareness as “the level of familiarity a target audience has with a company’s brand, the knowledge they have of their business, products and values. It is expressed as a force that drives the entire narrative of a brand which entails a company’s logo, slogan, color, messaging, voice etc.

Brand awareness is seen to have a super definition that embraces brand acquaintance and recall of information and ideas about a brand. Simply put, the brand awareness involves a brand taking a useful place in the minds of the consumers when compared among competitors’ brands. It can be referred to “a marketing term that describes the degree of consumer recognition of a product by its name” (Kopp, 2020). The creation of brand awareness helps in the promotion of new products and also in the revival of older ones, since it has the power of holding consumers to acknowledge a brand in the midst of other brands (Horsfall & Ubaka, 2018). The extent of a brand’s awareness may well be included as the quality that differentiates a product from that of competitors. Brand awareness also refers to the capacity of consumers to recognize or remember a brand. It can also be defined as “the probability that, consumers are familiar about the availability and accessibility of a company’s product and service” (Malik, et al., 2013). It determines purchase decision because customers make purchase decision on the bases of the brands in there evoke as well as consideration set. According to Lee, et al (2008), “brand awareness is seen as a prerequisite of peoples’ buying decisions”. It is known that what an individual is aware of is what he thinks of. A company’s successful brand awareness indicates a good reputation and acceptability of the brand in the marketplace (Gustafson & Chabot (2007). While purchasing a product, brand awareness plays an important role since it has control on perceived risk evaluation of consumers as well as the extent of assurance about the purchase decision. While making a purchase decision, there must be a consideration of a brand, without a consideration, there won’t be anything to choose (Baker W, J, & Nedungadi, 1996).

Brand Preference

According to Jin and Weber (2013), brand preference as “the extent to which the customer favors the designed service provided by his or her present company, in comparison to the designated service provided by other companies in his or her consideration set”. In highly competitive businesses, brand preference is seem to be indispensable. For a business to stand out its brands must be preferred among others else customers might not repeat a purchase. The indispensable nature of brand preference has made practitioners and researchers to have a spotlight on the concept. Brands are distinguishing features of products, and they are important to individuals buying the product. A product’s functional value might satisfy the customers but if the brand is not their favorite, they may not consider buying the product again (Steenkamp, et al., 2003).

According to Kalyanasundaram and Sangeetha (2019), Brand preference “means the brand is accepted and preferred over other in the same product category”. This begins with a customer agreeing to try out a product, and afterwards experiences satisfaction after a trial purchase, since

a product can actually be accepted at the beginning, and not preferred in the long run when expectations are not met. For this, marketers develop strategies to raise the likelihood that a brand will be activated from the memories of consumers and be added to the consumer's consideration set also, since he is likely to have a competitive edge in a market when a number of customers have develop preference for its brand.

“Brand preference is a measure of brand loyalty in which a consumer will choose a particular brand in the presence of competing brands, but will accept substitutes if that brand is not available (Amadi & Ezekiel, 2013). This is a selective demand for a company's brand instead of those of competitors. It is the degree to which consumers prefer one brand over another, and the percentage of people who profess a certain brand is their choice. It “represents which brands are preferred under the assumption of equality of price and availability” (Hellier, et al 2003).

Brand Reputation

Zeithaml (1988) described the reputation of a brand's name as an extrinsic cue that is a feature related to the product. This however does not include the physical composition of the product. Brand reputation changes always, and it is majorly produced by the flow of information from one customer to another. With this flow, Companies and brands having good reputations will likely attract more customers , but a positive reputation can be lost and replaced by a negative one if it fails to accomplish its marketing signals repeatedly (Herbig & Milewicz 1994).

Academics and practitioners believes in the increasingly importance of brand reputation. A positive reputation must be developed if brands must be successful (Herbig & Milewicz, 1995). Brand names can be seen as storehouses for firm's reputation since a good performance on one product can often be transferred to another product through the brand name (Moorthy, 1985). Reputation has become a very popular concept in the business world. This involves whether to believe a company's claims about its brands. According to Herbig (1997), Reputation is “the estimation of the consistency over time of an attribute of an entity”. A reputable brand is a strong asset to a company; it brings a high degree of loyalty and assurance of stable future sales. It is also a source of demand and lasting attractiveness since the image of superiority and added value is a justification of a premium price. Aperia, (2004) noted that “for brands with high reputation, the ultimate goal must be to strengthen their image, or more specifically, to examine which key traits the loyal consumers attribute to the brand, and unhealthy brands with low reputation need to focus on fixing image problems”. From the company's perspective, brand reputation remains a long central construct in marketing, it measures the attachment a customer has for a brand. It shows the likelihood of a customer switching to another brand, especially when there are changes in the features and price of a product. (Aaker, 1991).

Buzz Marketing and Brand Performance

Several studies (Greg, 2004; Ahuja, Michels, Walker, and Weissbuch, 2007; Baker 2011; Luo and Zhang, 2013; Belyn, 2015 ;) have exposed the association that exists between buzz marketing and brand performance. Buzz marketing has been identified to help in generating large number of contacts even at the initial stage of implementation. This easy flow is possible because contacts are quickly given by actor-buzz individuals who decide to disseminate messages to recipients with same interest. In a study carried out in Tunisia by Chebli L., and Gharbi A.

(2013) on, “the impact of the effectiveness of a buzz marketing campaign on the image, awareness and purchasing decision: the moderating role of involvement”, it was found that there is a positive association between buzz marketing and brand performance. The authors exposed the effectiveness of buzz marketing and added that, “because of its efficiency, buzz marketing offers direct stimuli, sensory renewal, a direct response to a need and the production of meaning, leading to a positive interaction between the consumer and the brand”; a positive association between buzz marketing and brand image was identified. One of their bearings was gotten from an argument made by Carl (2006) who holds that the target individual make choices on the brands and messages they want to disseminate themselves. They are said to also make use of means that help in spreading messages. In other words, individuals can seek to accept or reject a message. This will be decisive for the future of the brand (Creamer, 2007). For this, organizations are required to come up with good buzz if the image of the brand must be promoted. They also brought the positive association buzz marketing has with brand awareness to the fore. Going further they disclosed that one of the best strategies that can be used to approach customers directly, engage them, and establish an association with them is buzz marketing strategy. Buzz they say, is targeted at getting customers surprised, arousing their curiosity, and getting them talk about the brand beyond their action. According to Rosen (2000), this directly generates traffic around a brand. Based on the literature, the study proposed that;

Ho₁: There is no significant association between buzz marketing and brand awareness.

Ho₂: There is no significant association between buzz marketing and brand preference.

Ho₃: There is no significant association between buzz marketing and brand reputation.

METHODOLOGY

This study adopted correlational research design. The population of the study comprised all pharmaceutical companies, specifically the four (4) quoted pharmaceutical companies in the South-South region of Nigeria quoted in the Nigerian Stock Exchange report in 2019. They are Glaxosmithkline Plc with staff strength of 125, Fidson Plc with staff strength of 418, Nigeria-German Chemicals Plc with staff strength of 166, and Ekocorp Plc with staff strength of 74. Focus was placed on the companies listed in Nigeria Stock Exchange (NSE) because being listed comes with a higher public profile as well as visibility that are triggered by the media, investors, and increased coverage from researchers. The study used the purposive sampling technique to select fifteen (15) elements from marketing, sales and customer service departments of each firm. These were seen as the elements in a better position to provide the necessary research information for the study. From computations, the number gotten was sixty (60). This served as the sample units (the respondents) that participated in the study. However, from the sixty (60) questionnaires distributed, fifty four (54) representing 90% were returned, valid and used for the analysis, while six (6) representing 10% were not returned. A validity test that showed the level of capability of a scale to determine the proposed idea, and the degree to which a measurement corresponds to the construct that it was supposed to measure was carried out and the methodology and findings of this study were justified through a reliability test. The reliability analysis in Table 2.2 below shows that the variables have a Cronbach alpha value of ≥ 0.7 which is accepted as a reliable measure (Nunnally, 1978). Therefore, it would be acceptable for a research tool to measure research variables. With this, it was agreed that the instrument for the research measured appropriately the variables of the study.

Table 1: Result of Reliability Analysis

Variable	Cronbach's Alpha
Buzz Marketing	0.857
Brand Awareness	0.910
Brand Preference	0.828
Brand Reputation	0.877

Source: SPSS 21.0 Output (based on 2020 field survey data)

HYPOTHESES TESTING AND RESULT

The data collected for the study were analyzed and the hypotheses were tested using Spearman Rank Order correlation coefficient with the use of the Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS Version 22.0) was employed to test the hypotheses of the study.

Decision Rule

If the Significant/Probability Value (PV)<0.05 (Level of Significance) = Reject the null and Conclude Significant Association. If the Significance Probability value (PV)>0.05(Level of Significance) = Accept the null and Conclude Insignificant association:

Table 2: Association between Buzz Marketing and Brand Awareness

H0₁: There is no significant association between buzz marketing and brand awareness

Correlations			Buzz Marketing	Brand Awareness
Spearman's rho	Buzz Marketing	Correlation Coefficient	1.000	.818**
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.	.000
		N	54	54
	Brand Awareness	Correlation Coefficient	.818**	1.000
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.
		N	54	54

Source: SPSS V. 22.0 printout (based on field 2020).

Table 2 shows that Spearman's correlation coefficient (r) = .818**, this value is high, revealing that there is a strong association between buzz marketing and brand awareness. The positive sign of the correlation coefficient shows a positive association exists between both variables. That means an increase in Buzz Marketing by the pharmaceutical companies is accompanied with an increase in Brand Awareness. Probability/significant value (PV) is $0.000 < 0.05$ level of significance, consequently, the researcher rejects the null hypothesis and concludes that there is a significant association between Buzz Marketing and Brand Awareness.

Table 3: Association between Buzz Marketing and Brand Preference

H₀₂: There is no significant association between buzz marketing and brand preference.

Correlations

			Buzz Marketing	Brand Preference
Spearman's rho	Buzz Marketing	Correlation Coefficient	1.000	.722**
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.	.000
		N	54	54
	Brand Preference	Correlation Coefficient	.722**	1.000
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.
		N	54	54

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

Source: SPSS V. 22.0 printout (based on field 2020).

Table 3 shows that Spearman's correlation coefficient ($r = .722^{**}$), this value is high, revealing that there is a strong association between Buzz Marketing and Brand Preference. The positive sign of the correlation coefficient shows a positive association exists between both variables. That means an increase in Buzz Marketing by the pharmaceutical companies is accompanied with an increase in Brand Preference. Probability/significant value (PV) is $0.000 < 0.05$ level of significance, consequently, the researcher rejects the null hypothesis.

Table 4: Association between Buzz Marketing and Brand Reputation

Correlations

			Buzz Marketing	Brand Reputation
Spearman's rho	Buzz Marketing	Correlation Coefficient	1.000	.719**
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.	.000
		N	54	54
	Brand Reputation	Correlation Coefficient	.719**	1.000
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.
		N	54	54

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

Source: SPSS V. 22.0 printout (based on field 2020).

Table 4 shows that Spearman's correlation coefficient ($r = .719^{**}$), this value is high, revealing that there is a strong association between buzz marketing and brand reputation. The positive sign of the correlation coefficient shows a positive association exists between both variables. That means an increase in Buzz Marketing by the pharmaceutical companies is accompanied with an increase in Brand Reputation. Probability/significant value (PV) is $0.000 < 0.05$ level of significance, consequently, the researcher rejects the null hypothesis and concludes that there is a there is a significant association between buzz marketing and brand reputation.

Discussion of Findings

This study found that, there is a positive and significant association between buzz marketing and brand performance. This finding is corroborated in Chebli and Gharbi's (2013) work on "the impact of the effectiveness of a buzz marketing campaign on the image, awareness and purchasing decision: the moderating role of involvement". The authors exposed the effectiveness of buzz marketing and added that "because of its efficiency, buzz marketing offers direct stimuli, sensory renewal, a direct response to a need and the production of meaning, leading to a positive interaction between the consumer and the brand". One of their bearing was gotten from an argument made by Walter (2006) who holds that the target individual make choices on the brands and messages they want to disseminate themselves. They are said to also make use of means that help in spreading messages. On his part, Bhasin (2020) also agreed that apart from positives that come from the low cost associated with buzz marketing; it also helps in creating awareness since it is one of the best ways to reach customers. When information about a brand spreads quickly, many customers get exposed to the brand and the result is a rise in the sale of the brand. This makes feedback to be gotten quickly and improvements made where required so as to create the next generation of that brand.

Conclusion and Recommendations

The study concludes that, there is a significant relationship between buzz marketing and brand performance. A significant and positive relationship also exists between buzz marketing and measures of brand performance. Based on that, the study recommends that, companies should include buzz marketing techniques in their marketing plan so as to make improvements in their brand performance.

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Olfactory Marketing Strategy and Customer Engagement in Fast food Restaurants in Rivers State

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Abstract: *The purpose of this study was to investigate the extent to which olfactory marketing strategy relates to customers' engagement in fast food restaurants in Rivers State. The problem which calls for this study was the failure of fast food restaurants managements in Rivers State to engage their customers through the use of olfactory cues such as utilizing the aroma emanating from their kitchen as sensory cue to attract customers' patronage. One marketing strategy that addresses the sense of smell is the olfactory marketing strategy. Hence, this study suggested olfactory marketing strategy as a way out of these challenges. The population of the study was made up of all the customers of registered and operational fast food restaurants in Rivers State which was noted to be an infinite population. Using Godden formula for sampling infinite population, we generated a sample size of 384 customers which serves as our data base. Three hundred fifty five (355) copies of questionnaire out of the distributed 384 were valid and used for the study. The data collection instruments were validated through expert checking while Cronbach Alpha Test was used to check for its reliability. The study utilized a quantitative research design method, and Pearson moment correlation coefficient was used to test the earlier stated hypotheses. The study found that olfactory marketing strategy has significant positive relationships with the measures of customer engagement (customer patronage, repeat purchase, and referral). The study concludes that olfactory marketing strategies significantly influences customers' engagement in fast food restaurants. Therefore, this study recommends that management of fast food restaurants should position their kitchen at a strategic location where the aroma emanating from the kitchen can serve as an olfactory cue to customers and passerby, whereby encouraging them to engage with fast food restaurant. Also, that management of the fast food restaurants should adopt the use of air fresheners and other signature scents to generate a scented environment for the restaurant which soothes and appeals to customers' emotions.*

Keywords: *Customer Engagement, Olfactory Marketing Strategy*

1.1 Introduction

Human beings as a social animal engage and interact with one another in order to survive. The philosopher Martin Heidegger (1927/1996 as cited in Hatzithomas et al., 2016) asserts that the human existence takes place through the ongoing, active and practical engagement with other people, things and the world as a whole; and to be human is to be engaged with other beings in the world. This vital role which engagement has played in human consciousness and life has attracted the interest of academic scholars from diverse disciplines (Hollebeek, 2011). Even businesses live to generate customers' engagement since their money pays the bills for the organization. Customer engagement is very vital for business survival because it enables them to recoup return on investment and profit. It is not just beneficial to businesses alone but to the government and the society at large since the profit generated from customers engagement by

businesses enables them pay their taxes which the government then use to execute social projects such as road construction, building of hospitals and other social amenities that benefits the society at large. Fast food restaurants in Port Harcourt are not left out because they as well clamor for customer engagement.

Customers' engagement according to McEachern (2019) is all about interactions between your customer and your brand. Paul Greenberg defines customer engagement as the ongoing interactions between company and customer, offered by the company, chosen by the customer (Hussain, 2019). While Peterson (2016) defines customer engagement as an estimate of the degree and depth of visitor interaction against a clearly defined set of goals. There are several marketing strategies which fast food restaurants in Rivers State could use to generate customers engagement. This study considers the use of olfactory marketing strategy, and how this strategy could help the fast food management in Rivers State to generate customers' engagement. Olfactory marketing according to Winter (2012) is defined as the use of a scent in a particular environment to stimulate the senses of a person. Scented environments according to Minsky (2018) have been proven to reduce errors in office workers; enhance how product quality is being perceived; improve intention to purchase, average unit of sales, and time duration of a visit to a retail store or stay among consumers; and enhance the willingness of buyers to pay more for a product.

Several studies on olfactory marketing (Fiore et al., 2000; Chebat & Michon, 2003; Parsons, 2009; Fenko & Loock, 2014) considers the use fragrance to generate a scented environment in order to appeal to customers emotions, but within the context of Rivers State in Nigeria, there exist scarce empirical research work which dwells on utilizing the aroma emanating from the kitchen of fast food restaurants as an olfactory cue to engage customers' patronage rather than just fragrance to appeal to the sense of smell of the customers. This creates a lacuna in literature which this study tries to empirically fill.

1.2 Aim of the Study

The aim of the study was to empirically investigate the extent of relationship between olfactory marketing strategies and customers engagement in fast food restaurants in Rivers state.

1.3 Research Question

Based on the aim of the study, the following research question was formulated:

1. To what extent does olfactory marketing strategy relates to customers engagement in fast food restaurants in Rivers state?

1.4 Research Hypotheses

Ho1: There is no significant relationship between olfactory marketing strategy and customer patronage in fast food restaurants in Rivers state.

Ho2: There is no significant relationship between olfactory marketing strategy and repeat purchase in fast food restaurants in Rivers state.

Ho3: There is no significant relationship between olfactory marketing strategy and referral in fast food restaurants in Rivers state.

2.0 Review of Related Literature

2.1 Theoretical Foundation

The theoretical underpinning of this study is the Stimuli, Organism and Response Model by Mehrabian and Russell (1974) which proves how an individual responds to environmental stimulus, and this theory was adopted from the environmental psychology theory. Environmental psychology states that emotional response to the environment moderates the relationship between the environment and one's behavior (Mehrabian & Russell, 1974; Wu, et al., 2008). The Stimulus-Organism-Response (S-O-R) illustrates how the environment serves as stimulus (S), which is made up of a group of signals that causes an individual (O) to internally evaluate the cues and then generate a response (R) (Mehrabian & Russell, 1974).

We employ the S-O-R model by Mehrabian & Russell (1974) because it better explain that organisms such as the customers responds or behaves in a certain way such as engaging with a fast food restaurant based on the stimulus they come in contact with which in our case is the aroma emanating from the fast food restaurants kitchen (olfactory cue). This model of S-O-R proves that customers' emotions play a vital role in their response to the exposed cues and stimulus from the environment (Mowen & Minor, 2002). Donovan (1982, as cited in Hetharie et al., 2019) claims that this model also suggests that conscious and unconscious perceptions and environmental interpretations influence what someone feels.

2.2 Olfactory Marketing Strategy

Olfactory marketing looks at the use of the sense of smell to appeal to the customers of fast food restaurant to encourage them to engage with the business. You can close your eyes, cover your ears, refrain from touch, and reject taste, but smell is a part of the air we breathe. (Lindström, 2005). Stevens (2006, cited in Bradford & Desrochers, 2009) argues that "each person breathes around 20,000 times a day being able to recognize 10,000 different scents, according to the Sense of Smell Institute, which makes that each time a person breathes, creates an opportunity to feel the scent of some type of product.

Olfactory marketing could be seen as scent marketing and according to Winter (2012) is defined as "the use of a scent in a particular environment to stimulate the senses of a person." While Bradford and Desrochers (2009) define olfactory marketing as ambient scents which are defined as general odors that do not emanate from a product but are present as part of the retail environment. Scentair (n.d.) defined it as the use of a strategically chosen fragrance diffused at customer touch points and the right fragrance and strategy will communicate a clear, likable brand identity. While Marques (2013) defined olfactory marketing as using scents within in a business to alter the mood or improve the experience of both customers and employees. The views of theses authors about olfactory definition is limited to artificial smell alone (ambient fragrance) but there exists natural smell (such as aroma from the kitchen) when it comes to fast food restaurants which could be used as a sensory cue to attract customers. Rieunier (2000) supports the fact that the components of olfactory factor include natural and artificial smells. Within the fast food restaurants, natural smells looks at good aroma from the fries and cooking emanating from the kitchen. This aroma in most cases is appealing and stimulates the customers of these fast food restaurants or food vendors to engage in impulse purchase, since most of the customers will be tempted to have a taste of the food with the aroma. Within the context of Rivers state, a good example of this is the sweet smelling aroma of baked

bread emanating from a nearby bakery, or the sweet smelling aroma of a tang soup coming out of a restaurant. These natural aromas can be used as an olfactory strategy to attract customers but fast food restaurants in Rivers state have failed to use this as a sensory marketing strategy, thereby creating a gap.

Talking about the artificial smell, we are looking at a pleasant scented environment and signature scents which businesses use as a means of making the ambient of their business premises to be inviting. Most businesses with different branches use a particular signature scent in their business premises to distinguish their stores from that of competitors. Businesses and marketers started using scent when they discovered the impact smell has on our brain functioning. According to Prachi (2017), Pam Scholder Ellen, a marketing professor at Georgia State University points out that in the case of scent marketing the 'brain responds before you think' and since smell generates 75% of emotions, this powerful quality combined with not having to bypass a logical brain makes scent a strong tool in terms of marketing. Marketers today have discovered the important role scent can play in appealing to customers. That is why Bradford and Desrochers (2009) states that over the last few years consumers have been increasingly influenced by scents as marketers become more aware of the potential usefulness of this sense.

More and more businesses are looking up to utilizing scent to appeal to their customers and distinguish their business from that of competitors. Hence, Dowdey (2008) asserts that retailers, hotels, and restaurants are investing in the hope that distinctive, carefully considered smells will help amplify consumer spending, attract customers, and create memorable brands. To prove how powerful scent and odor is, the Sense of Smell Institute states that the average human being is able to recognize approximately 10,000 different odors, because first, smell is one of our most primal and deeply rooted senses and functions as our chemical alert system (Bradford & Desrochers, 2009). When a person smells something, the odor receptors produce an immediate, instinctive reaction (Vlahos, 2007; Zaltman, 2003).

"The sense of smell is considered to be the most closely related to emotional reactions (Bradford & Desrochers, 2009) and the olfactory bulb is directly connected to the limbic system in the brain, which is the system related to immediate emotion in humans (Wilkie, 1995), while 75% of emotions are generated by smell (Bell & Bell, 2007)." Hence smell whether pleasing or bad from marketing perspective has an instant influence on consumers' emotion and determines if they buy or not. That is why Bradford and Desrochers (2009) argues that smell has an instantaneous good or bad effect on our emotional state which, as some research has shown, ultimately affects our shopping and spending behavior.

Considering how marketers utilize scent as a strategy to lure customer, one could see it from three forms according to Bradford and Desrochers (2009) and these include marketers scent, product scent and ambient scent. While Scentair (n.d.) listed ambient scent and scent branding as the two types of scent marketing strategies. The marketer scent is a sort of promotional technique organizations use on their newly produced goods and could be perceived on new products such as brand new cars from dealers, brand new shoes, brand new clothes etcetera each producer with his or her unique scent to differentiate his product from competition. Scentair (n.d.) saw this as scent branding whereby a company uses a particular scent to differentiate its product from that of competitors where by customers without seeing the company logo but perceives the scent of the product will recall its brand name. And this is because memories about scent are time resistant and can be easy to recall.

The next strategy marketers uses when it comes to scent is product scent. In this strategy, the product sold is the scent itself. Bradford and Desrochers (2009) suggests that this category includes perfumes, air fresheners, and similar items and in addition, Duncan (2007) also said that consumers can purchase small scent-dispensing machines to disperse favorable scents in their homes, cars, or offices to disguise odors or to create a preferred scent. Looking at Ambient scent, Bradford and Desrochers (2009) asserts that it is a general odor which does not emanate from a product but is present as part of the retail environment. Scentair (n.d.) went ahead to explain that ambient scenting with a scent marketing system allows you to direct customers in a gentle yet impactful way, and by putting customers in the right mindset, you can enhance customer experience and help to mitigate stress and anxiety during tough customer interactions.

The better part of sensory marketing strategies such as the use of smell (olfactory) is that customers are ignorant of the fact that these strategies are being used as a mechanism to lure them to engage with the business concern. That is why Longley (2019) states that if the smell of pumpkin spices in October makes you think of Starbucks, it's no accident. Also, Krishna (2011) added that many upscale hotel chains have adopted signature scents with the hope that the scents will helps their customers better remember other features of their hotel that they loved, and bring them back, for instance, the Westin hotel chain has the signature scent of white tea with geranium and Freesia.

Observing the great impact smell has on customers have caused several fast food restaurants in Port Harcourt to position their kitchen at strategic points close to the walk way where the aroma from their fries and bakery will entice the passerby to branch and patronize the business. These aromas in most cases remembers passerby of hunger and the need to eat at that time. Next to be discussed is the sensory marketing strategy of taste which is termed gustative marketing strategy.

2.3 Concept of Customers Engagement

Engagement and interactions are key attributes of humans, who as a social animal engage and interact with one another in order to survive. Martin Heidegger (1996 cited in Hatzithomas et al., 2016) states that the human existence takes place through the ongoing, active and practical engagement with other people, things and the world as a whole; and to be human is to be engaged with other beings in the world. This vital role which engagement has played in human consciousness and life has attracted the interest of academic scholars from diverse disciplines (Hollebeek, 2011).

Paul Greenberg defines customer engagement as the ongoing interactions between company and customer, offered by the company, chosen by the customer (Hussain, 2019). While McEachern (2019) saw customers' engagement as the interactions between your customer and your brand. Peterson (2016) on his own account defined customer engagement as an estimate of the degree and depth of visitor interaction against a clearly defined set of goals. From the definitions above, the key thing about customer engagement is the interaction between the business and the customer. Therefore, in this study we align with the definition given by McEachern (2019) and define customer engagement as customers' interaction with a business concern such as the fast food restaurant.

2.4 Measures of Customers Engagement

Measures have been developed for customer engagement in several studies. In the work of Venkatesan and Bowers (2018), they measured offline customer engagement using word-of-mouth referral, reviews and referrals. Solomon (2015) used customer loyalty, customer patronage, customer based profit and customer ambassadorship for your brand as measures of customer engagement. Barbier (2019) measured customer engagement with: sum of a customer's product usage, involvement with services, feelings towards brand, and repeat purchase. In this study, we selected customer patronage, repeat purchase and referral as our measures for customer engagement due to their relevance to our study variable within the offline context of customer engagement in fast food restaurant. Defining our customer engagement variable based on the context of our study which is offline customer engagement with fast food restaurants is in line with Brodie et al. (2011b); Dessart et al. (2016) who argues that defining customer engagement should be based on the context of usage.

2.4.1 Customer Patronage

There has been wide study about consumer behaviors within and outside marketing discipline. One of the major attribute of consumer behavior is patronage. Customer patronage according to Simons (2016) is the support or approval made available by customers with regards to a specific brand. While Raji et al. (2020) states that patronage could be assumed to mean the material aid and motivation offered by a patron, in this case the patron could be seen to be a customer in an exchange transaction. Concise Oxford English Dictionary (2008, as cited in Adiele et al., 2015), asserts that the word customer patronage signifies an individual or thing that uses something or someone who buys goods and services for personal use. In the case of Dictionary.com, patronage was defined as the financial aid or business given to a hotel, store or the like, by clients, customers or paying guests. In this study, we define customer patronage as the act of a customer engaging with a business concern so as to buy a product or services.

2.4.2 Repeat Purchase

There is a popular adage in Igbo land which says that when a road is good, it is being repeatedly used by people, so also a product or services that satisfy consumers' needs and want will be repurchased by them when the need arises. Repeat purchase according to Tardi (2019) can be defined as purchases that customers make to replace the same items or services that they had bought and consumed previously. Leonard (2019) saw repeat purchase as the purchase by a consumer of a same-brand product as bought on a previous occasion. It is where consumers regularly purchase a brand (Hfonfe, 2012). ActiveDemand (2014) defined repeat purchase as the purchase by a consumer of a same-brand product as bought on a previous occasion. While BusinessDictionary.com defines repeat purchase as the buying of a product by a consumer of the same brand name previously bought on another occasion.

Customer engagement can be shown through their repeat purchase behavior. That is why McCandless (2018) states that the rate of repeat purchase gives you a clearer snapshot of the effectiveness of your entire retention strategy because it tells you how many customers are engaged enough to make more than one purchase at your store.

2.4.3 Referral

Referral according to dictionary.cambridge.org is the act of directing someone to a different place or person for information. Tax et al., (1993, as cited in Helm, 2003) defined referral as

informal communication, both positive and negative, between consumers about characteristics of a business and/or its goods and services. Also, Wheeler (1987, as cited in Helm, 2003) defined referral to represents one form of favorable word of mouth that is passed on by a customer about a certain product or service. Arndt (as cited in Wirtz et al., 2013) defined WOM referral as an oral, person to person communication between a perceived non-commercial communication and a receiver concerning a brand, a product or a service, offered for sale. Askoy et al. (2011) argues that there are many reasons why consumers are motivated to engage in WOM activity which a few examples include (a) helping others, (b) sharing experiences and promoting self-concept, and (c) product involvement.

2.5 Olfactory Marketing Strategy and Customers Engagement

The demonstration of various studies (Chebat & Michon, 2003; Fenko & Loock, 2014) have proven that olfactory marketing cues such as scent significantly influences customers perception and engagement in businesses such as the fast food restaurants. Scent is very important when a customer wants to perceives or create the feeling of high quality for a product or services and this increases their spending within such business area (Chebat & Michon, 2003). When consumers' tries perceiving quality for instance, olfactory or scent cues can either have positive influence which means making customers approach the business or negative influence when it puts off the customers (Parsons, 2009).

Most empirical research works have proven the influence of olfactory elements such as smell and scent on consumers' emotions which motivates them to behave in a particular manner such as engaging with businesses in one way or the other. Take for instance the study by Fiore et al. (2000) on "the influence of a product display and environmental fragrancing on approach responses and pleasurable experiences", which utilized a sample size of 109 females randomly assigned to one of four treatment used in the study. Pearson moment correlation coefficient was used to test the stated hypotheses and the study discovered that intangible store elements, such as scents or fragrance, can also stimulate one's emotional state and mental imagination. It discovered that the right fragranced display got the most positive impact on approach responses in terms of customer patronage and pleasurable experiences. This is in tandem with the study of Chebat and Michon (2003) in which they carried out a study on a shopping mall at Montreal in Canada to test the effect of ambient scent. Using Chi-square statistical tool found out that odor directly influences buyers' impression and has a significant impact on customers' behaviors'.

Also, Roschk et al. (2017) conducted an empirical study on a meta-analysis of the atmospheric effects of music, scent, and color on shopping outcomes. With a total sample of 15,621 respondents selected for the study and using student t-test, the results reveal that environments in which scent are present yield higher pleasure, satisfaction, and customer engagement behavioral intention when compared alongside with environments where there is an absence of such conditions. These findings both from Fiore, *et al.* (2000); Chebat and Michon (2003) and Roschk et al. (2017) serves as a pointer to the fact both pleasant aroma from the kitchen of fast food restaurants and the ambient scent of the store environment significantly influences customers emotions and intention to patronize, repeat purchase and refer a fast food restaurant to others.

On the account of Biswan and Szocs, (2019), they investigated the impact of food-related ambient scents on adults and children's food choices/purchases. The research actually evaluated

the impact ambient scents has on customers choices between unhealthy and healthy options A sample size of 61 customers was selected for a field studies at a middle school cafeteria and a supermarket. Pearson correlation was used to analyze data retrieved. And the study discovered that a prolonged exposure of the customer to the cookie ambient scent led to the customers making lower choice for unhealthy options. Whereas a brief exposure to the scent led to the customers making higher choice for unhealthy options. This findings is presumed to be so due to the fact that one sensory modality influences another (cross modal) whereby exposing a customer to a longer scent of indulgent food (scent of unhealthy food like cookies) brings about pleasure in the reward area of the brain which will reduce their desire to actually consume the unhealthy food. Unlike when the exposure was brief which will make their mouth watery and desire the food even if it's unhealthy. Yeomans (2006) argued that this happens because a short term exposure scent that is related to food tends to wet the customers' appetite and induce salivation. For example, Seo et al. (2010) discovered that when exposed to the scent of coffee for three seconds, participants fixated longer on a congruent product images (for example, pictures of coffee) than on the images of products that are incongruent (e.g., wine, beer, milk).

Vega-Gómez et al. (2020) conducted an empirical study aimed at providing empirical answers in relationship to the influence smell has on customers of nonprofit service behavior and evaluation, specifically the customers of González Santana public museum located in Olivenza, Spain. A sample of two hundred and thirty four (234) observations were generated from three rooms in the museum which were filled with scent, separately on two different floors in order to prevent the three scents from mixing up with each other. Using the MANCOVA analysis, the findings showed that scent significantly influences customers' evaluations and perceptions, as well as their intentions to revisit the institution.

In the case of Marques (2013), he conducted an empirical study on the influence which olfactory marketing has on clients' loyalty in Zara home stores in Portugal. The population of the study consists of individuals who resides in Portugal and have bought a product already from the Zara Home store chain. The statistical formula was used to reduce the population size to a sample of 385 individuals, and online survey copies of questionnaire were administered to them. Using Principal component analysis (PCA) the study discovered that Olfactory Marketing has a significant positive influence on both repeat purchase and word of mouth referral."

Table 2.1 Summary of Empirical Studies on Olfactory Marketing Strategy

Author(s)/ Year	Area of Study	Analytical tool used	Findings
Vega-Gómez et al. (2020)	The scent of art. perception, evaluation, & behavior in a museum in response to olfactory marketing.	MANCOVA analysis	Scent significantly influences customers' evaluations and perceptions, as well as their intentions to revisit the institution.
Biswan & Szocs, (2019)	the impact of food-related ambient scents on adults and children's food choices/purchases.	Pearson moment correlation coefficient.	1) A prolonged exposure of the customer to the cookie ambient scent led to the customers making lower choice for unhealthy options. 2) Whereas a brief exposure to the scent led to the customers making higher choice for unhealthy options.

Roschk et al. (2017)	A meta-analysis of the atmospheric effects of music, scent, and color on shopping outcomes.	Student t-test	environments in which scent are present yield higher pleasure, satisfaction, and customer engagement behavioral intention when compared alongside with environments where there is an absence of such conditions.
Marques (2013)	The influence of olfactory marketing on clients' loyalty in Zara home stores in Portugal.	Principal component analysis (PCA)	Olfactory Marketing has a significant positive influence on both repeat purchase and word of mouth referral
Chebat & Michon (2003)	Impact of ambient odors on mall shoppers' emotions, cognition, and spending	Chi-square statistical	Odor directly influences buyers' impression and has a significant impact on customers' behaviors'.
Fiore et al. (2000)	the influence of a product display and environmental fragrancing on approach responses and pleasurable experiences	Pearson moment correlation coefficient.	1) Intangible store elements, such as scents or fragrance stimulate one's emotional state and mental imagination. 2) The right fragranced display got the most positive impact on approach responses in terms of customer patronage and pleasurable experiences.

Source: Researchers Desktop from Literature Review

Based on these assertions and findings, we formulate our next set of hypotheses:

- Ho₁ There is no significant relationship between olfactory marketing strategy and customer patronage in fast food restaurants in Rivers state.
- Ho₂ There is no significant relationship between olfactory marketing strategy and customer repeat purchase in fast food restaurants in Rivers state.
- Ho₃ There is no significant relationship between olfactory marketing strategy and customer referral in fast food restaurants in Rivers state.

2.6 Operational Conceptual Framework

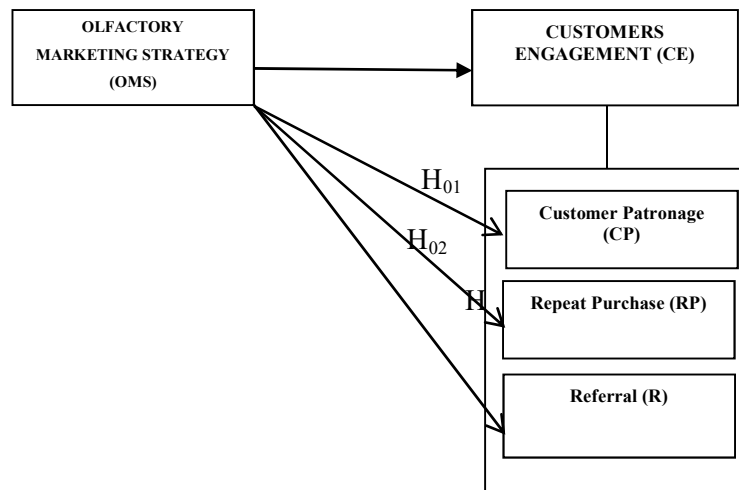


Figure 2.1: Operational Conceptual Framework for the Relationship between Olfactory Marketing Strategy and Customers Engagement.

Source: Author's Conceptualization (2022) as adapted from Manenti (2013); Iqbal (2011); Randhir et al. (2016); Maškarić (2018), Barbier (2019), Dodamgoda & Amarasinghe (2019)..

3.1 Research Methodology

In this study, our philosophical stands assume a realist viewpoint and a positivist epistemology. Hence, we adopted the quantitative research design method thereby applying a cross-sectional survey research design. The target population for the study comprised of all the customers of 52 registered fast food restaurants in Rivers State as listed in Rivers State Yellow Page Directory, and all those who visit the fast food restaurants which include the leisure customers, working crowd, couples, students and others who visit for dining and take-away, relaxation, studying, working and other purposes in Rivers State, South – South Nigeria. This population is an infinite population; hence we deployed the Godden (2004) infinite sampling technique which gave us a sample size of 384. Out of 384 copies of questionnaire administered, only 355 were valid and was used in conducting our analysis.

The study utilized both primary and secondary data collection method, and the main research instrument which is the copies of questionnaire was validated via an expert checking. While Cronbach's Alpha technique was used to check for its reliability. The reliability coefficients of our constructs were above 0.70 benchmark recommended by Nunnally (1978).

Table 3.1 Reliability Statistics

S/N	Construct	No of items	Cronbach's Alpha
1.	Olfactory Marketing Strategy	3	0.873
2.	Customer Patronage	3	0.801
3.	Repeat Purchase	3	0.836
4.	Referral	3	0.843

Source: SPSS Result

4.1 Analyses of Data

4.1.1 Results

A total of 384 copies of the questionnaire were distributed to the selected customers of identified registered functional fast food restaurants in Rivers State. From each of the 52 registered and functional fast food restaurants in Rivers, a frame of seven (7) respondents state were purposively adopted for administration convenient purposes. 22 copies of questionnaire accounting for 6% were dropped due to incomplete responses and mistakes, while 7 copies representing 2% were lost in transit. Therefore, a total of 355 representing 92% response formed the basis of our analysis. Pearson moment correlation coefficient was used to analyze our data set with the aid of SPSS version 23. Tables 4.1-4.3 show the tests of the hypotheses, and the decision rule states that: we should reject the null hypothesis (H_0) and accept its alternative (H_a) if $p\text{-value} < 0.05$ for 2 – tailed test and conclude that significant relationship exists.

Test of Hypothesis 1

H_{01} : There is no significant relationship between olfactory marketing strategy and customer patronage in fast food restaurants in Rivers state.

Ha₁: There is a significant relationship between olfactory marketing strategy and customer patronage in fast food restaurants in Rivers state.

Table 4.1: Correlations Analysis of Olfactory Marketing Strategy and Customer Patronage

Correlations		Olfactory Marketing Strategy (OMS)	Customer Patronage (CP)
Olfactory Marketing Strategy (OMS)	Pearson Correlation	1	.909**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	355	355
Customer Patronage (CP)	Pearson Correlation	.909**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	355	355

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

Source: SPSS Output (based on 2022 Field Survey Data)

Table 4.1 above reports on the relationship between olfactory marketing strategy and customer patronage. It shows that the correlation coefficient (r) is 0.909. This implies that there is a strong relationship between olfactory marketing strategy and customer patronage. The sign of the estimated value of (r) is positive while the p-value is $0.000 < 0.05$. Therefore, we reject the null hypothesis and conclude that there is a significant positive relationship between olfactory marketing strategy and customer patronage.

Test of Hypothesis 2

Ho₂: There is no significant relationship between olfactory marketing strategy and repeat purchase in fast food restaurants in Rivers state.

Ha₂: There is a significant relationship between olfactory marketing strategy and repeat purchase in fast food restaurants in Rivers state.

Table 4.2: Correlations Analysis of Olfactory Marketing Strategy and Repeat Purchase

Correlations		Olfactory Marketing Strategy (OMS)	Repeat Purchase (RP)
Olfactory Marketing Strategy (OMS)	Pearson Correlation	1	.581**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	355	355
Repeat Purchase (RP)	Pearson Correlation	.581**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	355	355

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

Source: SPSS Output (based on 2021 Field Survey Data)

The correlation analysis above was conducted to examine whether olfactory marketing strategy is associated with repeat purchase. The results revealed a significant and positive association ($r = 0.581$, $N = 355$, $p\text{-value} = 0.00$). Therefore, the null hypothesis is rejected, while its alternative was accepted. The correlation was moderate in strength. Higher levels of olfactory marketing strategy were associated with moderate levels of repeat purchase.

Test of Hypothesis 3

Ho₃: There is no significant relationship between olfactory marketing strategy and customers' referral in fast food restaurants in Rivers state.

Ha₃: There is a significant relationship between olfactory marketing strategy and customers' referral in fast food restaurants in Rivers state.

Table 4.3: Correlations Analysis of Olfactory Marketing Strategy and Referral

Correlations			
		Olfactory Marketing Strategy (OMS)	Referral (R)
Olfactory Marketing Strategy (OMS)	Pearson Correlation	1	.525**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	355	355
Referral (R)	Pearson Correlation	.525**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	355	355

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

Source: SPSS Output (based on 2021 Field Survey Data)

Table 4.3 above indicates that the correlation coefficient (r) = 0.525**. This suggests that a moderate relationship exists between olfactory marketing strategy and referral. The direction of the relationship as indicated by the sign of the correlation coefficient is positive, suggesting that the more fast food restaurants utilizes scenting their business premises with nice fragrance and positioning their kitchen so that their fries and baking could be perceived by the customers and passerby, the more the customers will be able to talk about their business and refer them to others. Also, the probability value ($p\text{-value}$) = 0.000 < 0.05, therefore, we conclude that there is a significant relationship between olfactory marketing strategy and customer referral.

Table 4.4 Summary of Test Hypotheses

S/N	HYPOTHESES	(r)	P – VALUE	DIRECTIO N	Magnitude	DECISION	CONCLUSION
H ₀₁ :	There is no significant relationship between olfactory marketing strategy and customer patronage	0.909**	0.00	+VE	Moderate	Reject	Significant
H ₀₂ :	There is no significant relationship between olfactory marketing strategy and repeat purchase	0.581**	0.00	+VE	Very high	Reject	Significant
H ₀₃ :	There is no significant relationship between olfactory marketing strategy and customers' referral	0.525**	0.00	+VE	Very high	Reject	Significant

Source: Research Findings Based on SPSS Output

4.2 Discussion of Findings

This study sought to examine the extent to which olfactory marketing strategy relates to customers' engagement. Olfactory marketing strategy has a significant relationship with the measures of customers' engagement. This finding resulted from the findings of the statistical test of hypotheses H_{01} , H_{02} and H_{03} . In testing H_{01} , olfactory marketing strategy attracted significant positive correlation coefficient (0.909, $p\text{-value} < 0.05$) implying strong positive relationship between olfactory marketing strategy and customer patronage. In terms of H_{02} , the result shows that olfactory marketing strategy attracts a significant moderate relationship as indicated by significant correlation coefficient (0.581, $p\text{-value} < 0.05$). Thus, an increase in olfactory marketing strategy within a particular fast food restaurant will command a moderate increase in repeat purchasing by the customers. The test of H_{03} also reveals a significant moderate correlation coefficient (0.525, $p\text{-value} < 0.05$). This confirms that a significant moderate relationship exists between olfactory marketing strategy and customers' referral.

Our findings as revealed by testing H_{01} , H_{02} and H_{03} which affirms that a positive significant relationship exist between olfactory marketing strategy and customers' engagement is in agreement with popular views in literature. In an empirical study conducted by Krishna, Lwin, and Morrin (2010), they found out that within a long-term, the impact of smell brings about more romantic memory and an object with fragrant is much gorgeous than the one without it. In another research by Chebat and Michon (2003) conducted in a shopping center, they discovered that scent directly affect the impression of consumers and has a significant influence on buyers' behaviors. Also, Roschk, et al. (2017) conducted an empirical study on a meta-analysis of the atmospheric effects of music, scent, and color on shopping outcomes using student t-test, the results reveal that environments in which scent are present yield higher pleasure, satisfaction, and behavioral intention ratings when compared with environments in which such conditions are absent.

From this discussion we conclude that olfactory marketing has a significant positive impact on customers' engagement.

5.1 Conclusion, Recommendations and Contribution to knowledge

Based on the result of our data analyses, we were led to conclude that olfactory marketing strategy has significant positive impact on customers' engagement in fast food restaurants in Rivers State. The findings as seen from the results of the hypotheses are believed to be premised on the fact that olfactory marketing strategies such as aroma from kitchen, pleasant scented environment and signature scent influences customers' engagement behaviors. Therefore, this study recommends that management of fast food restaurants should position their kitchen at a strategic location where the aroma emanating from the kitchen can serve as an olfactory cue to customers and passerby, whereby encouraging them to engage with fast food restaurant. Also, that management of the fast food restaurants should adopt the use of air fresheners and other signature scents to generate a scented environment for the restaurant which soothes and appeals to customers' emotions. The study using heuristic model provided an empirical evidence supporting the link between olfactory marketing strategy and customers' engagement in fast food restaurant in Rivers State.

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New Product Management and Marketing Performance of Breweries in South-South and South-East of Nigeria

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Abstract: *The study investigated the relationship between new product management and marketing performance of breweries in South-South and South-East of Nigeria. The survey research design was adopted. The population for this study comprised all the brewery firms in South-South and South-East of Nigeria, which amounted to seven (7). The managing directors and the managers as well as their assistants in the production, marketing, customer care, R & D, and logistics/distribution departments in the seven breweries were used as the sample for the study. The managing directors as well as the managers in these five (5) departments together with their assistants in the seven breweries, which amounted to seventy seven (77), constitute the sample size for the study. The sample size therefore was seventy seven (77). Data were obtained through the questionnaire and analysed using Spearman Rank Order Correlation Coefficient with the aid of SPSS (22.0). The findings in this study revealed that there is a positive and significant relationship between new product management and marketing performance. Based on the above, it was recommended that organizations should engage in new product management so as to improve on their marketing performance in turn.*

Keywords: *New Product Management, Marketing Performance*

INTRODUCTION

Recently the change in buyer's needs is on the uprise, this is as a result of change in buyer's income, lifestyles, levels of education, as well as a change in technology. The change in buyer's needs has brought intense competition in the marketplace. Organizations strive to meet these needs better than competitors so as to strive and remain competitive. This competition compels organizations to develop new products at a faster pace. This is mostly done in response to the changing needs of the marketplace (Didia 2004). What then is new product? Because new product ranges from a new concept of existing product idea, product adaptation or improvement, to a total innovation, Didia (2004) was of the opinion that there is usually a conceptual quagmire in defining new product. For this reason, it can be said that what makes a product new is more of the perception and conception of the market, the organization or both and how they see the product as being able to satisfy the needs and wants of the consumer (Ezirim, 2006). New products can be said to be goods and services that differ significantly in their characteristics or intended uses (OECD, 2005). On the other hand, Onah (2010) describe a product to be new if it is a new cost or price, new conveniences in use, new performance as against the old ones, new availability in a new market, easy credibility or benefit, new methods of use, unfamiliar patterns of use and new construction of composition. For the purpose of this study, new products will be

seen from the point of being new to the world, new product lines, and addition to existing product lines.

The introduction of new products into the marketplace does not guarantee its perpetual success (Onuoha, 2000). This is so because new products are not failure proofs (Didia, 2004). It is observed that most new products fail not too long after their introduction into the market; others last a little longer, while some last long before final death. The poor management of these new products could be the reason for their high failure rate. It is on this note that (Didia, 2004) opined that product management calls for due attention so that organizations will be able to respond and cope with consumer dynamics. In other words, in remaining competitive, an organization needs to embrace new product management because of its importance. It was observed that most organizations pay attention to the introduction of new product as well as the existing ones and pay little or no attention to the proper management of these products (Didia, 2004). An organization must decide what to serve the market (the size, quality, etc.) when to serve, what quantity, the price. When this is not properly done, there may be co-operate failure. The sudden decline and subsequent abandonment of a product is seen to bring about a negative performance of an organization. Based on the forgoing, the researcher holds the conviction that new product management may play a role in the marketing performance of breweries in South-South and South-East of Nigeria.

Several studies regarding new product, its development and management, in relation to the performance of organizations, have been carried out by various researchers. For example Amue and Adiele (2012) studied product development and consumer innovative behaviour. The study found out that there is a positive significant relationship between the variables. Nwokah et al (2009) equally studied product development and organizational performance. But a study on new product management in relation to marketing performance of breweries in South-South and South-East of Nigeria is yet to be found (if any), therefore to close this gap in literature this research investigated the relationship between new product management and marketing performance of breweries in the South-South and South-East of Nigeria.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Theoretical Foundation

Product Life Cycle Theory

When Hecksher-Ohlin's model that was built based on David Ricardo's theory of comparative advantage failed, Raymond Vevnon developed the PLC theory. This theory was developed around 1950's. The aim of this theory was to explain the observed pattern in international trade. Products were divided into three (3) by him. They are New Product, Maturity Product and Standardized Product.

The concept of the PLC theory is an abstract formation of a marketing phenomenon which seeks to recognize the distinct, and in some cases ephemeral stages a product passes in its sales history (Didia, 2004). There have been controversies concerning the stages as well as the pattern of the PLC but advocates of the PLC insist on a single pattern approach that starts from introduction to growth, then to maturity and decline. Some products go through this life stages faster than others, and yet some do not go through all the identified stages of a product life cycle. (Didia, 2004)

At the introduction stage, the product has just been introduced into the market; it could be an entirely new innovation or a remodelled version of an already existing product. Here sales are slow, zero profit, and high advert cost. The prices of such products are usually high because of the need to recover the high cost involved in product launch. The Growth stage sees a rise in sales and profit here because people are now becoming aware of the product. Surviving this stage requires the use of strategies like lowering prices, improving product quality, addition of new product features etc., this will help in the sustenance of rapid market growth. At the Maturity stage, products have filled the channel requirement and competitors have a share of the market, that is why this stage is associated with market saturation and slow growth. This is the most challenging stage and it last longer than the introductory and growth stage. Most products can remain there for decades. Strategies that can be used to tackle the challenges among others are market modification, product modification and marketing mix modification. When it gets to the decline stage, the product is not responding to the strategies used in curing or reversing its ailing sales history. It continues to decline, it is not able to beat competition again, instead it loses sales and profit. The product here can either be improved or abandoned.

The PLC model shows that new product success is not dependent on the initial market acceptance alone but management application of right strategies. These strategies can fall under planning for a wider market or logistics. Not too long after introduction, the product can be modified as well as the pricing system. According to Didia (2004), "Identifying the stages in the product life cycle enables management to become curiously apprehensive of the attendant and unique opportunities and problems associated with each stage and therefore is better placed to develop appropriate strategies that will result in exploiting and combating these opportunities and problems respectively for the overall benefit of the organization". Dougherty (1992) supported this when they said "astute marketing managers use the life cycle concept to make sure that the introduction, alteration and termination of a product are timed and executed properly.

Concept of New Product Management

An important role is being played by the product(s) in an organization, as well as the consuming public. It is the conception of a social object that firms use in relating with the target market it targets to serve. It is the product that gives character and fulfilment to the organization (Didia 2004). According to Galanakis, Passy, & Yazdani (2006), the product is also the means by which the company achieves its objectives. When a company decides on what to produce, it has equally defined its market industry as well as competition. Didia (2000) Supported this point of view when he noted that the choice of what to produce will dictate the market to serve, the industry to belong, the competition to face, and the nature and extent of resources to employ as well as the technology to use. With this, it is clear that the product is of utmost importance. This is what prompted Galanakis, Passy, & Yazdani, (2006) to explain that the central role that the product plays in marketing management makes it such an important subject that mismanagement in this area is unlikely to be compensated by good management in other areas. According to Moon, Miller, & Kim (2010), new product management is a dynamic decision process wherein new products are constantly revised. This is necessary because of a change in uncertainties in the information concerning the business environment as well as customers, dynamic opportunities, multiple goals and strategic consideration.

New product management deals with the planning, forecasting and production of new products at all stages of its life circle. As the environment of business is changing by the day, the need for

the proper management of new products is necessary. This is vital because most organisations don't put this in practice and it has brought about the extinct of products quicker than expected. This is supported by Pichgar,Dezhkam et al. (2013) when he said "discovery consists of seeing what everybody has seen and thinking what nobody has thought". The final products that are newly introduced into the market are like human beings, since they pass the stages of birth, growth, maturity and death. This means that a firm should be watchful of the stages their products exist since the introduction of a new product does not guarantee that it must live forever (Onuoha and Anyanwu, 1999). This makes it vital for the activities of the product to be continuously appraised to determine its day to day market performance and corrections made where necessary while new strategies are developed. Thus, this exposes the importance of a proper product management. In other words, it is not enough to just innovate; it should be followed by a proper management of it.

Product management includes a wide range of management activities, ranging from the time that there is a new idea for a product to eventually providing on-going support to customers who have purchased the new product. How a product is managed depends very much on the nature of the organization and its products. The management of products can range from managing the processes it passes through before coming into existence as well as all through its life cycle after it has been introduced, using other elements as well as the four Ps. According to Meniam-Weber (1994) "management is the act or skill of controlling and making decisions about a business, department, sports team etc.". According to Onuoha (2000), "The activities of the product should be continuously appraised to determine its day to day market performance and corrections made where necessary while new strategies are developed". At the start, an idea of a product is born. This idea or ideas can either come from internal or external source. Management should be able to plan on the source to get a product idea. These sources cannot be assessed by sitting down; resources are to be employed so as to get the right source of an idea that can bring about an acceptable product. This makes it bare that good product ideas are birthed as a result of planning and directing the right resources.

Concept of Marketing Performance

Marketing performance is marketing's result or output compared against the set objectives. Morgan, et al_(2002) explained that measuring performance has been a central issue in marketing, and remains a vital concern for a majority of organizations. The marketing science institutes research priorities for 2002-2004 also confirmed this when 'Assessing Marketing Productivity and Marketing Metrics' was voted as the highest topic for academic study. Recently managers as well as academics have both been drawn to the topic with an urgency and scope previously unpredicted. According to Reguia (2014), the reason the measurement of performance suddenly captured an attention is because, information relating to marketing has been increasingly demanded, after a decade of downsizing, major organizations were reaching the points of diminishing returns which have led to a refocusing on marketing as a driver of future profit and growth, thirdly, a measure of business performance such as the balance scorecard has made the inclusion of marketing measures attractive in the overall assessment of business performance. Finally, marketing managers have become frustrated with other performance measures with little or no value on what they do.

Business performance measurement is receiving active investigation from both practitioners and academics, the attention given to it has made new reports and articles on the topic to appear at a rate of one every five hours of every working day since 1994, with a search of the World Wide Web revealing over 170,000 references (Neely 1998). Beverland, Napoli, & Farrelly (2010) expressed that at one level, it may be as simple as its definition, although at another level the notion of a general level of performance is both intriguing yet continually disappointing. Performance is the aggregation of basic stages of action, from intention to result. It will be of no use engaging in marketing activities that cannot be measured; this is because those activities will not yield efficient result. If you can't measure you can't control, if you can't control you can't manage, if you can't manage you can't improve and be efficient.

Analysing the performance of marketing strategies should make clear and give an understanding of how marketing decisions influence financial results and their consequences on the firm cash flow. This level requires a marketing strategy analysis models that are more complex than the simple input-output analyses.

New Product Management and Marketing Performance

Studies (Ottih 2001, Orga 2006, Baridam 2002, Imka 2001) has shown the association between new product management and marketing performance. Orga (2006) revealed that the management of new products will result in the organization producing outputs desired by consumers and this will in turn help organizations achieve or accomplish their objectives. The management of new product is necessary if companies want to offer products that are of value to the society. This clearly exposed the significant association between new product management and marketing performance, since it is only a product that has value to customers that will be purchased, re-purchased and be stocked to (loyalty) and this brings about an increase in a firm's profit.

It was also found by Kalu et al (2006) that there is a significant association between new product management and marketing performance. They revealed that "the objective of new product management is to select the most effective, efficient and profitable one. Daneels (2002) also pointed out that new product management bring about the avoidance of sales fluctuation that result from seasonal or cyclical factors as well as the economic use of available resources. The marketing performance of an organization will be negatively affected if resources are not used properly, and also fluctuations in sales. He went further to say a good management of new product both before its development and launch, as well as after launch helps an organization to remain competitive. Onuoha and Anyanwn (1999) opined that a well-managed product has the likelihood of helping an organization in achieving its goals. It impacts on marketing performance through helping to meet customers' needs and achieve organizational objectives (Orga 2006), customer satisfaction (Banjoko 1994), customer loyalty (David & Rainey 2006) and profitability (Kalu 2006).

METHODOLOGY

This study adopted a survey research design. The population of the study comprised the seven (7) brewery firms in the South - South and South – East of Nigeria as reported by Nigerian stock exchange, 2017. The seven (7) breweries in the South-South and South East Nigeria were considered since they are below thirty (30). The managing directors in these companies and the managers as well as their assistants in the production, marketing, customer care, R & D, and

logistics/distribution departments of each company were chosen as the target population because they were in the right position to supply the relevant data for the study. The managing director of each company and two managers each from production, marketing, customer care, R & D, and logistics/distribution of the seven companies were selected as the sample size for the study. The total number of respondents in each company therefore amounted to eleven (11). Since there are seven companies, the total numbers of the respondents amounted to seventy seven (77). Therefore, the sample size for the study was seventy seven (77).

This study adopted the questionnaire as its basic research instrument. This helped in translating the research objectives in specific questions, which respondents easily answered. Valid information, were thus given. The questionnaire was divided into two (2) sections. The first section was used to get demographic data while the other section was used to get responses that are related to the research questions. Copies of questionnaires were distributed by the researcher to individuals within the firms and collected on the spot, so as to reduce loss. Data will be collected from individuals within the firm.

The nature of relationship that exists between new product management and marketing performance was x-rayed. To understand this, descriptive statistics such as frequency percentage, mean and standard deviation were used to analyse the data and Spearman Rank Order correlation coefficient with the aid of SPSS version 22.0 was used to test the hypotheses of the study. In order to test how valid the questionnaire was as regards measuring what it is supposed to measure, it was subjected to content validity. It was also subjected to professional scrutiny. A test-re-test method was adopted to know if there is consistency of the instruments. The reliability of the items measured using the Cronbach Alpha tool had high values (≥ 0.7). This showed the consistency in the response gotten from respondents. The reliability of the instrument used was also revealed.

Questionnaire Response

Questionnaire	Number	Percentage (%)
Distributed	77	100
Not Retrieval	5	6.5
Retrieval	72	93.5

Source: Field Survey (2017)

From the sixty (60) questionnaires distributed, fifty four (54) representing 90% were returned, valid and used for the analysis, while six (6) representing 10% were not returned.

Relationship between New product Management and Marketing Performance

Table 4.12; Correlation Analysis showing the relationship between new product management and marketing performance.

Correlations

Type	Variables 1	Statistics	New Product Management	Marketing Performance
Spearman's rho	New product Management	Correlation Coefficient	1.000	.631**
		Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
		N	72	72
	Marketing Performance	Correlation Coefficient	.631**	1.000
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
		N	72	72

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

Source: SPSS V. 22.0 printout (based on field 2017).

Table 4.12 shows that Spearman's correlation coefficient (r) = 0.613**, this value is high, implying that a strong relationship exist between new product management and marketing performance. The positive sign of the correlation coefficient means a positive relationship exist between them. That is to say that improvement in new product management equally improves in marketing performance.

Test of Hypotheses

Decision Rule

If the Significant/Probability Value (PV) < 0.05 (Level of Significance) = Reject the null and Conclude Significance Relationship.

If the Significance Probability value (PV) > 0.05 (Level of Significance) = Accept the null and Conclude Insignificance Relationship:

Discussion of Findings

The study exposed the positives attached to a proper management of new products. It shows that the introduction of new products into the marketplace alone does not guarantee its perpetual success. According to Didia (2004), "new products are not failure proofs". The study revealed that for a company to step up in its marketing performance, new product management must be thoroughly embraced, since the high failure rate of products are connected to poor management styles. Also, studies on product development, planning, and policy etc (Didia, 2004; Nwokah, Ugoji, and Ofoegbu, 2009) which are subsets of product management also revealed how vital product management if a company must stand out. According to Onuoha and Anyanwu (2000), the activities of a product should be

continuously appraised to determine its day to day market performance and corrections made where necessary while new strategies are developed. This makes it clear that bringing up a new product idea, developing and launching them alone is not enough. A proper management of all its areas is necessary, if it must bring about a positive marketing performance.

Conclusion and Recommendation

Based on the findings in this study, it is concluded that new product management is necessary for the success and promotion of organizations' performance, including the marketing performance of breweries in South-South and South-East of Nigeria.

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Effect of Operations Management Information System on Employee Performance in Deposit Money Banks in South East, Nigeria

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Abstract: *This study examined “Operations Management Information System on Employee Performance in deposit money banks in South East, Nigeria”. The dimensions of operations management information system are vigor, dedication and absorption. The survey research design was adopted for the study. The population of the study was 21 registered and licensed money deposit banks operating in the South East zone while the sample size was 143. The questionnaire was adopted for the collection of Primary data from the respondents. The analysis of the data was done and presented in tables and regression analyses were used to test the hypotheses. The objectives of the study are to examine the relationship between operations management information system and employee performance of deposit money banks in South East, Nigeria and to examine the relationship between dimensions of operations management information system and measures of employee performance in deposit money banks in South East, Nigeria. There is a significant relationship between operations management information system and employee performance in deposit money banks in South-East, Nigeria. Based on the results, this study concludes that operations management information system significantly influences employee performance in deposit money banks in South-East, Nigeria. It is highly recommended that: Managers of deposit money banks should make organizations not to make large use of documents and formal methods by using information systems to decrease the amount of useless relations. Managers of deposit money banks should employ operations processing information system and other information system in their operations. It also recommended that the senior managers of organisations by the help of management information systems increase their relations and power range in recognizing problems and ease of decision making to increase the level of focus in decisions and manipulation of organizers in decisions.*

Keywords: *Banks, Operations, Management, Information, System, Employee Performance, South East, Organisation*

INTRODUCTION

The role of operations management information System (OMIS) is vital now-a-days in the business environment because it has evolved over time to become an integral part of business operations. The use of operations management information system has increased in the last few

years not only by firms, but also by individuals and even governments. Because of today's global environment where competition is very high, it is the basic requirement of an organization to install operations management information system to compete in the market, to earn more profitability, invest in innovation in their products, and to grow their businesses. All of these factors transformed the information system from data processing systems to decision support systems and became the foundation of the new business environment. (Yusuf Munirat et al, 2014)

As the name implies, operations management information system comprises of three key words that are very important for the effective operations of any organization namely: Operations, Management, Information and System. Operations are day to day activities of the organisation geared towards achieving her pre-determined goals and objectives. Management is seen as an organized body or group of people who work with and through people. The main purpose of the management information system operations according to Intelligent Decision Support Methods (1997) is to give managers feedback about their own performance; top management can monitor the company as a whole. Information displayed by the management information system typically shows "actual" data over "planned" results and results from a year before; thus it measures progress against goals. (www.inc.com, 2020)

The increase in size, the complexity of the operations and the need to coordinate the various parts of the organization necessitated the introduction of operations management information system in corporate organizations. Corporate Institutions especially banks must put their environment under surveillance in order to be aware of the new opportunities and this can only be achieved by obtaining up to date information about their surroundings.

The early concept of operations management information system (OMIS) came into existence or place in the 1960's and 1970's when system analysis determines the information requirement of the individual management in an organization and would design systems to supply that information routinely and on demand. The gist of this appears to be that management Information System of a function arise from the linked needs of deposit money banks and the expertise of the computer and its other component professionals.(www.economicdiscussion.net)

Operations management information system (OMIS) embraces data processing system and control system, including decision making based on the facts communicated by the administrative section of the organization as a whole and is concerned with the systematic recording arrangement, filling, processing and dissemination of facts accruing in organizational documents and control information for the organization in order to keep them informed of the event or happenings in order to keep them informed of happenings in the organization for whatever corrective actions necessary to achieve the objective of that particular organization.

Operations management information system is deemed to be a system which provides organizations top management and even lower level management with appropriate information based on data from both internal and external sources, to allow them make effective and timely decisions that best achieve their organization goals and satisfy stakeholder requirements. Newman (2001) assert that the conception of information catches the attention of different professionals from different fields such as computer science, economics, business and management, political science, statistics, communication and information studies. This is the extent of role that management information system plays in an organization, more so in commercial banks. If the commercial banks cannot appreciate the providence of operations management information system, then their operational efficiency will be questioned, their survival and growth stamped.

Operations management information system has been described as an academic discipline which studies people, technology, organizations and the relationships among them. Operations management information system is the key factor to facilitate and attain efficient decision making in an organization. Currently, organizations are in the race for enhancing their capability in order to survive in the competitions of the new century global market. Therefore, organizations are attempting to advance their agility and ability level by improving the utilization of operations management information systems which help them to be more efficient and highly effective to meet the successive fluctuations and changes in the market. In an effort to achieve this, many modern organizations, either mid or large sized are concerned with a cycle of progressive investments and adopted new management information systems components. (Yusuf et al, 2014)

During the last decade, a high percentage of financial organizations frequently used operations management information systems to facilitate the provision of services and that the speed of the adoption is expected to grow further as the technology expands. Suffice to note that many deposit money banks, especially the selected ones in South east, Nigeria cannot operate efficiently without operations management information system. Every deposit money bank is a scene of many information flows affecting organization. This challenge calls for operations management information system in the survival and growth of organizations, with due respects to deposit money banks.

Statement of the Problem

Before the advent of operations management information system, there were poor global interactions as organizations were localized and hardly relate with their international counter parts. This resulted to disconnection from the outside world leading to stagnation and backwardness of modern organizational activities, unclear and appropriate statement defining the business the organization is involved in and the objective of the company: Such a clear statement keeps management always on track and avoids the tendency of every problem becoming unique. Also, documentations of changes in records, facts and histories were not properly kept in the various deposit money banks visited. Where there is no proper authorization or documentation of changes, the operations management information system stands the danger of being corrupted intentionally. The aftermath of improper documentation results to expensive misunderstanding and operational errors, as well as orientation process required for new employers and facilitating the maintenance of changes to the system. Hence, these challenging situations informed this study.

Objectives of the Study

The broad objective of this study was to examine the effect of operations management information system on employee performance in deposit money banks in South East, Nigeria. The specific objectives include:

- i. to examine the relationship between operations management information system and employee vigor in deposit money banks in South East, Nigeria.
- ii. to examine the relationship between operations management information system and employee dedication in deposit money banks in South East, Nigeria.
- iii. to evaluate the relationship between operations management information system and employee absorption in deposit money banks in South East, Nigeria.

Research Hypotheses

The following hypotheses were adopted:

- i. There is no significant relationship between operations management information system and employee vigor in deposit money banks in South East, Nigeria.
- ii. There is no significant relationship between operations management information system and employee dedication of deposit money banks in South East, Nigeria.
- iii. There is no significant relationship between operations management information system and employee absorption in deposit money banks in South East, Nigeria.

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

Operations Management Information System

Management Information System is a computerized database of operations of an organisation organized and programmed in such a way that it produces regular reports on operations for every level of management in a company. (www.inc.com). Operations Management is concerned essentially with the utilization of resources, i.e., obtaining maximum effect from resources or minimizing their loss, under-utilization or waste. Operations management is also concerned with the achievement of both satisfactory customer service and resource utilization. (www.wisdomjobs.com).

According to Rayton & Yalabik, (2014) employee Vigor is characterized by high levels of energy and mental resilience while working, the willingness to invest effort in one's work, and persistence even in the face of difficulties. Williams, Maha, et al, (2010) defines employee dedication as the type of engagement in which the employee is engaged due to the feeling that his services are retained in the organization, and there will be no need to think of looking for job elsewhere. Employee Absorption refers to a sense of detachment from an employee's surroundings, a high degree of concentration on employee's job, and a general lack of conscious awareness of the amount of time spent on the job (Rayton & Yalabik, 2014).

Contemporary business organizations are not in the position of processing information for its own sake; instead they process information in order to improve organizational performance and produce profits (Kenneth & Laudon *et al.*, 2004). Information is becoming the foundation for many new services and products. Decision makers need both internal information about their organization and the external information about its environment to draw conclusion in the process of decision making. Business organizations rely on information systems to carry out and manage their operations, interact with their customers and suppliers and compete in the business environment. Companies use information systems to reach their potential customers with targeted messages over the web, to process financial accounts, and to manage their human resources. Furthermore, Buckingham *et al.*, (1987) stated that information system is a system which assembles, store, processes, and delivers information relevant to an organization in such a way that the information is accessible and useful to those who wish to use it, such as managers, staff, clients and citizens.

The term operations management information systems, popularly abbreviated as OMIS according to Lucey (2005) has become synonymous with computer; yet, both concepts are not exactly the same because management information systems existed in the life of pre-modern organizations long before the advent of the computer technology. This argument is substantiated by the fact that computer was not in use when organizations kept records using traditional and

manual mechanisms to manage information. It is important though to pinpoint that the computer takes credit for increased interest in operations management information systems because it eases and facilitates data processing as well as adds new vistas of interesting career options in management information systems (Ottih, 2005).

With faster access to needed information through operations management information systems, managers are able to make effective and timely decisions regarding investments, employment, new products and many more as it concerns their organizations. By decision making, we refer to the process of choosing certain lines of action from among numerous alternatives. Decisions are basically an integral chunk of management and it occurs in every level for example top management, middle management and lower management and in every function like marketing, accounting, human resources, and production (Lucey, 2005).

The effectiveness or otherwise of any organization is dependent on the quality of decisions that informs its operation. If decisions are right, it translates in positive organizational outcomes, but where organizational activities are executed in conditions of poor decisions resulting from insufficient or inaccurate information, such organization could be doomed. This is why decision making is a major determinant of organization's success or failure.(www.sciencedirect.com)

As a key consideration, operations management information systems is a highly complex and delicate arena that calls for a lot of caution to be taken by its managers. It is for this reason, that it is recommendable for organizations to ensure that they carefully select the individuals who are placed to control the systems. The more cautious and professional a person is, the better the person gets an assurance of positive prospects of a management information system with regards to decision making and other related areas of business (Lingham, 2006).

Management Information System provides a fitting platform for good decision making (Kumar, 2006). Essentially, without the established systems of getting information in operations management information system, it would be extremely difficult for organizations to make their decisions. This is because they would be forced to making baseless information due to lack of confirmed information. Moreover, operations management information system normally lays a firm foundation for the establishment of concrete decisions through its systematic tools, timely information and adequate managerial policies and regulations. (www.aabri.com). Operations management information systems statutes regarding businesses act as guidelines to business owners when making critical decisions about their businesses. As a result, managers and key decision makers are bridled from overstepping their boundaries or exceeding their business mandate. This is very crucial as it helps in keeping businesses checked and balanced thus ensuring that only proven decisions are considered while the untried ones are thwarted. More importantly, the capacity to guide decision-making facilitates progress and improvement of the operations in a company (Lingham, 2006).

In addition, most operations management information system programs are endowed with the capacity to give real-time updates of the occurrences in company or system. By real-time, scholars simply refer to immediate updates of occurrences in a system. These immediate updates help managers to take necessary actions as deemed appropriate especially during the discovery and management of crises. This augments progress and improvement in company operations through timely decision-making(www.aabri.com).

As a fundamental point, a good number of operations management information system used today can perform multiple tasks all at the same time. This potential to multitask increases efficiency in a company since several business operations can be conducted simultaneously. With special regards to decision making, the capacity to multitask ensures that decisions are

made speedily when compared to those systems which can only handle one task at a time. Jahangir (2005) stated that some Management Information System allow multiple users to access the same content all at the same time without any discrepancies. This potentiality boosts accountability from the business operators since multiple people can access a particular content and verify whether they are consistent or whether they are not. As a matter of fact, most organizations tend to suffer due to poor accountability from those charged with the mandate to manage certain details. This safeguard action of some management information system is what macroeconomists refer to as the “gate-keeping” role of management information system in decision making and overall well-being of the organization.

According to Lucey, (2005) describes management information system as a system that convert data from internal and external sources into information and communicates that information in an appropriate form to managers at all levels in all functions to enable them make timely and effective decision for planning, directing and controlling the activities for which they are responsible.

Theoretical Review

Operations management is concerned essentially with the utilization of resources, i.e., obtaining maximum effect from resources or minimizing their loss, under-utilization or waste. The extent of the utilization of the resources’ potential might be expressed in terms of the proportion of available time used or occupied, space utilization, levels of activity, etc. Each measure indicates the extent to which the potential or capacity of such resources is utilized. This is referred as the objective of resource utilization. (William J. Stevenson, 2001)

Operations management is also concerned with the achievement of both satisfactory customer service and resource utilization. An improvement in one will often give rise to deterioration in the other. Often both cannot be maximized, and hence a satisfactory performance must be achieved on both objectives. All the activities of operations management must be tackled with these two objectives in mind, and many of the problems will be faced by operations managers because of this conflict. Hence, operations managers must attempt to balance these basic objectives. Operations Management concern with the conversion of inputs into outputs, using physical resources, so as to provide the desired utilities to the customer while meeting the other organizational objectives of effectiveness, efficiency and adoptability. It distinguishes itself from other functions such as personnel, marketing, finance, etc. by its primary concern for ‘conversion by using physical resources’. The following are the activities listed under production and operations Management functions: (William J. Stevenson, 2001)

1. Location of facilities.
2. Plant layouts and Material Handling.
3. Product Design.
4. Process Design.
5. Production and Planning Control.
6. Quality Control.
7. Materials Management.
8. Maintenance Management.

1. Location of Facilities

Location of facilities for operations is a long-term capacity decision, which involves a long-term commitment about the geographically static factors that affect a business organization. It is an

important strategic level decision-making for an organization. It deals with the questions such as ‘where our main operations should be based?’

2. Plant Layout and Material Handling

Plant layout refers to the physical arrangement of facilities. It is the configuration of departments, work centres and equipment in the conversion process. The overall objective of the plant layout is to design a physical arrangement that meets the required output quality and quantity most economically.

2. Product Design

Product design deals with conversion of ideas into reality. Every business organization have to design, develop and introduce new products as a survival and growth strategy. Developing the new products and launching them in the market is the biggest challenge faced by the organizations.

3. Process Design

Process design is a macroscopic decision-making of an overall process route for converting the raw material into finished goods. These decisions encompass the selection of a process, choice of technology, process flow analysis and layout of the facilities. Hence, the important decisions in process design are to analyse the workflow for converting raw material into finished product and to select the workstation for each included in the workflow.

5. Production Planning and Control

Production planning and control can be defined as the process of planning productions in advance, setting the exact route of each item, fixing the starting and finishing dates for each item, to give production orders to shops and to follow-up the progress of products according to orders.

6. Quality Control (QC)

Quality control may be defined as ‘a system that is used to maintain a desired level of quality in a product or service’. It is a systematic control of various factors that affect the quality of the product. Quality control aims at prevention of defects at the source, relies on effective feedback system and corrective action procedure.

7. Materials Management

Materials management makes sure the materials available are aligned with the customer demands thus giving a schedule of costs and resources that the company has or needs. Materials management controls the flow of materials with demand prices, quality and delivery schedules (www.toolshero.com)

Indicators of Operations Management Information System:

- **Activity Schedule:** Scheduling of activities is the listing of activities, deliverables and milestones within a project. A schedule also usually includes the planned start and finish date, duration and resources assigned to each activity. Scheduling represents the plan to deliver the activity over time.

- **Control of Report**

This is a part of any information feedback loop that informs management of business activity and identifies any potential issues that could generate undue financial harm on the business or create

an unsafe product or work environment. Managers need control reports that include a lot of detail. Control reports should not be flat, with all lines of information appearing to be equally important.

Since in most organizations, employee performance is the result of collaborative effort, the engagement of one person may transfer to others and indirectly improve team performance. To date, several studies have shown that work engagement is positively related to job performance (e.g. in-role performance, that is, officially required outcomes and behaviours that directly serve the goals of the organization; creativity; organizational citizenship behaviour). For example, Bakker, Demerouti, and Verbeke (2004) showed that engaged employees received higher ratings from their colleagues on in-role and extra-role performance (discretionary behaviours on the part of an employee that are believed to directly promote the effective functioning of an organization, without necessarily directly influencing a person's target productivity), indicating that engaged employees perform well and are willing to go the extra mile. Further, in their study of employees working in Spanish restaurants and hotels, (Salanova, Agut et al., 2005) showed that employee ratings of organizational resources, engagement, and service climate were positively related to customer ratings of employee performance and customer loyalty.

This study is anchored on the social exchange theory. Social exchange theory proposes that social behaviour is an exchange process. The purpose of this exchange is to maximise benefits and minimize costs. According to this theory developed by sociologist George Homans, people weigh the potential benefits and risks of social relationships. It studies the social behaviour in the interaction of two parties that implement a cost benefit analysis to determine risks and benefits. In line with the concept of employee engagement, Social exchange theory says that if the costs of the relationships are higher than the rewards, then the relationships may be terminated or abandoned.

Empirical Review

In their recent study of Greek employees working in fast-food restaurants, Xanthopoulou, Bakker, Demerouti, and Schaufeli (2009b) expanded this research and made a compelling case for the predictive value of work engagement for performance on a daily basis. Participants were asked to fill in a survey and a diary booklet for five (5) consecutive days. Consistent with hypotheses, results showed that employees were more engaged on days that were characterized by many job resources. Daily job resources like supervisor coaching and team atmosphere contributed to employees' personal resources (day levels of optimism, self-efficacy, and self-esteem), which in turn, contributed to daily engagement. Importantly, this study clearly showed that engaged employees perform better on a daily basis. The higher employees' levels of daily engagement, the higher their objective financial returns.

According to previous literature, there are two popular models used to depict employee performance. To begin is the Job Demand Resource (JD-R) Model. This model illustrates the relationship between many factors while work engagement is the mediator. On the left side, antecedents of work engagement consist of resources and job demand. On the right side of the work engagement, outcomes or consequences of work engagement are depicted. The second model that expressed work engagement is the State Work Engagement (SWE).

Both the JD-R model and the SWE, represent work engagement as a psychological state which impacts behavioural outcomes. Additionally, job resources, personal resources, and job demand are antecedents of work engagement in both models, JD-R and the SWE. Even though the JD-R model and the SWE model have the same antecedents, they are different in that the SWE model

represents work engagement as a moment in (day-level or week-level) state or experience, while the JD-R model represents work engagement as a trait that is known as an average over-time assessment of experience.

Another employee performance conceptualization is Psychological Capital (PsyCap). This construct refers to: An individual's positive psychological state of development that is characterized by: (1) having confidence (self-efficacy) to take on and put in the necessary effort to succeed at challenging tasks;

(2) making a positive attribution (optimism) about succeeding now and in the future;

(3) persevering toward goals and when necessary, redirecting paths to goals (hope) in order to succeed; and

(4) when beset by problems and adversity, sustaining and bouncing back and even beyond (resiliency) to attain success (Luthans, Gretchen et al., 2006).

- Employee Vigor

Vigor is characterized by high levels of energy and mental resilience while working, the willingness to invest effort in one's work, and persistence even in the face of difficulties (Rayton & Yalabik, 2014). Vigor is one of the aspects of Job engagement that implies high levels of energy and mental resilience while working (Armstrong, 2012). Vigor at work is an internal, affective representation of the individual's energy reservoirs related to the job. Thus, an individual experiencing vigor at work perceives him or herself to be peppy, physically enlivened, cognitively quick and creative, and able to have meaningful interactions with others.

Vigor also refers to energy, mental resilience, determination and investing consistent effort in job (Rayton and Yalabik, 2014). Vigor is one of the aspects of employee performance that implies high levels of energy and mental resilience while working. There is also a determined investment in the actual work, together with high levels of persistence even when faced with difficulties. This aspect can be determined based on Atkinson's motivational theory. Motivation is strength of doing work. So, strength and resistance are addressed as aspects of employee performance and their concept is constant with popular definition of motivation (Latham & Pinder, 2005).

- Employee Absorption

Absorption refers to a sense of detachment from your surroundings, a high degree of concentration on your job, and a general lack of conscious awareness of the amount of time spent on the job (Rayton & Yalabik, 2014). Absorption is the intensity of the frequency of concentration in carrying out its work, and enthusiasm as a positive energy view that pleases employees in every job ((Macey & Schneider, 2008). Employees who have absorption have full concentration with their work, making it difficult to get away from their jobs (Schaufeli, Bakker, & Salanova, 2006). Absorption is characterized by full concentration and happily doing the work, Employees are engaged to have an energetic and effective relationship with their work activities, and they see themselves able to deal well with the demands of their work (Schaufeli, 2017).

Absorption, refers to a sense of detachment from your surroundings, a high degree of concentration on your job, and a general lack of conscious awareness of the amount of time spent on the job (Rayton & Yalabik, 2014).

- Employee Dedication

According to Deloitte's report (2008), dedicated employees are committed to continually achieving higher levels of performance. In today's rapidly changing business environment, companies need passionate workers because such workers can drive extreme and sustained performance and improvement more than the one-time performance "bump" that follows a bonus or the implementation of a worker engagement initiative. Compared with employees who are not dedicated, dedicated employees get more satisfaction from work, higher organizational commitment, and less willingness to leave the organization (Yang, 2005). Dedicated employees are more active in their work, have better health, and perform better (Susana *et al.*, 2007).

Also, dedication is characterized by a strong psychological involvement in one's work, combined with a sense of significance, enthusiasm, inspiration, pride, and challenge" (Mauno, *et al.*, 2007, Schaufeli, *et al.*, 2002).

The secret to long term, consistent success for business is to have dedicated employees that are consistently working towards big goals and thinking big. Dedicated employees have a positive behavior (Wilmar & Arnold, 2006). When an organization is trying to reach new heights for its team, they need everyone to be able to handle stress well and have a growth mindset where each one is always learning and growing. When an employee is dedicated to what they do, they consistently look for better ways to improve themselves, their role, and the business in general, there's a much bigger focus on growth and development.

Hardzic, (2001) in a research carried out on the impact of operations management information system to employees, deduced the impact of operations management on employee's ability to control risks and range time in short and long term planning and in decision making task. He revealed that the better availability of information, the better the impact on both efficiency and accuracy of business decisions. He therefore recommended that adequate operations management information system enhanced employee performance.

The study of Hardzic, (2001) is related to this present study given the fact that both studies to an extent examined how management activities impact on employee engagement. However, there are some differences between both studies which include dimensions and measures of independent and dependent variables of both studies.

In a similar study, Al Meetany (2004) conducted a study on the impact of operations management information system on efficiency and effectiveness of employee performance of the Jordanian commercial banks: A case study of Arab Bank. The study sample size is made up of 100 respondents which were drawn from the population of middle level and low level managerial staff of Jordanian commercial banks. Questionnaire was the major data collection instrument. Quantitative data analysis was applied in the study to find the relationship between independent and dependent variables (operations management information and employee engagement). Findings revealed that users of operational management information system have highly skilled technicians, qualified and experience staff to enable them perform their work to the fullest and that Arab bank has efficient hardware's and soft ware's required for the operations of the system. Based on the findings the study recommends that operations management information system should be maintained in Jordan banks.

The above study is similar to this present study considering the fact that both studies share related work place (Deposit money banks). However, there are some differences between both studies given the fact that the formal study was conducted in the Arab country while the present study was conducted in Nigeria.

METHODOLOGY

This study adopted a cross sectional survey research design. Cross-sectional surveys are studies aimed at determining the frequency or level of a particular attribute in a defined population at a particular point in time (Lotta, 2012).

There are 21 deposit money banks in Nigeria registered with the Central Bank of Nigeria and the Nigeria Stock Exchange. The population for this study was 223 staff drawn from 21 deposit money banks in Enugu. The study was focused mainly on the regional offices of these banks in Enugu. The regional offices coordinate the operations of the various branches in Abia, Imo, Enugu, Anambra and Ebonyi States.

Table 1: Population of the study

S/No	Names of Deposit Banks	Population Size (N)	Sample Size
1.	First Bank	18	12
2.	United Bank for Africa (UBA)	14	9
3.	Union Bank Nigeria (UBN)	13	8
4.	Zenith Bank	17	11
5.	Access Bank	12	8
6.	ECO Bank Nigeria (EBN)	13	8
7.	FCMB	10	6
8.	Polaris Bank	9	6
9.	Stanbic IBTC Bank	8	5
10.	Guarantee Trust Bank (GTB)	13	8
11.	Fidelity Bank	11	7
14.	Heritage Bank	11	7
15.	Key Stone Bank (KSB)	12	8
16.	Sterling Bank	10	6
17.	Unity Bank	10	6
18.	Wema Bank	9	6

19.	Standard Chartered Bank (SCB)	12	8
20	Providus Nigeria LTD	12	8
21	SunTrust Bank Nigeria Ltd	9	6
	Total	223	143

Source: Administrative Departments of the Regional Offices

Obioma (1987) posited that sampling is that process by which a sub unit of persons or observations from a larger set is taken and investigated in details so as to arrive at conclusions about the features of a larger group. Thus, in view of the fact that our study involves a finite population, a sample size that can be possibly reached is obtained. The study sample size of 143 was arrived at using the Taro Yamen's 1970 formula.

Primary method of data collection was adopted with the aid of a structured questionnaire which was the major instrument for data collection. Copies of the questionnaire were personally administered by the researcher.

The questionnaire was designed following standard guidelines for questionnaire design (Sekaran, 2003). The first part of the questionnaire sought to know the demographic background of the respondents, while the second part comprised of 24 item-questions answered in Likert scale format, which measured relevant constructs (both the independent and dependent variables of the study). Each item of the construct was presented with five alternative responses from strongly disagree to strongly agree with numerical value 1 - 5. The questionnaire survey followed all the required ethical considerations as highlighted.

First, the instrument was designed using a five (5) point Likert Scale rating with 1 depicting lowest agreement and 5-strongest agreement. This feature enabled the respondents not only choose their preferred option; it enabled them to rate the extent to which they agreed or disagreed with their chosen option.

Secondly, the researcher then fixed an acceptable tolerance rate of 75% as recommended by Sakaran (2003) for blank answers from same section on any of the dimensions or measures of the study variable that may be considered tolerable. Thirdly, the researcher termed all blank response within the set tolerance limit of 75% as "undecided" response and further assigned a mid-point because original Likert scales are 5-point scales with the middle scale representing neutrality such as "undecided", "do not know" or "no opinion" which would be used for this study, fourthly, some questions which were similar were repeated in another form which the respondents were expected to circle or choose the same option to both questions. Also, certain reversed coded items were included in the research instrument to detect the level of inconsistency of the subject's response.

Face validity test carried out on the research instrument. This was accomplished by giving the self-designed questionnaire to a panel of experts who are the researcher's supervisors and other professionals in the area of the study. The researcher used the measure of internal consistency dimension for the reliability by using Cronbach Alpha. Sub-population analysis was used to determine the internal reliability. This is in line with the assertion that the reliability of data tested by Cronbach alpha method should show reliability score greater than 70%.

In order to assess the relationship of operations management information system and employee performance in deposit money banks in South East Nigeria, the researcher used a well-structured questionnaire that is made up of two sections - Section A: Personal Information, Section B: Main questionnaire item which is a type of question tailored for pre-conceived response. The multi term five point Likert scale enabled the researcher harness the latent character of the variables considered in the study to produce scales of Strongly agree, Agree, Disagree, Undecided and Strongly disagree. Analysis was undertaken in which all previously hypothetical statements of bivariate relations was tested using Spearman's Rank Order Correlation Statistics with the assistance of SPSS 23.0 to determine the degree of significance of the hypotheses to be tested to decide whether the null hypotheses should be rejected or accepted.

DATA PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS

Table 2: Questionnaire Administration and Return

	Number of Cases	Percentage
Copies of Questionnaire Administered	143	100
Copies of Questionnaire Retrieved/Returned	125	88.03
Copies of Questionnaire not Retrieved/Returned	18	11.97
Completed but Unusable Copies of Questionnaire	5	4.00
Completed and Usable Copies of Questionnaire	120	96.00

Source: Field Work (2021)

The above table shows that a total of one hundred and forty-three (143) copies of questionnaire were distributed to the respondents, out of which a one hundred and twenty (120) copies were retrieved, representing 88.03%. Eighteen (18) copies representing 11.97% of the copies questionnaire were not retrieved. However, five (5) copies of the questionnaire returned representing 4.00 percent were not suitable for analysis while 120 copies of questionnaire representing 96.00 percent were used for the data analysis.

Operations Management Information System

In the questionnaire, five research statements were stated on operations management information system and the response mean scores and standard deviations presented in the table as follows:

Table 3: Descriptive Statistics for Operations Management Information System

Descriptive Statistics for Operations Management Information System					
	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
MIS is used to process information to facilitate report writing	120	1	5	4.08	1.142
MIS is used to improve the accuracy levels among staff	120	1	5	4.16	.870

The organization has invested in a management information system which has enabled the minimization of administrative costs	12 0	1	5	4.05	.942
The management information system of the firm has been crucial in delivering innovative customer services	12 0	1	5	3.68	1.384
The management information system of our company has been crucial in assisting employees to enhance their performance and productivity	12 0	1	5	4.27	1.059
Valid N (listwise)	12 0				

Source: SPSS Output version 23.0

The table above was to determine the manifestation of operations management information system as a dimension of management information system in which five research statements were stated in the questionnaire. It represents the accumulated sum from the respondents indicating the mean score and standard deviation. The first item was to ascertain if OMIS is used to process information to facilitate report writing; had a mean score (\bar{x}) of 4.03 and Std. Dev. 1.181. The second item sought to know if MIS is used to improve the accuracy levels among staff, the result showed a mean score of (\bar{x}) of 4.18 and Std. Dev. 0.596. Similarly, the third item was to know if the organization has invested in a management information system which has enabled the minimization of administrative costs, the responses generated were in the affirmative with a mean score (\bar{x}) of 4.96 and Std. Dev. 0.944. The fourth statement sought to ascertain if The management information system of the firm has been crucial in delivering innovative customer services; and the responses also in the affirmative showed a mean score (\bar{x}) of 3.61 and Std. Dev. 1.338. The last statement sought to ascertain if the management information system of our company has been crucial in assisting employees to enhance their performance and productivity; and the responses also in the affirmative showed a mean score (\bar{x}) of 3.45 and Std. Dev. 1.355. Generally, Table 4.6 shows that the respondents agreed on all items of operations management information system with a mean score > 2.50 indicating a substantial and adequate level of affirmation. The results also indicate a low level disparity in the responses ($SD \leq 2.00$).

C Employee Performance

The interval scale was used in the research questionnaire, indicating five respond choices with Strongly Disagree= 5; Disagree=4; Neutral=3; Agree=2 and Strongly Agree=1. A base mean ($\bar{x} = 2.50$) as a result of the scaling type (5-point likert) was used to ascertain levels of affirmation to the indicators (where $\bar{x} \leq 2.50$ = poor and weak level of affirmation to the indicator; where $\bar{x} > 2.50$ = substantial and adequate level of affirmation to the indicator). Also, this section presents the response mean scores and standard deviations on each item in the questionnaire on employee vigor, employee dedication and employee absorption.

Employee Vigor

In the questionnaire, four research statements were stated on employee vigor with the response mean scores and standard deviations presented as follows:

Table 4: Descriptive Statistics for Employee Vigor

Descriptive Statistics for items on Employee Vigor					
	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
In our organization, employees always feel bursting with energy at work.	120	1	5	3.55	1.460
In our organization, vigor employee feels that organizational problem is his/her problem.	120	1	5	3.43	1.448
In our organization, employee put in extra time and effort for the organizational success.	120	1	5	4.32	1.062
The organization has a great deal of personal meaning to employees in our organisation	120	1	5	3.91	1.021
The employees in our organization enjoy sense of belonging.	120	1	5	4.08	1.178
Valid N (listwise)	120				

Source: SPSS Output version 23.0

The table determines the manifestation of employee vigor as a measure of employee engagement in which five research statements were stated in the questionnaire. It represents the accumulated sum from the respondents indicating the mean score and standard deviation. The first item was to ascertain if in I their organization, employees always feel bursting with energy at work; the results showed a mean score (\bar{x}) of 3.44 and Std. Dev. 1.315. The second item sought to know if in their organization, vigor employee feels that organizational problem is his/her problem; the result showed a mean score of (\bar{x}) of 4.00 and Std. Dev. 0.691.

Similarly, the third item was to ascertain if in their organization, employee put in extra time and effort for the organizational success; the responses generated were in the affirmative with a mean score (\bar{x}) of 3.43 and Std. Dev. 1.262. The fourth statement sought to ascertain if the organization has a great deal of personal meaning to employees in their organisation and the responses also in the affirmative showed a mean score (\bar{x}) of 4.08 and Std. Dev. 1.255. The last statement sought to ascertain if the employees in their organization enjoy sense of belonging; and the responses also in the affirmative showed a mean score (\bar{x}) of 3.61 and Std. Dev. 1.163. Generally, this shows that the respondents agreed on all items of employee vigor as a measure of employee performance with a mean score > 2.50 , indicating a substantial and adequate level of affirmation. The results also indicate a low level disparity in the responses ($SD \leq 2.00$).

Table 5: Descriptive Statistics for Employee Dedication

Descriptive Statistics for items on Employee dedication					
	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
In our organization, dedicated employee always feel proud about his or her work.	120	1	5	3.47	1.414
In our organization, dedicated employee helps the organization to achieve its objectives or goals.	120	1	5	3.65	1.281
In our organization, employee regarded the organization as part of his/her family.	120	1	5	3.98	1.290
The contribution of employees in our organization is always recognized.	120	3	5	4.23	.645
In our organization, social skill knowledge employee always promote effective relationship with others.	120	1	5	3.92	1.089
Valid N (listwise)	120				

Source: SPSS Output version 23.0

To determine the manifestation of employee dedication as a measure of employee performance in which five research statements were stated in the questionnaire. It represents the accumulated sum from the respondents indicating the mean score and standard deviation. It represents the accumulated sum from the respondents indicating the mean score and standard deviation. The first item was to ascertain if in their organization, dedicated employee always feel proud about his or her work; the results showed a mean score (x) of 4.18 and Std. Dev. 0.700. The second item sought to know if in their organization, dedicated employee helps the organization to achieve its objectives or goals.; the result showed a mean score of (x) of 3.86 and Std. Dev. 1.121. Similarly, the third item was to ascertain if in their organization, employee regarded the organization as part of his/her family.; the responses generated were in the affirmative with a mean score (x) of 3.60 and Std. Dev. 1.526. The fourth statement sought to if the contribution of employees in our organization is always recognized; the responses also in the affirmative showed a mean score (x) of 3.67 and Std. Dev. 1.227. The last statement sought to ascertain if in their organization, social skill knowledge employee always promotes effective relationship with others; and the responses also in the affirmative showed a mean score (x) of 3.61 and Std. Dev. 1.163. Generally, Table 4.10 shows that the respondents agreed on all items of process success as a measure of organizational success with a mean score > 2.50 , indicating a substantial and adequate level of affirmation. The results also indicate a low level disparity in the responses ($SD \leq 2.00$).

Employee Absorption

In the questionnaire, four research statements were stated on employee absorption with the response mean scores and standard deviations presented as follows:

Table 6: Descriptive Statistics for Employee Absorption

Descriptive Statistics for items on Employee Absorption					
	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Employees in our organization exercise high concentration at work.	120	1	5	3.52	1.449
In our organization, concentrated employee normally forget everything around him/her when working.	120	1	5	3.57	1.389
In our organization, workers are eager to contribute for the well-being and growth of the organization.	120	1	5	3.72	1.373
In our organization, concentrated employee always feels happy when working.	120	1	5	4.02	1.277
In our organization, effective communication of high knowledge employee with his/her subordinates always bring benefit to the organization.	120	1	5	4.17	1.118
Valid N (listwise)	120				

Source: SPSS Output version 23.0

The table determines the manifestation of employee absorption as a measure of employee performance in which five research statements were stated in the questionnaire. It represents the accumulated sum from the respondents indicating the mean score and standard deviation. The first item was to ascertain if employees in their organization exercise high concentration at work; the results showed a mean score (\bar{x}) of 3.88 and Std. Dev. 1.133. The second item sought to know if in their organization, a concentrated employee normally forgets everything around him/her when working. The result showed a mean score of (\bar{x}) of 3.44 and Std. Dev. 1.315. Similarly, the third item was to ascertain if in their organization, workers are eager to contribute to the well-being and growth of the organization. The responses generated were in the affirmative with a mean score (\bar{x}) of 3.66 and Std. Dev. 1.157. The fourth statement sought to ascertain if in their organization, concentrated employee always feels happy when working; the responses also in the affirmative showed a mean score (\bar{x}) of 3.62 and Std. Dev. 1.360. The last statement sought to ascertain if in their organization, effective communication of high

knowledge employee with his/her subordinates always bring benefit to the organization.; and the responses also in the affirmative showed a mean score (x) of 3.61 and Std. Dev. 1.163.

Generally, this shows that the respondents agreed on all items of employee absorption as a measure of employee engagement with a mean score > 2.50, indicating a substantial and adequate level of affirmation. The results also indicate a low level disparity in the responses ($SD \leq 2.00$).

Table 7: Descriptive Statistics for the measures of Employee Performance

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Vigor	120	2.40	5.00	3.8600	.79477
Dedication	120	1.80	5.00	3.8500	.91201
Absorption	120	1.60	5.00	3.7967	.96353
Valid N (listwise)	120				

Source: SPSS Output version 23.0

The data illustrates the summary of the statistics for the measures of the criterion variable – employee engagement with summarized values for central tendency based on the responses to the indicators. Results reveal high affirmative summaries for each measure, indicating that the measures are highly an observed phenomenon in deposit money banks in South-East, Nigeria.

Test of Hypotheses

This section of the study presents the results on the tests on the bivariate and null hypotheses of the study. The bivariate level of analysis presents evidence which illustrates the strength of the relationship between the dimensions of operations management system; and the measures of the criterion variable, employee performance namely: vigor, dedication and absorption. The tests for this section are two-tailed and as such emphasizes on no particular direction. The assessment of the bivariate relationships was carried out using the Spearman's rank order correlation with the precision for error fixed at 0.05 given the choice of the confidence interval of 95% at 0.80 – 0.99. Decision rule: The decision rule which applies for all bivariate test outcomes according to Bryman and Bell (2003), where:

Ho1: There is no significant relationship between operations management information system and employee vigor in deposit money banks in South East, Nigeria.

Therefore, based on empirical findings the null hypothesis earlier stated is hereby rejected and the alternate upheld. Thus, there is a statistically significant relationship between operations management information system and employee vigor in deposit money banks in South East, Nigeria.

Ho2: There is no significant relationship between operations management information system and employee dedication in deposit money banks in South East, Nigeria.

Therefore, based on empirical findings the null hypothesis earlier stated is hereby rejected and the alternate upheld. Thus, there is a statistically significant relationship between operations management information system and employee dedication in deposit money banks in South East, Nigeria.

Ho3: There is no significant relationship between operations management information system and employee vigor in deposit money banks in South East, Nigeria.

Table 8: Correlations for Operations Management Information System and Employee Performance measures						
			OIMS	Vigor	Dedication	Absorption
Spearman's rho	OIMS	Correlation Coefficient	1.000	.809**	.500*	.242**
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.	.000	.029	.008
		N	120	120	120	120
	Vigor	Correlation Coefficient	.809**	1.000	.257**	.337**
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.	.005	.000
		N	120	120	120	120
	Dedication	Correlation Coefficient	.500*	.257**	1.000	.907**
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.029	.005	.	.000
		N	120	120	120	120
	Absorption	Correlation Coefficient	.242**	.337**	.907**	1.000
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.008	.000	.000	.
		N	120	120	120	120
**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).						
*. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).						

Source: SPSS Output Version 23.0

Therefore, based on empirical findings, the null hypothesis earlier stated is hereby rejected and the alternate upheld. Thus, there is a statistically significant relationship between operations management information system and employee absorption in deposit money banks in South East, Nigeria.

Discussion of Results

This study examined the relationship between operations management information system and employee performance in deposit money banks in South East, Nigeria. This finding implies that when an organization is OMIS-oriented in their day to day activities, it will be faster and easier for them to retrieve information and such information could be utilized for organizational performance to be more successful. Mathis (2006) noted that to determine a set of competitors, it requires knowledge of which customers might be using this product and for what purpose.

This finding reinforces previous research of Rananathan and Kannabira (2012) in which it was discovered that the main objective of information systems is to improve and enhance the potential role of the organization in terms of improving its overall financial performance.

The results from the data analysis revealed that there is a significant relationship between operations management information system and employee engagement of deposit money banks in South East, Nigeria. This current finding was also consistent with Mugenda (2006) who argued that effective operations management information system fosters the easy dissemination of information and knowledge by separating content from its physical location.

Summary of Findings

From the data analysed, the summary of statistical values and their interpretations respectively were recorded and the summary of the findings are presented as follows:

- There is a significant relationship between operations management information system and employee vigor in deposit money banks in South East, Nigeria.
- There is a significant relationship between operations management information system and employee dedication in deposit money banks in South East, Nigeria.
- There is a significant relationship between operations management information system and employee absorption in deposit money banks in South East, Nigeria.

CONCLUSION

The current business environment is very dynamic and has undergone rapid changes as a result of technological innovations, increased awareness and demands from customers. Business organizations, especially of the 21st century, operate in complex and competitive environment characterized by these changing conditions and highly unpredictable economic climate.

Therefore, based on the findings, this study concludes that there was a positive and significant relationship between operations management information system and employee performance in deposit money banks in South-East, Nigeria. This implies that there is an impact of information availability on people's ability to process and use information in short and long term planning and in decision making tasks.

RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that managers of deposit money banks should make organizations not to be able to make large use of documents and formal methods by using information systems to decrease the amount of useless relations. Banks by using management information systems should provide conditions to make needed decisions in changing, describing, analysing the gathered data, setting budget, evaluating workers' performances, employing and firing personnel of their own section.

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Employee Voice and Workers' Well-Being: Empirical Evidence from the Food and Beverages Manufacturing Companies in Rivers State, Nigeria

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Abstract: *Employees have been the most important element of any organization whereby success or otherwise of a given organization depends largely on the performance of its employees. If employees are not allowed to participate in decision making, it becomes very difficult for them to showcase the skills, knowledge and abilities they possess. This study therefore examines the relationship between employee voice and workers' well-being in food and beverages manufacturing companies in Rivers State, Nigeria. The study used a cross-sectional design. The population of this study is the seven (7) food and beverages manufacturing companies out of the Thirty-four (34) manufacturing companies registered with the Manufacturers Association of Nigeria (MAN), as obtained from the 2019 updated Directory of the Rivers State zone of the Association. These seven (7) companies were purposively selected because of their peculiarity of being in the same grouping of production, that is, food and beverages. The population element for the study was 208 employees, of which a sample size of 137 was extracted using Taro Yamane's sample size determination formula. Data were analyzed using mean and standard deviation for univariate analysis while Spearman Rank Order correlation Coefficient was used to test all stated hypothesis. The findings of the study showed that there was a significant relationship between Employee Voice and the measures of workers Well-being in food and beverages manufacturing companies in Rivers State, Nigeria. The study recommends that organizations need to encourage employees' participation in all aspects of decision making as a crucial determinant of employee functioning and job performance.*

Keywords: *Employee Voice, Worker Well-Being, Psychological Well-being, Social Well-being, Physical Well-being*

INTRODUCTION

Undoubtedly, employees have been the most important element of any organization whereby success or otherwise of a given organization depends largely on the performance of its employees. This is because the performance of employees in any organization is vital, not only for the growth of the organization, but also for the growth of individual employee (Meyer and Peng, 2016). Employers believe that making employees happier and healthier increases their

efforts, contributions, productivity and level of performance. As a result, managers of organizations devote considerable organizational resources to enhancing employee well-being. Employee well-being has to do with creating an enabling and supportive work environment that promotes healthy and safety working conditions, learning culture, work-life balance, stress management and anti-bullying practices (Armstrong, 2017). Employee well-being also refers to workers feeling of satisfactions and happiness arising from the work environment and the work itself. The importance of worker's well-being cannot be over emphasized. Wright and Bannet (2007) maintained that where there is worker satisfaction at work, they are likely to stay in the same workplace. Streek (2005) also opined that well-being influences the development of friendship and contributes to a sense of familiarity, which motivates people to stay at the same workplace.

Due to the importance of workers well-being; various studies have being conducted on this concept. They have sought to link employees well-being to various variables such as turnover, burnout, workplace productivity, etc (Wright & Bonnet, 2007; Judge, Thoresen, Bono & Patron, 2001; Wnght & Cropanzano, 2000). These literatures suggest that there is a strong relationship between employee well-being and less turnover, less burnout and workplace productivity. Despite the increasing awareness to promote workers well-being as it helps reduce turnover, burnout, the literature posits that most corporate leaders are still hesitant in paying adequate attention to it probably because of the cost implication (Hughes, Patrick, Hannon, Harris and Ghosh, 2011) and reluctance to invest, hence the need for a common voice by the employees. Perlow and Williams (2003) postulate that when employee voice is stifled, it can lead to many negative outcomes their well-being inclusive. Contrarily, when it is allowed to flourish, some of the accruable gains could range from reducing employee turnover to improving employee job tenure and productivity and enhancing employers' investment in human capital (Lewin, 2014).

Inspite of the widely established business and associated benefits of using employee voice to ensure workers well-being outcomes in many organisations in Nigeria work spaces, it has been skewed in favour of the organisations i.e. most corporate leaders see employee voice from the angle of what it takes in only for the organization. Head and Lucas (2004) specifically posit that organisations are usually not too eager to formally embrace the mutual nature of the employment relationships; hence they would do everything to stifle or grant partial employee voice. This has been the bane of employee voice in Nigeria! While voice has become a tool used to further organizational interest and worker well-being in the advanced economies for decades now, the contrast seem to be the case in Nigeria (Akinwale, 2018; Anyago, Ojera and Ochieng, (2015).

Allowing employee voice to thrive so that positive workers well-being outcomes can be reaped has remained a research concern that has drawn serious attention which has led to several related studies. From the standpoint of literature reviewed, most related studies had basically focused on employee voice and some fractions of workers well-being viz: employee voice and job satisfaction; enhancing performance through employee engagement; employee voice and organizational performance: employee voice in management and employee health; employee voice and mental well-being; effects of high-involvement work systems on employee satisfaction; job attitudes between unionized and non-unionized employees; job characteristics, employee voice and well-being; (Esievo, F. 2018; Patrice and David, 2018; Rona, Elinor and Martin, 2018; Joshua, Antonio, and O'neil, 2016; Kim, Macduffie and Pil, 2010; Macleod and Clarke, 2009).

Yet others focused on employee voice and employee involvement and participation, employee voice and workers' compensation, employee voice and employee involvement, employee voice and employee participation (Adrian, Paul, Senia and Xu, 2018). It was therefore clear from the literature that, there were not enough specific studies that attempted to examine the linkage between employee voice and the totality of workers' well-being in the public universities in Rivers State, Nigeria. Therefore, this paper will bridge this identifiable gap by empirically discussing the relationship between employee voice and workers' well-being in food and beverages manufacturing companies in Rivers State, Nigeria.

Conceptual Framework

In order to pursue with clarity and precision the purpose of this study, the conceptual framework in figure 1 reflecting employee voice as the independent variable (IV) which was used as a unidimensional construct while workers well-being as dependent variable (DV) was measured with Worker Psychological Well-being, Worker Social Well-being and Worker Physical Well-being.

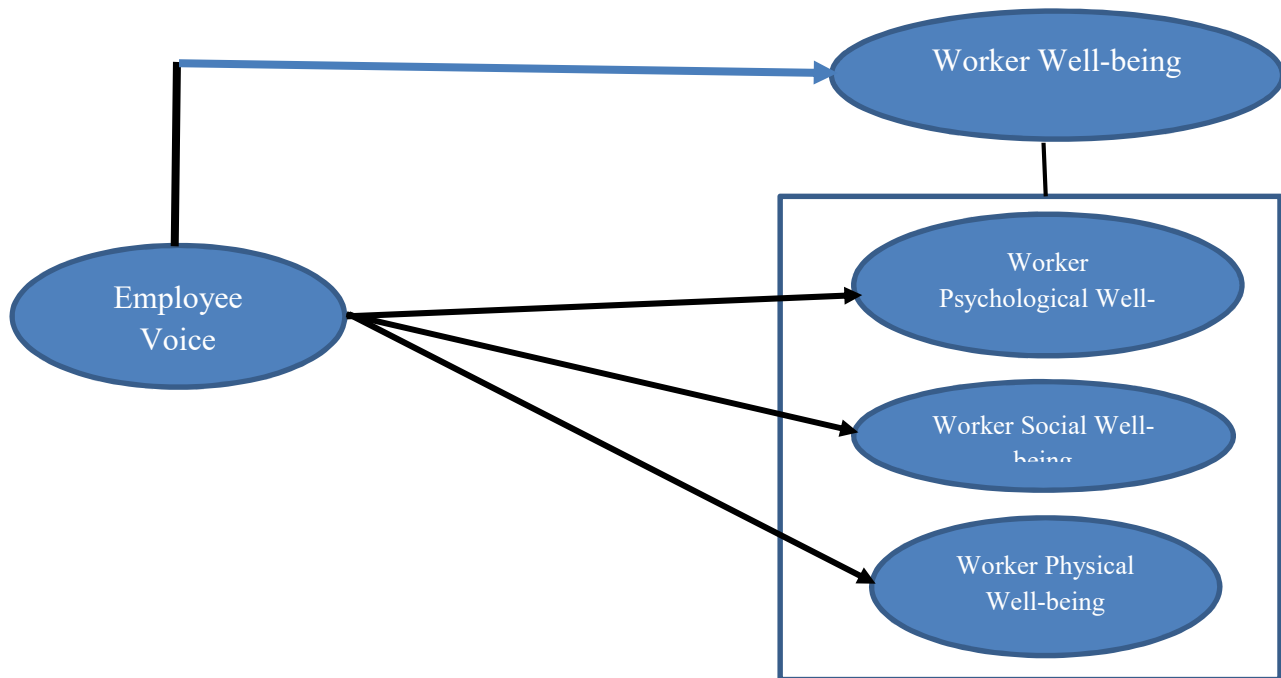


Figure 1: Conceptual Framework of employee voice and workers' well-being of food and beverages manufacturing companies in Rivers State, Nigeria

Source: Researcher's Conceptualization from Review of Related Literature, 2022

Objectives of the Study

In line with the purpose of the study, the following are the objectives this study intends to seek:

- (i)** To examine the relationship between employee voice and workers' psychological well-being in food and beverages manufacturing companies in Rivers State, Nigeria.
- (ii)** To examine the relationship between employee direct voice and workers' social well-being in food and beverages manufacturing companies in Rivers State, Nigeria.
- (iii)** To examine the relationship between employee grievance procedure and workers' physical well-being in food and beverages manufacturing companies in Rivers State, Nigeria.

Research Questions

Based on the above objectives, the following research questions were raised.

- i)** What is the relationship between employee indirect voice and workers' well-being in food and beverages manufacturing companies in Rivers State, Nigeria.
- (ii)** What is the relationship between employee direct voice and workers' well-being in food and beverages manufacturing companies in Rivers State, Nigeria.
- (iii)** What is the relationship between employee grievance procedure and workers' well-being in food and beverages manufacturing companies in Rivers State, Nigeria.

Literature Review

Theoretical Foundation

The organizational justice theory is adopted as the theoretical framework for this study. The Organizational justice theory relates to the perceived fairness of processes, outcomes and interactions within the decision making processes of an organization between management and employees (Tyler, 1987; Greenberg, 1990; Saunders, Thornhill and Lewis, 2002; Nowakowski and Conlon, 2005; Korsgaard, Schweiger, and Sapienza, (1995). Organizational justice has its roots in the justice theories attached to theories of legal and organizational decision making and is comprised of three forms of justice (Rawls, 1999). First, distributive justice or the satisfaction with the outcome of a decision provides a measure of fairness for how justice is distributed amongst the disputants. Second, procedural justice, or the satisfaction with the process used to reach a decision refers to the experience of fairness by the disputants (Deutcsch, 1985; Masterson, Lewis, Goldman & Taylor, 2000). Third, interactional justice, or the interpersonal treatment of the disputants which is believed to be a sub-component of procedural justice and indicates that the process must not only be experienced as being fair, but must also be accompanied by a sense of being treated with respect and dignity (Bies & Moag,1986; Tyler, 1991). Organizational Justice Theory suggests that employees will be satisfied if they feel that they are fully involved in the decision-making process of the organization.

Conceptual Review

Employee Voice

Research and analysis have grown around the employee voice concept in a variety of disciplines and they often see it in different ways. Some refer to it as involvement, others participation while yet others call it empowerment or engagement. It has become an elastic term meaning different things to different policy, academic and practitioner actors (Budd *et al*, 2010; Wilkinson, Bacon, Redman & Snell, 2010). These researchers explore the subject from different frames of reference and with different concepts and methods. According to Boxal and Purcell (2011), Employee voice comprise of all kinds of opportunities where individual or collective employees will have an opportunity to express themselves and exert some influence on workplace decisions. In a more apt explanation, Purcell (2014), presents another dimension of employee voice as demonstration of individual employee displeasure among managers and subordinates or through employee grievance procedure; secondly, demonstration of collective employee displeasure raised by trade unions through collective bargaining action; thirdly, contribution to management decision-making process through a two-way communication, problem solving, suggestion systems and attitude evaluations; and lastly, through shared partnership understanding, joint consultative forum and work councils (Anyago, Ojera & Ochieng, 2015).

Similarly, Morrison (2011) posit that Employee voice is described as championing and speaking up on certain fundamental issues bothering employee productive work behaviour. According to Burris, (2012) at any point in time when employees intentionally provide suggestions, concerns, information regarding issues or work-related opinions to someone in higher position of a corporate organisation, they engage in upward voice mechanism, however, when they cease such meaningful contributions, they are showing silence and depriving their organisation of potentially useful information. Labour unions popularised and contributed to the concept of employee voice has been practised today. They were argued to be of economic value to both employers and employees precisely because they offered an independent voice channel for addressing potentially conflictual issues such as the determination of pay and conditions, and the resolution of discipline and grievance issues (Freeman and Medoff, 1984). They have benefited and still benefits both the employees and employers alike (Levinson, 1965) today. As a tool, employees have used them to resolve problems or to collectively challenge managements on rights or issues related to the workplace well-being (Milward, Bryson & Forth, 2000).

Worker Well-Being

The concept of well-being has several definitions and a plethora of views are available in literature as to what it is. The variation in defining this concept is because of its multidimensional and interdisciplinary nature (Hird, 2003). The term has the advantage of almost being understood naturally. In popular language, it usually relates to health, as in the most visible use of the term in health magazines and newspapers. However, it is much more than the absence of ill health and relates to all aspects of a person's working and non-working life. Well-being has generally been referred to as "a generalised feeling of happiness" (Schmutte & Ryff, 1997). Happiness is also considered a mental state of well-being. Individuals who score high on well-being generally also have a happy disposition. Block and Kremen (1996) suggest that well-being is an individual's ability to monitor and modulate constraints effectively and the ability or capacity to self-evaluate

the surroundings. This involves an individual's capacity to adapt to a changing environment. Therefore, some internal mechanisms influence how individuals interact with the external world, which influences their well-being. Well-being in the workplace is, in part, a function of helping employees do what is naturally right for them by freeing them up to do so through behaviors that influence and therefore increase the workers well-being. Workplace well-being is presently taking centre stage because corporate leaders, policy makers, and workers are now aware that workers' well-being is a crucial determinant of employee functioning and job performance (De Neve, Diener, Tay & Xuereb, 2013).

Stefania, (2014) argued that well-being can be used to refer to the mental, psychological, physical, social or emotional aspects of the worker. This indicates everything that has to do with the working and non-working life of the individual. Similarly, Warr, (1990) describes well-being as a broader concept that takes into consideration the "whole person". Again, the whole person is made up of the psychological, physical social spiritual, emotional etc. aspects of an individual. Well-being is how well one is doing in relation to the natural environment one lives in, one's occupation, economics and personal finances, health, social relationships, education and skills (Caan, 2016), well-being factors which include the provision of an adequate environment, including access to food, shelter, clothing, and financial stability as well as reasonable levels of security from harm. It includes positive physical health, as expressed by more than the absence of disease but also the presence of enough energy and strength to meet environmental demands. It involves a healthy psychological state that includes the ability to make flexible psychological adaptations to the external environment, the ability to act with some autonomy and self-direction in life and the opportunity to express talents. An individual experiencing well-being is able to establish mutually supportive relationships in which the opportunity to give to others is as essential as the opportunity to receive support. And it includes the ability to live a purposeful and meaningful life (Adler and Kwon, 2002).

Measures of Workers Well-Being

Psychological Well-being

Day and Randell (2014) defined psychologically healthy workplaces as 'workplaces that not only aim to reduce negative demands and stressors but also promote organization resources to improve well-being'. For a workplace be psychological balanced, the following has to be in place viz: a culture of support, respect and fairness; employee involvement and development; work that is safe, ergonomically based, and offering tasks that fit employee needs and skills; interpersonal relationships with supervisors, co-workers and clients; work-life balance; and high levels of corporate social responsibility (Kelloway & Day, 2005). This is a very important endeavour that should be active and ongoing on the part of management of organisations. Where these are present, the experiences lead to higher frequency of joy, interest, and love among their employees. Over time, this serves to build a bond between the individual employee and other employees in the organization. Robertson and Flint-Taylor, (2008) defined psychological well-being at work as, the affective and purposive state people experience while at work. Psychological well-being is focused on the subjective experience of workers. It has two main components; hedonic and eudaimonic (Ryan & Deci, 2001). The hedonic component is focused on experiences of pleasure.

Furthermore it is focused on finding a balance between the positive and negative feelings and thoughts in individual's judgment. It is based on the notion that increased pleasure and decreased pain leads to happiness. The eudaimonic component is focused on the realization and fulfilment of human potential. It is based on the premise that people feel happy if they experience life purpose, challenges and growth (Grant, Christianson & Price, 2007) Both of these components together form the psychological well-being of workers. The indicants of psychological well-being as outlined by (Keyes & Grzywacz, 2000) viz: job satisfaction, self-respect, personal growth, purpose in life, environmental mastery and autonomy etc. The psychological well-being of the worker is linked to the positive economic growth of an organisation because it minimises organisational problems such as absenteeism and low performance in the workplace. The demands of the workplace can also affect the psychological well-being of the individual. Heavy workloads, unconducive work environments e.g. noise levels, lighting etc. and poor relationships with colleagues can lead to poor psychological well-being. Positive or negative behaviours of supervisors greatly influence an employee's physical and psychological well-being. An individual's psychological well-being can also impact physical health. Individuals who experience significant amounts of stress from various areas of their life, such as work, can experience negative physical health outcomes (Danna and Griffin, 1999)

Physical Well-being

According to Kahn's (1990) conceptualization, employees become more engaged when their basic needs are met and this includes their physical well-being need. The positive outcome that result when these needs are met in the workplace serve to broaden the employees' attention and action in areas related to the welfare of the business. Experience has shown that most employees have an inherent need to contribute to an organization or larger entity when their needs and that of the organization are met. Physical well-being is concerned with the bodily health and functioning of a person. The physical health of workers is of vital importance, if not, they would be unable to perform their tasks. Having enough energy to get things done on a daily basis is also a part of the physical well-being of workers (Ryan & Frederick, 1997). If an individual for example does not get enough sleep it decreases their level of energy and well-being throughout the day.

Organizational researchers study the link between work and worker physical well-being in at least three ways. First, work is a potential source of injury or disease (Danna & Griffin, 1999). Second, work can be a source of stress (Karasek & Theorell, 1990). Thirdly, work as source of direct and indirect benefits (Adler & Kwon, 1993). The physical dimensions include nourishment, shelter, health care, clothing, and mobility etc. Many employees do not have an opportunity to engage with physical activity during work and research suggests that physical activity plays a vital role in reducing stress (Brailovskaia, Teismann & Margraf, 2018). Worker well-being can influence, and be influenced by their physical health (Danna & Griffin, 1999). When an individual experiences physical injury or illness, this can negatively impact their well-being through increased feelings of discomfort and pain (Ryan & Deci, 2001). An individual's physical health could also limit someone's ability to take up opportunities which could help improve their well-being, such as participating in physical and social activities (Ryan & Deci, 2001).

Social Well-being

Whereas psychological well-being and physical well-being are properties of the individual employee, social well-being focuses on the interactions that occur between employees (Bradbury

and Lichtenstein, 2000). This dimension of well-being is concerned with the relationships one has with other people and how an individual communicates and socializes with them (Grant *et al.*, 2007). The difference between social well-being and physical and psychological well-being in an organizational context is that social well-being is focused on the relationships between employees while physical and psychological well-being is focused on the individual themselves (Bradbury and Lichtenstein, 2000). Just like well-being, social well-being has been operationalized in numerous ways. Some have operationalized it using gauges that mirror belonging, trust, social support, reciprocity, leader-member exchange, contribution, coordination, and integration (Adler and Kwon, 2002; Gerstner & Day, 1997; Kramer, 1999).

Cohen and Strauss, (1985) describe social well-being as having ready support from colleagues at work or friends and family in times of need and also been seen as a valued support provider. As per Larson, (1993) and Keyes, (1998) social well-being denotes the quality of one's relationship with other people and community. On the other hand, more recent work has operationalized social well-being in terms of behaviors that reflect workers and organizational participation and membership (Coleman 1988; Putnam 2000). McDowell and Newell, 1987 opined that individual social well-being can be conceptualized as having two features, social adjustment and social support. Social adjustment refers to the satisfaction with relationships or the performance of roles. Social support refers to the quality and number of persons whom an individual trusts and can rely on, as well as the degree to which one is needed and matters to others and society (Larson, 1993). Employees at work need to feel a sense of belonging with organizational goals as well as with colleagues.

Relationship between Employee Voice and Worker Well-Being

The employees are the mainstay of any organization, the greater the opportunity of being allowed to speak up concerning work related dissatisfaction, opportunity to participate in decision making and work related issues in organisations, the more beneficial it will be for both the employees and the organisation (Marchington, 2001). Allowing employees the opportunity to voice almost always leads to improved workers' well-being. Employee voice and workers well-being are both asset to performance driven organisations as lack of employee voice and or low worker well-being have both been linked to low productivity and eventually undesirable economic consequences for an organisation and a country at large. Employee voice e.g. union voice in general enhances workers' welfare. A number of influential studies have established the link between union voice and workers' welfare in the followings viz: levels of pay either in terms of a direct premium attributable to unions or through reducing pay inequality (Freeman 1980; Booth 1995; Gosling & Machin 1995; Clark & Oswald, 1996; Card, 1996; Card, Lemieux & Riddell, 2003; Budd & Na 2000; Metcalf, Hansen & Charlwood, 2001; Hirsch 2004, Blanchflower & Bryson, 2004).

Aside from their effect on pay, unions have also been linked to a number of other well-being improving changes for members, which include access to employer provided training (Booth 1991; Acemoglu, Aghion and Violante, 2001; Booth, Francesconi and Zoega, 2003; Waddoups, 2012), risk sharing (Malcomson, 1983), health care and pension plans (Buchmueller, Dinardo & Valletta, 2002), workplace and occupational health and safety (Donado and Walde, 2012), family friendly policies (Budd & Mumford, 2004), and curbing discrimination (Phanindra & Peled, 1999). More generally unions uphold members' interest in collective bargaining on issues such as self-respect,

transfers, promotions and grievances, among others, in the spirit of Freeman and Medoff, (1984) collective voice. The extent, to which management is perceived to consult and inform workers, that is providing the basis for employee voice, plays a very significant role here. Unions provide the voice option for workers to express concerning their well-being.

The literature shows that employee direct voice can have positive effects for both employees' psychological well-being and their motivation. This finding earned employee direct voice a 'place in the policy priorities of the European Union, most notably through Directive 2002/14EC on the Information and Consultation of Employees (Budd & Zagelmeyer, 2010). It has the effect of enhancing the utilisation of workers' experiences and skills, enhances their self-efficacy, and improves job satisfaction and work-life balance (Boxall and Macky, 2014; Gallie, 2013; Parker, 2003; Klein, Ralls, Smith-Major, Douglas, 2000); Cotton, Vollrath, Froggatt, Lengnick-Hall and Jennings, 1988). Theoretically, the combined effect of both factors is greater than each one alone. We infer from the foregoing discussion that:

- H₀₁:** There is no significant relationship between employee voice and psychological well-being in food and beverages manufacturing companies in Rivers State.
- H₀₂:** There is no significant relationship between employee voice and social well-being in food and beverages manufacturing companies in Rivers State.
- H₀₃:** There is no significant relationship between employee voice and physical well-being in food and beverages manufacturing companies in Rivers State.

Methodology

The study used a cross-sectional design. The population of this study was the seven (7) food and beverages manufacturing companies out of the Thirty-four (34) manufacturing companies registered with the Manufacturers Association of Nigeria (MAN), as obtained from the 2019 updated Directory of the Rivers State zone of the Association. These seven (7) companies were purposively selected because of their peculiarity of being in the same grouping of production, that is, food and beverages. The population element for the study was 208 employees, of which a sample size of 137 was extracted using Taro Yamane's sample size determination formula. Data was sourced primarily using the structured questionnaire instrument. All items within the study variables were scaled on a five-point Likert scale ranging from 5 = Strongly Agree; 4 = Agree; 3 = Neutral; 2 = Disagree and 1 = Disagree Agree. Tests for the reliability of the instrument was carried out using the Cronbach alpha coefficient as shown in table 1. Data were analyzed using mean and standard deviation for univariate analysis while Spearman Rank Oder correlation Coefficient was used to test all stated hypothesis.

Table 1 Reliability Test

S/N	Variables	Number of Items	Cronbach Alpha Value
1	Employee Voice	3	0.757
2	Psychological Well-being	3	0.829
3	Social Well-being	3	0.915
4	Physical Well-being	3	0.871

Source: SPSS Output

Data Analysis and Results

In this section of the study, the findings are presented and analysed. all 137 questionnaire copies were distributed accordingly and with a success return rate of 125 copies. Retrieved copies were subsequently coded into the statistical package for the social sciences (SPSS version 25.0).

Univariate Analysis

The univariate analysis for the distribution of the variable describes the properties and its manifestations within the context of the investigation.

Table 2: The univariate distributions for the constructs of the study

Constructs	Items	Mean	S.D
Employee Voice	There are genuine consultations between management and employees before decisions that affect employees are taken at my place of work	3.96	1.319
	Other than on issues affecting me at work, my views are sought on some other work related issues	4.00	1.217
	Our Trade Union ensures the promotion of employee right to respect in the workplace	3.89	1.242
Psychological Well-being	Most days I feel a sense of accomplishment from working.	4.11	1.048
	Psychological wellbeing can forecast the future performance of the individuals	4.22	1.272
	Positive psychological health leads to higher work motivation	4.22	1.197
Social Well-being	My company organizes social functions and get together parties for all staff	4.05	1.268
	My work is such that I am able to balance work and family	4.04	.860
	My supervisors have good relationship with me and they are friendly	4.00	.882
Physical Well-being	The company provides me with adequate leave and holiday period	4.07	1.245
	My organization places and maintains its worker in an occupational environment adapted to their physiological and psychological capabilities	4.20	.779
	Wellness programs reduce employees' health hazards and illness.	4.05	.848

Source: SPSS Output, 2022.

The Table 2 above illustrates the distribution for the constructs of the study based on summaries obtained from their manifest properties. The distribution which is based on a 5 – point Likert scale format of 1 = strongly disagree, 2 = disagree, 3 = moderately agree, 4 = agree and 5 = strongly agree. The distributions for the variables demonstrate evident levels of agreement to the

properties and manifestations of the constructs; where mean scores (\bar{x}) are observed to range mostly between $\bar{x} = 3.0 - 4.0$, it is evident that constructs such as Employee Voice, Psychological Well-being, Social Well-being, and Physical Well-being are substantial and well manifested realities within the context of the study.

Bivariate Analysis (Test of Hypothesis)

The bivariate analysis involving the test for the bivariate relations is presented on Table 3. The decision rule which applies for all bivariate test outcomes is stated as follows: where $P < 0.05$, reject hypothesis on the basis of evidence significant relationship; and where $P > 0.05$, accept hypothesis on the basis of insignificant relationship between the variables.

Ho₁: There is no significant relationship between Employee Voice and Psychological Well-being in food and beverages manufacturing companies in Rivers State, Nigeria.

Table 3: Correlation of Employee Voice and Psychological Well-being

		Employee Voice	Psychological Well-being
Spearman's rho	Employee Voice	Correlation Coefficient	1.000
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.871**
		N	.000
	Psychological Well-being	Correlation Coefficient	.871**
		Sig. (2-tailed)	1.000
		N	.000

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

Source: SPSS Output, 2022

Table 3 showed the relationship between Employee Voice and Psychological Well-being using Spearman's Rank-order Correlation Coefficients techniques. From the analysis the result showed that Employee Voice has a very strong positive and significant relationship with Psychological Well-being at ($\rho = 0.871$, and $P\text{-}v = 0.000 < 0.05\%$). The null hypothesis was therefore rejected and restated that there is a very strong positive and significant relationship between Employee Voice and Psychological Well-being in food and beverages manufacturing companies in Rivers State, Nigeria.

Ho₂: There is no significant relationship between Employee Voice and Social Well-being in food and beverages manufacturing companies in Rivers State, Nigeria.

Table 4: Correlation of Employee Voice and Social Well-being

		Employee Voice	Social Well-being
Spearman's rho	Employee Voice	Correlation Coefficient	1.000
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.684**
		N	.000
	Social Well-being	Correlation Coefficient	.684**
		Sig. (2-tailed)	1.000
		N	.000

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

Source: SPSS Output, 2022

Table 4 showed the relationship between Employee Voice and Social Well-being using Spearman's Rank-order Correlation Coefficients techniques. From the analysis the result showed

that Employee Voice has a very strong positive and significant relationship with Social Well-being at ($\rho = 0.684$, and $P-v = 0.000 < 0.05\%$). The null hypothesis was therefore rejected and restated that there is a very strong positive and significant relationship between Employee Voice and Social Well-being in food and beverages manufacturing companies in Rivers State, Nigeria.

H₀₃: There is no significant relationship between Employee Voice and Physical Well-being in food and beverages manufacturing companies in Rivers State, Nigeria.

Table 5: Correlation of Employee Voice and Physical Well-being

		Employee Voice	Physical Well-being
Spearman's rho	Employee Voice	Correlation Coefficient	1.000
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.945**
		N	.000
	Physical Well-being	Correlation Coefficient	.945**
		Sig. (2-tailed)	1.000
		N	.000

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

Source: SPSS Output, 2022

Table 5 showed the relationship between Employee Voice and Physical Well-being using Spearman's Rank-order Correlation Coefficients techniques. From the analysis the result showed that Employee Voice has a very strong positive and significant relationship with Physical Well-being at ($\rho = 0.945$, and $P-v = 0.000 < 0.05\%$). The null hypothesis was therefore rejected and restated that there is a very strong positive and significant relationship between Employee Voice and Physical Well-being in food and beverages manufacturing companies in Rivers State, Nigeria.

Discussion of Findings

The study examines the relationship between Employee Voice and workers Well-being in food and beverages manufacturing companies in Rivers State, Nigeria. The findings of the study showed that there was a significant relationship between Employee Voice and the measures of workers Well-being in food and beverages manufacturing companies in Rivers State, Nigeria. The first hypothesis (**H₀₁**) assumed no significant relationship between employee voice and psychological well-being in food and beverages manufacturing companies in Rivers State. However, the result from the analysis shows a positive and significant relationship between employee voice and psychological well-being in food and beverages manufacturing companies in Rivers State. The explanation to this finding can be found in Saks (2006) suggestion that because of opportunities to voice, employees perceive autonomy in the job and organizational affairs which brings intrinsic motivation among them. This intrinsic motivation gets expressed in the form of vigor, absorption, and dedication in their work and organization.

Similarly, the results rejected the second hypothesis (**H₀₂**) which state that there is no significant relationship between employee voice and social well-being in manufacturing companies in Rivers State. Analysis shows a positive and significant relationship between employee voice and social well-being in manufacturing companies in Rivers State. This result confirms to the findings of Kataria et al. (2013) who argued that an engaged employee is more committed to the

well-being of the organization. The results also rejected the third hypothesis (**H₀₃**) which assumed no significant relationship between employee voice and physical well-being in food and beverages manufacturing companies in Rivers State. Analysis shows a positive and significant relationship between employee voice and physical well-being in food and beverages manufacturing companies in Rivers State. This confirms to Andrew and Sofian (2012) findings that employees who believe their opinion and suggestions are listened and valued are more engaged and contribute to organization's productivity. The opportunity to voice is perceived as a support provided by the employer, to which the employees respond with positive behaviors within the organization (Farndale et al., 2011).

Conclusion And Recommendations

This study examined the relationship between employee voice and workers well-being in manufacturing companies in Rivers State. The study revealed that there was a significant relationship between: (i) employee voice and psychological well-being in food and beverages manufacturing companies in Rivers State; (ii) employee voice and social well-being in food and beverages manufacturing companies in Rivers State and (iii) employee voice and physical well-being in food and beverages manufacturing companies in Rivers State. This relationship between these two variables is explained with the help of organizational justice theory. The theory relates to the perceived fairness of processes, outcomes and interactions within the decision making processes of an organization between management and employees. This develops positive feeling in their minds which is internally rewarding. As a result, they perceive shared responsibility for the success or failure of the organization (Lawler, 2001). Based on the findings and conclusions, the following recommends were made:

- Managers need to encourage employees' participation in all aspects of decision making if they expect them to perform at their peak for organizational performance to be improved.
- By adopting employee voice as an engagement strategy, management of food and beverages manufacturing companies can increase the psychological well-being level of its employees.
- Management of food and beverages manufacturing companies should create an avenue where employees' perception of getting the opportunity to voice and being heard, make them more engaged in the organization which will lead to their social well-being.
- The study indicates the needs of strengthening the mechanisms of employee voice. These mechanisms may include facilitating face to face and online interaction of the employees with the senior management.

Contribution

It provides the management, policymakers and stakeholders in the food and beverages manufacturing companies a promising way to enhance employees' well-being to the organization. Thus, this research is a major contribution to advancing literature on employee voice as well as workers well-being. The findings of this study have the potential to motivate industry practitioners to create ample opportunities for employee voice. The increased

opportunity to voice may affect the well-being level of the workforce thus enhancing their contribution toward the overall effectiveness of the organization.

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Acceptability of Locally Made Cosmetic Product: A Study of Shea Butter in Ebonyi State Nigeria

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Abstract: *This study centered on “acceptability of locally made cosmetic product: A study of Shea butter in Ebonyi state Nigeria”. The general objective of this study was to find out the factors responsible for the acceptability of locally made cosmetic product using Shea butter (okwoma) as a study in Ebonyi state. The specific objectives of this study was to: determine the influences of functionality on consumer’s acceptability for locally made Shea butter cosmetic product in Ebonyi State, and to find out if consumer lifestyle influences the use of Shea butter cosmetic product in Ebonyi South Senatorial Zone, Ebonyi State. The study adopted a survey research design approach. Topman’s formular was used to determine the sample size for the users of Shea butter. Data was collected from 289 respondents through convenient questionnaire. Data was examined for validity and reliability using Cronbach alpha internal consistency. For inferential analysis, the researcher used the statistical package of social science (SPSS) version 20 using Pearson Coefficient of correlation. It was found in the study that there was strong and positive significant relationship between functionality of Shea butter and consumer’s acceptability. Again, lifestyle and consumer acceptability for Shea butter. The study conclude that if Shea butter cosmetic product work as expected by the consumer(s), consumers will be buying the product compare to other cosmetic product. Consumer lifestyle and attitude may constitute an important aspect in purchasing intention. The implications of the study shows that functionality of Shea butter has a greater impact in consumer buying decision whether to accept and use Shea butter or not in Ebonyi State, Nigeria. It is recommended that sellers of Shea butter should create awareness on the sells of Shea butter cosmetic product. The information from the study will help the sellers to pass knowledge to users of Shea butter cosmetic and also need for them to accept it after usage.*

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the Study

Cosmetics are products used to enhance or change the appearance of the face, fragrance or the texture of the body. Cosmetics that are applied to the face to enhance one's appearance are known as makeup which include items such as; lipstick, mascara, eye shadow, foundation, blush, highlighter, bronzer and several other products. Cosmetic body art is argued to have been the earliest form of a ritual in human culture. Cosmetics were used in ancient Rome, although much of Roman literature suggests that it was frowned upon (Power, 2010).

In order to encourage local manufacturing products including cosmetics, import restrictions were introduced under the comprehensive import supervision scheme in 1979. Certain classes of

goods were banned from being imported and restrictions were imposed on importation of certain other goods through the requirement of import licenses or increase in import duties. This was a tremendous opportunity presented to indigenous producers to launch new Nigeria bands that should view for consumer acceptance in it product categories affected. In 1986, the Structural Adjustment Programme (SAP) was introduced and new industrial policy is well as export scheme programmer was promulgated. These introductions improved the manufacturers sectors in the economy. The local manufacturer still in attempting to face the challenges posted by the government introduced a very wider range of cosmetic products into the market. Many brands of body lotions and creams, soaps, hair creams, foot care product are now produced locally.

Shea butter is fat that is extracted from the nuts of the Shea tree. It is solid at warm temperatures and has an off-white or ivory colour. Shea butter has been used as a cosmetic ingredient for centuries. Its high concentration of vitamins and fatty acids — combined with its easy-to-spread consistency — make it a great product for smoothing, soothing, and conditioning one's skin. During the 20th century shea butter has been used in a range of industrial products from soap, candles, and animal feed to margarine, cakes, and most importantly confections (Chalfin, 2004). Shea butter is a central ingredient in factory-based production of chocolate products in developed countries and the extraction of shea butter for this purpose is usually taking place in industrial plants. Recently, shea butter has been 'discovered' as a healing, natural ingredient in cosmetics and skin-care products targeted at affluent consumer segments. Here, manual extraction is re-emerging since it keeps the healing properties of shea butter that industrial extraction may destroy. Shea butter is in many ways exemplary of a globalised agricultural commodity. In the confectionary industry, shea is an anonymous ingredient in a mass consumed product. In the cosmetics industry, shea is a high value product demanded by global postmodern consumers. In its capacity of luxury product, shea butter is meant for a selective mass-market consisting of well-off consumers with postindustrial lifestyles and consumption habits. People apply shea butter to the skin for acne, arthritis, burns, dandruff, inflamed skin, dry skin, eczema, insect bites, itch, muscle soreness, scaly and itchy skin (psoriasis), rash, a skin infection caused by mites (scabies), scars, sinus infection, skin breakages, stretch marks, wound healing, and wrinkled skin. shea butter is used as emollients in various cosmetic products, due to its smoothening properties for dry skin.

Furthermore, market acceptability is a measure by which it is seen whether the product or service is satisfying a large customer base so as to continue or increase its current production. Market acceptance is most important for a company to determine at the time of product launch to determine whether it is a failure or a success. Whereas consumer acceptability is the feasibility of whether a product or service will be acceptable to the consumer requires tests, surveys, pretests and even prototypes (Smith,2017).

However, Consumers' lifestyles could be shaped culturally, historically and contextually through products which have symbolic meaning. In terms of the relationship between lifestyle and

consumption, lifestyle gradually blurs the boundary between producers and consumers. In the sector of natural cosmetics, consumers make their own natural cosmetic products to satisfy their needs (Morais, Brito, and Quintão, (2018). Consumers who have lived for a long time in a collectivism culture tend to follow the identity of others and buy products with values advocated by the society in which they live. Thus they are easy to be influenced by the local social context. Kaze and Skapars (2011) suggested a hierarchical construct placing lifestyle as the determinant factor of attitude and fed by social values. Due to their “Consumer Purchasing Behaviour Process”, lifestyle is a key metric shaping the attitude and on the further stage, brand purchase decision as well.

1.2 Statement Of The Problem

The emergence of Shea butter cosmetic products (Okwoma) is considered not only to meet consumers’ need of healthy, environmental friendly and ethical beliefs but also to promote the whole cosmetics industry to develop in a sustainable way (Matić and Puh, 2016).

When a consumer wants to purchase cosmetic product, he/she will first of all examine the functionality of the product and evaluate the attributes so as to determine their strengths and weaknesses. If the product did not meet the functionality attribute desired by the consumer, the product will be rejected. This evaluation could be based on consumer past experience as well as current information available.

Understanding consumer lifestyle will help marketers to know the behaviour of consumers’ spend time and purchase the product. Sellers of Shea butter cosmetic product needs to understand consumer attitude on buying pattern and the need for expression. Sellers of Shea butter cosmetic product need to know the intensions of consumers which drive them towards accepting to buy Shea butter cosmetic product or reject it.

However there has been a gradual but steady shift towards consumer’s acceptability of Shea butter cosmetic. Buying behaviour of the consumer is one of the very significant determinant factors to be well thought out which helps in knowing the factors that influence the Shea butter cosmetic product (okwoma). With reference to the facts that there are many factors responsible for product acceptability by consumers, it is pertinent to ask, what are those factors responsible for Shea butter acceptability? Are such factors like functionality of Shea butter, and lifestyle of consumer among those factors responsible for Shea butter (Okwoma) acceptability?

1.3 Objectives of the Study

The general objective of this study is to find out the factors that are responsible for the acceptability of locally made cosmetic product using shea butter as a study.

The specific objectives of this study are as follows:

1. To determine the influence of functionality on Shea butter cosmetic product on consumer’s acceptability for locally made Shea butter cosmetic product in Ebonyi State Nigeria.

2. To find out if consumer lifestyle influences the use of Shea butter cosmetic product in Ebonyi State Nigeria.

1.4 Research Questions

The study addressed the following research questions

- 1 To what extent did functionality of Shea butter cosmetic product influence consumer's acceptability of Shea butter cosmetic product in Ebonyi State Nigeria?
- 2 To what extent did consumer lifestyle influences locally made Shea butter cosmetic product in Ebonyi South Senatorial Zone, Ebonyi State?

1.5 Research Hypotheses

The following formulated null hypotheses help solve the research problem:

Ho₁: Functionality of locally made Shea butter has no significant influence on consumer acceptability for Shea butter cosmetic product in Ebonyi State Nigeria.

Ho₂: Consumer lifestyle has no significant influence on brand loyalty for consumer's acceptability for the use of Shea butter cosmetic product in Ebonyi South Senatorial Zone, Ebonyi State Nigeria.

1.6 Implications of the study

Theoretically, this study will definitely serve as a guide to those who will like to write on similar topics in future. Empirically, it will help the producer of Shea butter to improve and as well expand in the business.

For managerial implications, this study suggests that marketers should try and create awareness on the uses of Shea butter cosmetic product and its benefits.

Practical Implications

For one thing, in view of this is that sellers should make the product accessible to the buyers.

1.7 Limitations of the study

It is expected that in research of this nature, certain constraints will hinder the smooth conduct of the study. However, efforts were made to ensure that the authentic and reliable data were obtained and used not minding the limitations. The most important thing is that most of these expected constraints were overcome in the course of carrying this study through the applications carefulness, caution and consciousness while some insignificant once were ignored. Some of the notable major constraints which the researcher could not overlook include:

High response rate the researcher anticipated from the respondent were not achieved. This was as a result that some of the questionnaire were not well filled correctly as expected by the researcher. The questions framed to achieve the objectives of the study required that the respondent must tick their chosen option for each of the alternative rating. Some instead of ticking one out of the five options, decided to tick more than one which the result was discarded and not used in the analysis. Only the well filled questionnaire were used.

Another limitation of this study was inability to release relevant data that would have be helpful in the study. Some of the respondents were non-chalant to release some vital information that

would have been very helpful in the study during the questionnaire interview. So the researcher only worked for people who released the information.

2.0 REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

2.1 Conceptual Review

2.1.1 Cosmetic Product

Cosmetics are substances used to enhance or protect the appearance or odor of the human body. They include skin-care creams, lotions, powders, perfumes, lipsticks, fingernail and toenail polishes, eye and facial makeup, permanent waves, hair colours, hair sprays and gels, deodorants, baby products, bath oils, bubble baths, bath salts, butters and many other types of products. Their use is widespread, especially among women in Western countries. A subset of cosmetics is called "makeup," which refers primarily to coloured products intended to alter the user's appearance. Cosmetics are used to enhance your appearance. Makeup has been around for many centuries. The first known people who used cosmetics to enhance their beauty were the Egyptians (Linkedin, thebeautybite.com, 2016).

2.1.2 Factors that influences buying decision of cosmetic product

Personal factor plays a role in influencing prospective consumer's decision to use cosmetic product. Such personal factors comprise age, occupation, stages in life cycle, lifestyle, personality, and values (Kotler and Keller, 2009). Customers will compare price of products before making decision to use or buy a product. The price must be reasonable and affordable. If the price for the same product is different, a customer will choose the product with the lower price.

2.1.3 Customer purchasing decision toward cosmetics:

Before buying a product, Consumers walk or move through a series of steps. They emphasis the product in a way that it should satisfy their needs and have good quality with low or more affordable price, and should deliver them with value added features. Consumer buying pattern differ when comes to the product quality, status, features, functionality, knowledge, affordability and consumer lifestyle. They mostly follow the rhythm of fashion and this changing preference affects their buying pattern. To identify and predict this changing behavior, marketers spend million rupees every year for market research. Currently the marketers are facing difficulties to understand and target the consumer's behavior because they are flourished by the different varieties, affordable price and changing trend in the market of cosmetics. Consumer's preference is changing along with time (Anjana,2018).

Every individual is different and has different and unique needs and wants. What one desires may not be necessary liked by another person. Similarly, tastes and choices differ in different age groups. People of the same lifestyle, age, family background might use similar products. In a study conducted (Askegaard, Ger, and Christensen, 1999) it was concluded that age is considered as a major factor that influences the buying patterns of an individual. Younger people tend to use more hair and body products as compare to older people. Similarly, another study (Larasati, 2013) carried out research on a similar topic. The questionnaires were distributed and it was found out that the people between the ages of 17-24 stating that the younger people take more effort and care of their physical self. Tiainen,

(2010) carried out a survey on 99 respondents. The majority of the individuals that purchased cosmetics were teenagers and youngsters mainly aged under 25. They believed that in order to attract others, appearance has an important part. (Audrey, Chareyron, and Quentin (2007) stated in their findings that younger people are more open minded and concerned about their appearance.

Skin acceptability of a cosmetic moisturizer

Nisbet (2018) studied on Clinical, Cosmetic and Investigational Dermatology, Acceptability trials aim to confirm the absence of risk of primary and/or cumulative irritation and to identify feelings of discomfort associated with cosmetic product application under normal or reasonably predictable conditions of use. Prior to clinical testing, the cosmetic moisturizer was assessed for predicted tolerability based on the toxicological profiles of the ingredients. At the concentrations of use in the formulation, none of the ingredients were considered to be skin irritants or skin sensitisers. In vitro testing using established models confirmed the predicted irritancy potential of this formulation. The present study was conducted to evaluate the acceptability of a cosmetic moisturizer in female subjects with sensitive skin under normal conditions of use.

2.1.4 Shea butter

The word Shea is derived from the word S'í, the Bambara name given to the tree in Mali. Shea butter is fat that's extracted from the nuts of the Shea tree. It's solid at warm temperatures and has an off-white or ivory colour. Shea trees are native to West Africa, and most Shea butter still comes from that region. Shea butter has been used as a cosmetic ingredient for centuries. Its high concentration of vitamins and fatty acids combined with its easy-to-spread consistency, make it a great product for smoothing, soothing, and conditioning skin. It goes by many other names, including Kade or Kadanya in the Hausa language, Ori in some parts of West Africa, Okwome in Afikpo North dialect, Okwoma in general Igbo Language. In some of Africa's poorest regions, the Shea tree has become important to the economy and source of livelihood.

Shea butter product is increasing in various sectors across the world. Factors that are increasing the growth of the shea butter cosmetic industry globally are a rise in the demand for natural products in terms of cosmetics and skin care products. In addition, shea butter cosmetic products are antioxidants and recover the damaged hair and healthy skin. Growth in the acceptance of shea butter and personal care based products of cosmetic is anticipated to boost the value for shea butter cosmetic market globally in the upcoming years.

2.1.5 Packaging characteristics for cosmetics products

Ahaiwe and Ndubuisi (2015) studied on the effect of packaging characteristics on brand preference for cosmetics products in Abia State, Nigeria. The objective of the study was to examine the effect of packaging characteristics on brand preference for cosmetics products. Specifically, the aims are to; (a) ascertain the effect of packaging size on brand preference for cosmetics; (b) determine the effect of packaging colour on brand preference for cosmetics; and (c) ascertain the effect of packaging shape on brand preference for cosmetics. Packaging characteristics considered were packaging size, colour and shape. A sample size of 250 was purposively selected for the study. The samples were drawn from the five (5) major markets in

Aba metropolis of the State. Data analysis was done with Karl Pearson correlation coefficient model. Findings showed that all the variables examined (size, colour, and shape) were positive and significant factors influencing brand preference for cosmetics products. The study concluded by recommending that adequate packaging strategies are to be formulated and implemented by manufacturing companies when they are designing packages for their products brands. Such packaging strategies must incorporate all the elements of packaging which include packaging colour, size and shape. Furthermore, marketing research that focuses on packaging sizes, colours, and shapes which will be desired by consumers should be regularly conducted to enable manufacturing companies to know the right packaging variables to utilize during the design of packets.

METHODOLOGY

3.1 Research Design

The study adopted survey design. According to Saunders, Lewis, and Thornhill (2009), survey research strategy allows for the collection of quantitative data which can be analysed quantitatively through descriptive and inferential statistical tools. The study involves the use of a representative sample from a population and drawing conclusion based on analysis of available data.

3.2 Area of the Study

The area/context of the study is in Ebonyi State, Nigeria. The selection of Ebonyi State Nigeria is that they have high believed for the usage of the Shea butter and its benefits.

3.3 Sources of Data collection

Data collection used in this study is primary data which was collected from the respondents of those that buy Shea butter cosmetic (okwoma) in Ebonyi state, Nigeria.

3.4 Population of the Study

Population of people that uses locally Shea butter cosmetic is not known that is infinite, so the researcher used pilot survey and Topman's formula to determine number of those that uses Shea butter (okwoma) and those that do not.

3.5 Sample Size Determination

Since the population is not known, the researcher employed Topman's formula in order to estimate the proportion of the respondents. 145 respondents were randomly sampled, 83 said that they are not using Shea butter, 62 said they are using it.

The formula is given below:
$$n = \frac{Z^2 pq}{e^2}$$

where n =required sample size, Z = value of Z score associated with the degree of confidence collected.

P = probability of positive Response, q = probability of negative response, e = tolerable error or error margin

Based on the above the proportion of those who uses Shea butter (okwoma) is $62 \div 145 = 0.428$

Proportion of those who do not use Shea butter (okwoma) is $83 \div 145 = 0.572$, Z using the Z -Score table $= (1.96)^2$, $e = 0.05$ that is 5%

$$\text{Therefore, } n = \frac{(1.96)^2 \times 0.428 \times 0.572}{0.05^2} = \frac{3.8416 \times 0.244816}{0.0025} = 0.9405 \quad n=376$$

3.6 Sampling Technique

The researcher used convenient sampling to pick the respondent (consumers) that was seen at the process of the study. The researcher administered copies of questionnaire to users of Shea butter cosmetic in Ebonyi South Senatorial Zone. The administration and collection of the questionnaire took a period of four weeks to accomplish. During the administration, the researcher tried to explain the questions to some respondents who did not really understood the questions before the finally agreed to fill the questionnaire.

3.7 Research Instrument

Quantitative method and survey questionnaire were used in the study. The questionnaire was prepared using 5-point Likert rating scale thus: Strongly Agree (SA), Agree (A), Strongly Disagree (SD), Disagree (D), and Undecided (U), typed and sent to the respondents to fill and return within four week.

3.8 Measuring Instrument

Qualitative method and Survey questionnaire was used in this study to collect required data from respondents. The questionnaire comprised mainly 5-point rating scale questions. The measuring scale value was label in this format: 5 type response format represents “strongly agree”, 4 represent “agree”, 3 represent “Disagree”, 2 represent “Strongly Disagree”, 1 represent “undecided” (Self, construction, 2021). The respondents were asked to rank the 5-point scale on how they agreed or disagreed on the questions. The scale items are captured first before the respondents’ questions this allows the respondents to fill in these scale items with fresh minds. The questionnaire was constructed by the researcher based on information and knowledge from the statement of the problem, objectives of the study, research questions and hypotheses. Finally, before the questionnaire was used, it was subjected to both validity and reliability tests.

Decision Rule

If the value of the Cronbach’s Alpha = 0.975, indicates about 98% internal consistency of measure of sets of the responses of the respondent in this research study. It implies a very high reliable and consistent condition on the measures of data collected for this research.

Cronbach α is given as

$$\alpha = (K\bar{c}) / ((\bar{v} + (K-1)\bar{c}))$$

Where

α = Cronbach alpha

k = sum of k component or item

\bar{v} = the average variance of each component

\bar{c} = the average of all covariances between the components across the current sample of persons

3.9 Validity of the research Instrument

To validate the instrument for the study, the researcher adopted both face validation strategy and use of SPSS software to test for construction validity. In order to comply with requirements for face validity and reliability, the questionnaire was giving to the supervisor and other expert in the field of Marketing and other expert in Faculty of Management Sciences so as to check if there is any mistake or dual meaning in the contents so as to eliminate errors, omission duplications and technical work that may convey a dual meaning. Also, to ensure predicted validity, the researcher ensured that the issue in the research objectives, research questions and hypotheses is reflected in the questionnaire

Cronbach alpha and composite reliability are often used to establish a scale's reliability, but the latter has been championed as a less conservative measure (Hair, Sarstedt, Hopkins and Kuppelweiser, 2014). In this study, both measures of reliability (that is cronbach alpha and composite reliability) were employed to ascertain the internal consistency of the measurement items. Specifically, the established minimum threshold for establishing reliability with cronbach's alpha is ≥ 0.60 while the set threshold for composite reliability is ≥ 0.70 (Bagozzi and Yi, 1988).

3.10 Reliability of the research Instrument

This is the capacity of a measuring instrument to yield similar and consistent result when applied to the same situation at diverse period. The measuring attributes of the variables are functionality on consumer's acceptability for locally made Shea butter cosmetic product in Ebonyi South Senatorial Zone, Ebonyi State, and consumer lifestyle. These variables were assessed for validity and reliability to ascertain the psychometric properties of these measures. Latent variables are said to demonstrate excellent psychometric properties if its measurement scales demonstrate bivariate normal population, reliability and construct validity. In this study, Cronbach Alpha was used to determine the reliability of the instrument.

Reliability Test Formula

Cronbach α is given as

$$\alpha = \frac{K\bar{c}}{(\bar{v} + (K-1)\bar{c})}$$

Where α = Cronbach alpha

k= sum of k component or item

\bar{v} = the average variance of each component

\bar{c}

= the average of all covariances between the components across the current sample of persons

3.11 Data Analytical technique

In this study, the researcher adopted Pearson Coefficient of correlation. This was used to determine the strength of variables (dependent and independent variables) in the hypothesis. More so, Tables, frequencies, and percentages made it easier in the analysis. Moreso, the data was put in the Micro soft excel before it was converted to table, frequencies and pie chart for easy understanding.

The formula for the Pearson is $r = \frac{\sum XY}{\sqrt{\sum X^2 \times \sum Y^2}}$

Where,

- r = Pearson correlation Coefficient
- n = number of the pairs of the stock
- $\sum xy$ = sum of products of the paired stocks
- $\sum x$ = sum of the x scores
- $\sum y$ = sum of the y scores
- $\sum x^2$ = sum of the squared x scores
- $\sum y^2$ = sum of the squared y scores
- X = Dependent variables
- Y Independent variables,
- Square Root. $\sqrt{\quad}$

Test for Significance of correlation Coefficient

$$t = \frac{r \sqrt{n-2}}{\sqrt{1-r^2}}$$

t stands for “t” distribution with (n-2) d.f (Okeh, First Edition)

Decision Rule:

If calculated value of “t” $>$ table value of “t” with (n-2) d.f at specific level; of significance, the null hypothesis is rejected. That is there may be no significant correlation between the two variables. Otherwise, the null hypothesis is accepted. If “r” is observed correlation coefficient in a sample of “n” pairs of observations from a bivariate normal population, then the null hypothesis H_0 $p=0$, the variable X,Y follow a bivariate normal distribution. If the population correlation coefficient of X, Y is donated by p, then it is often of interest to test whether p is zero or different

from zero, on the basis of observed correlation coefficient “r”. Thus, “r” is the sample correlation coefficient based on a sample of “n” observations, the appropriate test statistics for testing the null hypothesis $H_0: p=0$ against alternative hypothesis $H_1: p \neq 0$ (Okeh, First Edition)

Test for Pearson Coefficient of correlation.

The decision rules are as follow:

If “r” which is the coefficient correlation ranges between 0.6 to 0.9, it is said to be strong and positive relationship.

If “r” ranges between 0.23 to 0.59, it can be regarded as fairly strong and positive relationship.

If it is less than 0.25, it can be regarded as being weak and positive relationship.

In the case i-iii, if the sign is negative, the strength is the same but the directive become negative.

If it is zero, then there is no relationship between the variables. If it is positive and negative, then it is perfect relationship in positive and negative direction respectively (Mojekwu, 2000)

RESULTS

4.0 Results of Data examination and Descriptive Statistical Analysis

Consistent with the procedures stipulated in chapter three, the researcher presented the outputs from the survey analysis in tables, frequencies, percentages and Pearson Coefficient of Correlation as statistical tool for the data analysis was used to test the hypotheses. In this study also, the researcher used inter_correlation matrix:

Table 1: Distribution of Questionnaire and Response Rate

Questionnaire	Frequencies	Percentages
Returned	289	76.86
Not Returned	87	23.14
Total	376	100

Source: Nwachi Lilian.O and Prof. Ike-Elechi Ogba, field survey, (2021)

Table 1 above shows that out of 376 questionnaire distributed to the respondents, 289 (76.86) filled and return the questionnaire, while 87 (23.14%) did not return the questionnaire. This analysis shows that majority of the respondents returned the questionnaire.

Table 2: Responses on Demographic Profile

Variable/Demographic Factor	Categories	Frequencies	Percentages	Valid percentages	Cumulative Percentages
Gender	Female	207	71.63	71.63	71.63
	Male	82	28.37	28.37	100
	Total	289	100	100	
Age bracket	1-15	94	32.53	32.53	32.53
	16-31	21	7.27	7.27	39.8
	32-47	36	12.46	12.46	52.26
	48-63	58	20.06	20.06	72.32
	64-79	80	27.68	27.68	100
	Total	289	100	100	
Monthly income	Less than #30,000	127	43.94	43.94	
	#31,000-#60,000	64	22.13	66.07	
	#61,000-#90,000	45	15.6	81.67	
	#91,000-#120,000	38	13.15	94.82	
	#121,000 and above	15	5.2	100	
	Total	289	100		
Educational background	FSLC	66	22.8	22.8	
	WASC/SSCE	68	23.5	46.3	
	NCE/OND	73	25.3	71.6	
	HND/BSC	50	17.3	88.9	
	Postgraduate cert	32	11.1	100	
	Total	289	100		
Usage frequencies	Less than 5days per month	42	14.5	14.5	
	6 days to 11days	56	19.4	33.9	
	12days to 18days	74	25.6	59.5	
	19 to 25days	60	20.8	80.3	
	26 to 30days	57	19.7	100	
	Total	289	100		

Source: Nwachi, Lilian.O and Prof. Ike-Elechi Ogba, field survey, (2021)

Table 3 above shows that out of 289 respondents, 207 (71.63%) of the respondents are female, while 82 (28.37%) of the respondents are male. This analysis shows that consumer who buy and use Shea butter cosmetic are more of female in Ebonyi south senatorial zone of Ebonyi state, Nigeria.

For the age bracket, this analysis shows that out of 289 respondents, 94 (32.53%) of the respondents who buy and uses Shea butter are within the range of 1-15 years old. 21(7.27%) are within the age of 16-31 years. 36 (12.46%) are within the age bracket of 32-47. 80(27.68%) are within the age of 64-79. This analysis shows that the highest consumer who buy and use Shea butter cosmetic are within the age of 1-15 follows by 64-79 years old in Ebonyi south senatorial zone of Ebonyi state, Nigeria.

In terms of monthly income distribution of the sample element, Participants that their monthly salary is less than #30,000 with the highest frequencies of 127 and 43 percent respectively dominated the sample followed by those who earn between #31,000 to #60,000 with the frequencies of 64 and 22.13 percent respectively. Participant whose monthly salary is between the ranges of #61, 000 to #90,000 has a frequencies of 45 with 15.6 percent which dominated participant whose monthly salary are between the ranges of #91,000 to #120,000 with frequencies of 38 and percentage of 13.15 respectively. Finally the least participant are buyers whose monthly salaries are between the ranges of #120,000 and above. This analysis shows that majority of buyers of Shea butters are the low income earners.

Still on table 3 above, educational qualifications of the respondents indicates that 66 (22.8%) of user of Shea butter are First school leaving certificate holders, 68 (23.5%) are WAEC/ senior school certificate Examination holders (SSCE), 73 (25.3%) are NCE/ OND holders, 50 (17.3%) are HND/B.Sc holders while 32 (11.1%) are the PGD holders. This analysis indicates that most of the users of Shea butter cosmetic product are NCE/OND holders which dominates WASCE, followed by FSLC, then HND/B.Sc. finally Post Graduates holders.

Finally on the demographic profile of this study on usage frequencies in the study shows that the frequencies and percentages of participant who use Shea butter cosmetic less than 6 days in a month is 42 (14.5%), those who use it between 6 days to 11 days is 56 (19.4%), 74 (25%) of the respondent which dominated other element in the items uses the Shea butter between 16 to 20 days in a month. Whereas 60 (20.8%) of the respondents uses the product between 21 to 25 days in a month. Finally, 57 (19.7%) respondents said that they used the product between 26 to 30 days. This analysis concluded that the most users of Shea butter product are those who use it between 16 to 20 days and less users are those who uses it less than 6 days in a month.

Table 3 N statistics, Mean, Standard Deviation, Skewness and Kurtosis on Functionality variable

	Descriptive Statistics						
	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Skewness		Kurtosis	
	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Std. Error	Statistic	Std. Error
Does functionality of Shea butter influences consumer acceptability of Shea butter	289	3.2872	1.33485	-.309	.143	-1.081	.286
Does Shea butter perform as expected	289	4.0692	1.25086	-1.504	.143	1.209	.286
Do you agree that functional preventing of joint inflammation by Shea butter determines consumer acceptability of Shea butter	289	4.2734	1.07271	-1.888	.143	3.126	.286
Do you agree that functional acceptability of Shea butter is because it eliminate dandruff and support hair growth	289	3.5052	1.40713	-.519	.143	-1.035	.286
Do you agree that functional acceptability of Shea butter is because it maintain softness and radiance of skin	289	4.1696	1.11289	-1.557	.143	1.849	.286
Does bone dislocation treatment of Shea butter has any determination functional factor for the acceptability of Shea butter	289	3.8962	1.21747	-1.102	.143	.335	.286
Valid N (listwise)	289						

Source: Nwachi, Lilian and Prof. Ike-Elechi Ogba, field survey, SPSS OUT PUT (2021)

Decision Rule For A Kurtosis

The general guideline is that **if the number is greater than +1, the distribution is too peaked**. Likewise, a kurtosis of less than –1 indicates a distribution that is too flat. Distributions exhibiting skewness and/or kurtosis that exceed these guidelines are considered nonnormal." (Hair et al.,

2017). A negative kurtosis means that distribution is flatter than a normal curve with the same mean and standard deviation.

Interpretations

Table 3 above showed that the mean, standard deviation, Skewness and kurtosis of Functionality variable. The mean values of the six scales item are 3.2872, 4.0692, 4.2734, 3.5052, 4.1696 and 3.8962 respectively, while the standard deviation are 1.33485, 1.25086, 1.07271, 1.40713, 1.11289 and 1.21747 respectively. Skewness statistics are -.309, -1.504, -1.888, -.519, -1.557 and -1.102 respectively. Skewness standard error are .143, .143, .143, .143, .143 and .143 respectively. Whereas kurtosis are -1.081, 1.209, 3.126, -1.035 1.849 and .335. Kurtosis standard error are .286, .286, .286, .286, .286 and .286 respectively. Since the mean and standard deviation is 4.2734 and 1.07271 respectively, the positive and negative value of Skewness statistics -1.888 and Kurtosis 3.126 respectively. Thus, there is clear evidence that the data demonstrates normality because the outcome was within the set limits of acceptability. The functionality of Shea butter is therefore suitable for further parametric statistics. Since the maximum thresholds of acceptability was within ± 2 and ± 7 respectively.

Table 4 N statistics, Mean, Standard Deviation, Skewness and Kurtosis on Consumer Lifestyle variable.

	Descriptive statistics						
	N	Mean	Std.	Skewness		Kurtosis	
	Statistic	Statistic	Deviation Statistic	Statistic	Std. Error	Statistic	Std. Error
Do you agree consumers' own characteristics such as, lifestyles influences consumer acceptability foe Shea butter	289	3.9585	1.15696	-1.192	.143	.733	.286
Does lifestyle influence consumer acceptability for the use of Shea butter cosmetic	289	4.4429	.66486	-1.574	.143	4.904	.286
Do you agree that customer approach for Shea butter is as a result of family lifestyle	289	3.3806	1.42416	-.468	.143	-1.134	.286
Does lifestyle contribute to sales increase of Shea butter	289	3.6920	1.30649	-.806	.143	-.477	.286

Do you agree lifestyle has influence on brand loyalty for consumer acceptability for the use of Shea butter cosmetic product in Ebonyi south senatorial zone	289	3.6194	1.30455	-.656	.143	-.703	.286
Do you agree that consumer lifestyle has high level of consumer acceptability of Shea butter	289	3.8201	1.20566	-.942	.143	.040	.286
Valid n (listwise)	289						

Source: Nwachi, Lilian and Prof. Ike-Elechi Ogba, field survey, (2021)

Interpretations

Table 4 above showed the mean, standard deviation, Skewness and kurtosis of consumer Lifestyle variable. The mean values of the six scales item are 3.9585, 4.4429, 3.3806, 3.6920, 3.6194, and 3.8201 respectively. The standard deviations are 1.15696, .66486, 1.42416, 1.30649, 1.30455 and 1.20566 respectively. Skewness is -1.192, -1.574, -.468, -.806, -.656 and -.942 and kurtosis is .733, 4.904, -1.134, -.477, -.703 and .040 respectively. The overall mean and standard deviation for the six scale item are 4.4429 and 1.42416. Since the overall mean value for the six Scale items fall within the maximum threshold while the standard deviation was relatively low, the outputs indicate that parametric statistical analytical tools can be use for further study to analyse the data relating to these six scale items measures. Since Skewness and kurtosis values which ranged from is -1.192, -1.574, -.468, -.806, -.656 and -.942, and .733, 4.904, -1.134, -.477, -.703 and .040 respectively were well below the maximum thresholds of acceptability within ± 2 and ± 7 respectively.

4.3 Examination of scale reliability

In this study, the researcher used inter-correlation matrix: This is calculated from a cross-tabulation and shows how statistically similar all pairs of variables are in their distributions across the various samples.

Table 5 Scale Statistics Cronbach alpha on functionality

Reliability Statistics		
Cronbach's Alpha	Cronbach's Alpha Based on Standardized Items	N of Items
.981	.983	6

Source, SPSS and Nwachi, Lilian and Prof. Ike-Elechi Ogba,field survey, (2021)

Table 6 Summary item statistics on functionality, item means, variances, inter-item correlations.

	Mean	Minimum	Maximum	Range	Maximum / Minimum	Variance	N of Items
Item Means	3.867	3.287	4.273	.986	1.300	.153	6
Item Variances	1.533	1.151	1.980	.829	1.721	.100	6
Inter-Item Correlations	.907	.823	.962	.139	1.169	.002	6

Source, SPSS OUTPUT, Nwachi, field survey, (2021)

This analysis summaries the item statistics for the inter correlation of functionality. On the item means the mean was 3.867, minimum 3.287, maximum 4.273, ranges 0.986, maximum/minimum 1.300, variance 0.153 with six item scales. Item variances are: mean 1.533, minimum 1.151, maximum 1.980 ranges 0.829, maximum/minimum 1.721, and variance 0.100 respectively. Inter-item correlation is mean 0.907, minimum 0.823, maximum 0.962, ranges 0.139, maximum/minimum 1.169, variance 0.002 with six item scale.

Table 7:Summary Item Statistics on consumers' lifestyle

	Mean	Minimum	Maximum	Range	Maximum / Minimum	Variance	N of Items
Item Means	3.819	3.381	4.443	1.062	1.314	.131	6
Item Variances	1.445	.442	2.028	1.586	4.588	.298	6
Inter-Item Correlations	.892	.773	.976	.203	1.262	.006	6

Source, SPSS and Nwachi, Lilian and Prof. Ike-Elechi Ogba Field survey, (2021)

4.3 Test of hypotheses

This is the final section of this result chapter. This section report the results of the two hypotheses stated in chapter one.

Table 8: hypothesis Test Result summary

S/N	Hypothesis	"r"	p-value	Decision/Remark
1	Functionality	0.907	0.000	Accepted
2	Consumer's Lifestyle	0.892	0.000	Accepted

Source: SPSS Nwachi field Survey, 2021

Table above is the result that emerged from the test of four hypotheses stated in chapter one. 'r' here is the inter-correlation for each variable as stated in the table, while "p" represents the Pearson correlation significant value.

4.3.1 Test of Hypothesis One: Functionality

Ho₁: Functionality of locally made Shea butter has no significant influence on consumer acceptability for Shea butter cosmetic product in Ebonyi South Senatorial Zone, Ebonyi State

X= Consumer acceptability

Y= Functionality of Shea butter

In the correlation matrix **test of Significance**, two-tailed test was used to determine if two variables have a statistically significant association. The number of pair used was six. The result showed that since the value of “r” is 0.907 and the value of “p” is 0.000, it is therefore regarded as being strong and positive relationship between functionality and consumer acceptability for Shea butter. Meaning the H_0 (Null) hypothesis will be rejected, and the alternative will be accepted. This analysis concludes that functionality of Shea butter significantly influence consumer acceptability for Shea butter cosmetic product in Ebonyi State, Nigeria.

Test of hypothesis two: Consumer Lifestyle

H_{02} : Consumer lifestyle has no significant influence on the use of Shea butter cosmetic product in Ebonyi State Nigeria.

Since the value of “r” is 0.892, it is therefore regarded as being strong and positive relationship between consumer lifestyle and consumer acceptability for Shea butter. Meaning the H_0 (Null) hypothesis will be rejected, and the alternative will be accepted. This analysis concludes that consumer lifestyle has significantly influences on consumer acceptability for Shea butter cosmetic product in Ebonyi State, Nigeria.

This result supported Chin et al. (2018) which hold that social movements positively influence consumers’ purchasing intentions in natural cosmetics consumption. In terms of the relationship between lifestyle and consumption, lifestyle gradually blurs the boundary between producers and consumers. Consumers can become producers. In the sector of natural cosmetics, consumers make their own natural cosmetic products to satisfy their needs (Morais, 2018).

DISCUSSION

The implicit study indicates that there was a strong positive relationship between functionality and acceptability of Shea butter in Ebonyi State Nigeria. The implication here is that functionality plays a major role for the acceptability of Shea butter and has greater impact for the significant influence by the consumer. In relating to the findings to the first objective of this study which is: “to determine the influences of functionality on consumer’s acceptability for locally made Shea butter cosmetic product in Ebonyi State Nigeria”. It is important to note that from the data, statistically shown that the variables functionality has a significant influence on consumer’s acceptability for locally made Shea butter cosmetic product in, Ebonyi State.

Consumer Lifestyle

The study shown in the study that consumer lifestyle has strong positive significant influence for acceptability of Shea butter in Ebonyi South Senatorial zone. This means that consumers’ lifestyle play an important role whenever decision to accept and buy Shea butter come to play. This was shown statistically in table 8 of this study where the value of “r” was 0.909, and the “p” value is 0.000 it was therefore regarded as being strong and positive relationship between consumer acceptability for Shea butte and consumer Lifestyle. By implications, this means that consumer Lifestyle significantly influence consumer acceptability for Shea butter cosmetic product.

SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This chapter constitutes the last chapter of report in thesis study.

6.1 Summary of the findings

This study was summarized in line with the specific objectives, and hypotheses. Therefore, below are the findings in the study:

In the study, the researcher found out that functionality of Shea butter cosmetic product significantly influences consumer acceptability of Shea butter cosmetic product in Ebonyi State, Nigeria. Test of hypothesis one confirmed this descriptive result on the bivariate of inter correlation of 2 tailed which indicated that since the value of “r” is 0.907 and the value of “p” is 0.000, it is therefore regarded as being strong and positive relationship between functionality and consumer acceptability for Shea butter. Meaning the H_0 (Null) hypothesis was rejected, and the alternative was accepted.

Finally, the researchers equally found that since the value of “r” is 0.892, it was therefore regarded as being strong and positive relationship between consumer lifestyle and consumer acceptability for Shea butter cosmetic product. Meaning the H_0 (Null) hypothesis was rejected, and the alternative was accepted. The study concluded that consumer lifestyle has significantly influences on consumer acceptability for Shea butter cosmetic product in Ebonyi South senatorial Zone of Ebonyi State, Nigeria.

6.2 Recommendations

The researcher recommends that the locally cosmetic made product should be accepted and encouraged in Nigeria. Sellers of Shea butter cosmetic product needs to understand consumer attitude on buying pattern and the need for expression. Sellers of Shea butter cosmetic product need to know the intensions of consumers which drive them towards accepting to buy Shea butter cosmetic product or reject it.

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Timber Marketing and Economic Development in Ebonyi State, Nigeria

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Abstract: *The paper, “Timber Marketing and Economic Development in Ebonyi State, Nigeria”, examined the extent of influence of those activities carried out in the areas of timber marketing (comprising: timber trading, timber harvesting and timber transportation) on providing economic opportunities for employment, income generation and timber value addition. The research method adopted in the study is survey design through administering questionnaire to a sample size of 251 timber marketers in Amegu/Nkwegu, Abakaliki. Afikpo and Okposi in Ebonyi State. Pearson’s Product Moment Coefficient of Correlation (PPMCC) was used to analyse the data collection. Major problems of timber marketing in Ebonyi State observed from the study were: poor infrastructure (poor road network/feeder roads, lack of water supply, health facilities among others), absence of Government-sponsored supply of electricity, multiple taxation, high prices of timber resulting to reduced consumer demand, indiscriminate felling of trees without equivalent replacement through re-planting of trees or afforestation programmes. It was found that timber marketing has generated employment, income and value addition but such efforts are not adequate and satisfactory. Table 3 shows that the highest mean value of employment creation (4.4398) came from responses in “Timber harvesters’ activities contribution of 5 – 10 % employment generation in Ebonyi State Nigeria and “Timber harvesters are capable of inducing expanded investment in other branches of timber production” respectively. It is, therefore, concluded that the timber marketing operators should always be pro-active to realise the essence of their existence for the benefit of the Nigerian consuming public. It is recommended that sustainable value addition should always be undertaken since it will lead to optimal and viable economy for all stakeholders within timber industry in Ebonyi State and even beyond.*

INTRODUCTION

1.1 The Background of the study

It is undisputed that marketing has made remarkable progress in the development of public policy in all areas of human activities including consumption (Egele & Ejirihugha, 2020). The consumption of timber products by almost individuals, organisation and government has highly demanded for the applications of marketing principles in timber business which has resulted in the concept of timber marketing and requires the examination of timber marketing contribution

to the society in the area of economic development , most importantly in a growing state economy like Ebonyi State in Nigeria .Timber is one of the forest products that are grown as trees to be used for building or for making things like chewing stick, fruits, fuel wood, among others. A forest, on the other hand, is a large area of land that is thickly covered with trees (Hornby, 2015). Sambe, Tee and Dagba (2016) state that forest both serve as source of raw materials to the industries and provide employment opportunities to thousands of people. Timber marketing consists of timber marketers who are the various stakeholders in the timber industry who utilize their individual and collective resources (time, money, energy, skills, policies, among others) to engage in value-adding activities of timber production and consumption for the benefit of themselves and the environment. Timber marketing actors consist of timber producers, timber distributors and timber traders while their activities include timber production, timber distribution and timber trading respectively. Timber markets in Ebonyi State include Linus Ede Memorial Timber Market (formerly Abakaliki Timber Shed), Amegu (Nkwegu); Onueke Timber Market; Timber Shed Court Area, Okposi and Timber Market, Afikpo.

Timber production is a stage in the process of wood production. Timbers are used for structural purpose (Bhuiyan , n.d.) . Harvesting is the cutting down of wood from the wild and reserved areas for both domestic and commercial purposes. Harvesting of industrial woods is carried out by mill operators, independent registered loggers and by poachers (persons who obtain timber illegally in private and protected areas) (Obasi, Agbo & Onyenekwe, 2015).

Timber distribution or timber transportation is the act of conveying timber products (logs) from the point of production to the point of sale and/ or consumption. Timber products are produced and transported to the areas of need (marketplace or buyer's point of destination). Modes of timber transportation in Nigeria include rail, road and water. Road transportation remains the most utilized mode of transportation.

Timber trading is the selling of timber and non-timber products for commercial purpose. Toledo (2006) in Kalu and Okojie (2009) maintains that timber trading accounts for a large proportion of total share of international economics which contributes to economic development. Kozak (2007) in Sambe, Tee and Dagba (2016) maintains that timber marketing contributes a reliable source of livelihood for many of the Nigerian poor in rural and urban areas. It provides employment and income derived from a diverse range of timber marketing activities such as loading, offloading, transportation, processing, among others. In addition, timber marketing is the process of selling timber to obtain its true market value (Hoover, n.d.). Economic development is an end result of economic activities of which timber marketing is one of the economic activities. Thus Egele and Ozo (2017) asserted that wherever economic activities are undertaken the practice of marketing is inevitable. This suggests that economic development and marketing must have interdependent relationship.

Feldman, Hadjimichael, Lanahan and Kemeny (2016) indicate that economic development is the expansion of capacities that contribute to the advancement of society through the realisation of individual, firm and community potential. The main goal of economic development is improving the economic wellbeing of a community through efforts that entail job creation, job retention, and quality of life (International Economic Development Council, n.d.). Economic development comprises three aspects, among others: employment, income and value chain. Employment means work, especially when it is done to earn money. (Hornby, 2015). Employment creation are the various ways jobs are generated by timber marketers through timber trading, timber harvesting, timber transportation, consumption of timber products and disposal of waste arising from timber products. This leads to more employment from the development of more facilities

in urban forestry in such areas as ornamental gardening, landscaping and recreational parks located in most urban centres and urban cities in Nigeria. Kalu and Okojie (2009) maintain that 80 percent of the rural population in Nigeria is engaged in agro-forestry and other agro-allied industries. Income means the money that a person, a region, a country earns from work, from investing money from business (Hornby, 2015). The value chain describes the full range of activities that firms and workers (timber marketers) do to bring a product from its conception to its end use and disposal of the product. Blythe (2008) states that when the object (product) is no longer of any use, the individual has a choice of three options: keep the item, dispose of the item permanently and dispose of the item temporarily. The value chain activities include design, production, marketing, and support to the final consumer (Institute for Sustainability Leadership, 2015). Timber marketers are involved in value-addition and facilitated through value chain. Kaplinsky and Morris (2001) define value chain as any activity necessary to get a product or service throughout different phases, from resource extraction, production and manufacturing to consumption and finally disposal after use. By so doing, timber marketers generate income for a range of participants in the timber trade chain including rural people, transporters and urban traders.

With the existence of timber marketers in Ebonyi State, it is assumed to have high rate of multiplier effects in the economic development of the State, but that is not the case in Ebonyi State. Then, it becomes pertinent to establish some of the areas of economic development timber marketing have such effect in Ebonyi State.

1.2 The Statement of the Problem

There are possible perceptions that timber marketing contributes to economic development in Ebonyi State. Timber marketing is reinforced in Ebonyi State by the existence of timber sheds and timber markets. Obasi, Agbo and Onyenekwe (2015) state that 11 (eleven) gazetted forest reserves exist in Ebonyi State. However, timber producers obtain their timber supplies from timber producing areas such as Bayelsa, Cross River, Edo, Ondo, Ogun, Delta States and Cameroon. Activities of timber marketing in Ebonyi State lead to harvesting, transportation and trading. Timber marketers depend on forest to actualize some of their activities. However, climate change has brought along massive changes in tree growing. In some areas, climate change has hindered the growth of some tree species that have been known to be a source of timber (Leos Timber Limited, 2018).

Timber marketing operations in Ebonyi State require sound marketing infrastructure (network of roads/feeder roads, portable water, health facilities, among others) to blossom. Bad road networks lead to high cost of vehicle maintenance and increased costs in harvesting, transportation and trading and incidental costs on buyers of timber goods and services Ebonyi State Government is addressing the challenges but certainly not yet adequate and satisfactory.

The study observed that there is low rate of mechanization /usage of machines among the timber marketers in Ebonyi State (since most are borrowed at high interest rates with low rate of return) in terms of owning and using different categories of machines in their operations. Mechanization is one of the components of 'Process' and this process is one of the 7ps of service marketing mix but its optimal usage in the timber industry in Ebonyi State is at a very low ebb.

Government –sponsored supply of electricity to energize privately installed machines in the selected timber markets is still a mirage. Equally evident is incidence of excessive taxation by Ebonyi State Government. Tenancy levy, capital/income tax should be appropriately undertaken by the tax relevant authorities. High taxation reduces consumer demand with spiral negative effects on the income and profits of the timber operators.

Aside from personal selling, there is low usage of promotional mix (advertising, sales promotion, publicity/public relations and direct marketing) in timber marketing activities in Ebonyi State. Low awareness of timber marketing operations leads to accompanying unsatisfactory sales volume, income and profits for timber marketers in Ebonyi State. Federal Ministry of Environment (2006) maintains that the present situation in Nigeria forestry is characterized by inability of the sector to meet pressing national demands and to contribute its maximum quota to national development. Presently, the expansion of industrial plantation is constrained by funding and situation of the forest sector since the down turn in the nation's economic fortune. The involvement of the private sector and local communities in industrial plantation development has been modest but constrained by some policies which include the land tenure, among others.

Across the states in Nigeria, there is weak institutional capacity to effectively implement forest management strategies. For example, Federal Ministry of Environment (2006) in her Approved National Forest Policy states that most states do not have appropriate forest resources, information and data for the development and updating of management plans

This paper observes that the indiscriminate felling of trees without equivalent replacement through re-planting of trees or afforestation programmes causes deforestation, erosion menace, food insecurity, among others. Adepoju (2018) maintains that in the area of employment generation, forestry has the potential to mop up all the army of unemployed people in our society. Could this assertion be true when it is considered that on yearly basis the unemployment situation in all sectors of the Nigerian economy and all states of Nigeria is grossly alarming? Therefore, it is pertinent to ascertain whether these activities of timber marketing yield expected or significant results on Ebonyi State, Nigeria.

1.3 Objectives of the Study

The general objective of this paper is to ascertain the extent timber marketing has influenced economic development in Ebonyi State, Nigeria. The specific objectives of the study include:

1. To determine the extent timber harvesting influence employment creation in Nigeria.
2. To determine the extent timber transportation, help to increase income generation in Nigeria.
3. To ascertain the extent of timber trading influence on value chain creation in Nigeria.

1.4 Research Questions

The following research questions were asked:

- i. How does timber harvesting help to increase income generation in Nigeria?
- ii. Does timber transportation help to increase income generation in Nigeria?
- iii. How does timber trading influence value chain creation in Nigeria?

1.5 Research Hypotheses

The hypotheses that guided the study include:

Ho₁: There is no significant relationship between timber harvesting and employment creation in Nigeria.

Ho₂: There is no significant relationship between timber transportation and income generation in Nigeria.

Ho₃: There is no significant relationship between timber trading and value chain creation in Nigeria.

1.6 Significance of the Study

The study will be a source of revenue to the government at all levels (Federal, State and Local) in Nigeria through collection of taxes from timber marketers (who may be firms, entrepreneurs

and workers) involved in the timber industry. Such revenue goes a long way to provide social amenities and create employment for the citizenry.

The study will serve as a source of employment for different categories of Nigerian workers. Timber marketers through the forestry sector employ both skilled and semi-skilled Nigerians in the industrial sector of the economy. This cuts across rural and urban areas of the country.

The study will provide companies owned by individuals and the government wood and other non-timber products (fruits, fuel wood, leaves, among others) for industrial usage. This makes the economy of a given nation, such as Nigeria dynamic and productive.

Tourists within and outside of Nigeria will benefit from the activities of timber marketers. Through forests, they provide capital resource base for the development of tourism industry in Nigeria. According to the Federal Ministry of Environment (2006), with the growing population, increasing urbanization and economic activities, the demand for recreation is bound to increase. This leads to more employment from the development of more facilities in urban forestry in such areas as gardening, landscaping and recreational parks located in most urban centres and major cities in Nigeria.

The study will also serve as a veritable area of research and further research for students and scholars. It is expected to provide wider interest for the Forestry Research Institute of Nigeria (FRIN) to develop adequate information and data on the existing scanty documentation on the timber market in Ebonyi State.

1.7 Scope of the Study

The study focused on the activities of timber marketing in the areas of harvesting, transportation and trading and aspects of economic development such as creation of employment, income generation and value chain creation in Nigeria. Timber markets used for the study include: Linus Ede Memorial Timber Market (formerly Abakaliki Timber Shed), Amegu (Nkwegu); Timber Shed Court Area, Okposi; and Timber Market, Afikpo. Proximity of the timber markets would lead to reduction in research cost and easier access to administration of questionnaire to respondents and retrieval of their responses.

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

2.1 Conceptual Review

2.1.1 Timber Marketing

Sambe, Tee and Dagba (2016) maintain that timber marketing is an asset in the economy of timber. In addition, Lintu (1995) maintains that marketing provides a means through which people can create efficient economic value for their resources and products. Consequently, efficiency in timber marketing is an economic asset to the forestry sub-sector for a sustained resource production, distribution and consumption. An efficient marketing system of timber will provide a means for maximizing products values and also stimulating equitable distribution of its economic benefits among the different actors in the market. The activities involved in timber marketing are: harvesting, transportation and trading.

(i.) Timber (wood) harvesting: Wood harvesting refers to the process of cutting trees and delivering them from the forest to the sawmills, pulp mills and other wood processing plants. It can also be referred as the preparation of logs in a forest or tree plantation according to the requirements of a user and delivery of logs to a consumer. Wood harvesting includes the cutting of trees, their conversion into logs, extraction and long distant transport to the consumers or processing mills (Dykstra & Heinrich, 1992 in Okon, 2018). Wood harvesting therefore, has essential linkage with timber production and consumption. It

involves issues of technology and transportation, particularly in Nigeria where the forests are inaccessible and comprises trees of irregular shapes and sizes (Okon, 2018).

- (ii.) **Timber Transportation:** Timber transport provides the link between forest harvesting and the mill. The basic factors affecting timber transport include: the size of the operation, the geographic locations of the forest and the mill as well as the distance between them; the assortment of timber for which the mill is designed; and the kinds of transportation that are available and suitable. Transport can be by road, rail, ship, waterways or combinations of any these modes of transportation. Road transport by truck, however, has become the primary form of timber transportation (Weber, 2011) in Nigeria and other developing countries.
- (iii.) **Timber Trading:** Bichi (2011) asserts that timber trade is profitable and thus a formidable tool for poverty alleviation. Timber products are industrial round wood, sawn wood (plank), wood-based panels, pulp and paper. Yusuf and Edom (2007) state that timber production has contributed immensely to the Nigerian economy in terms of exports and also domestically as a source of raw materials to wood based industries like pulp and paper, furniture, match, and the saw-milling industries, among others. It also helps in the development of the immediate environment that surrounds forest areas. Eno-Abasi (2017) in Awe and Idumah (2018) indicates that from 2011 – 2015, Nigeria exported \$400.2 million worth of timber, behind Cameroon and Gabon who exported \$745.9 million and \$474.7 million of timber respectively.

2.1.2 Economic Development: Economic development is measured by a sustained increase in prosperity and quality of life through innovation, lowered transaction costs, and the utilization of capabilities towards the responsible production and diffusion of goods and services. Economic development requires effective institutions grounded in norms of openness, tolerance for risk, appreciation for diversity, and confidence in the realization of mutual gain for the public and the private sector. Economic development is essential to creating the conditions for economic growth and ensuring economic future (Economic Development Administration, 1965). There are mainly two types of determinants (factors) which influence the economic development of a country: (a) Economic factors in economic development such as capital formation, natural resources, marketable surplus of agriculture, conditions in foreign trade and economic system (b) Non-economic factors in economic development consisting of human resources, technical know-how and general education, political freedom, social organisation and desire to develop (Chand, n.d.).

Three areas of economic development in Nigeria that are to be considered in this study as part of economic system are as follows: employment, income and value chain.

- (i.) **Employment:** Adeniyi (2016) states that the forestry sector is very important to Nigeria's economy as it ranks among the highest employment generating sectors while providing resources base for many forest industries. It is in line with such proposition that Areola (1991) in Appendix II indicated six industrial sectors (saw mill, plywood, veneer, particle board, match factory and pulp and paper) showing number of workers and number of plants in Nigeria. For example, saw mill recorded highest number of workers and number of plants to the tune of twelve thousand four hundred and sixty and one thousand and thirty respectively. The least industrial sector was pulp and paper with one thousand workers and one plant respectively. Adejumo (2017) indicates that forest plantations play a vital role in the economic development of the country as they provide sources of livelihood for many of the rural poor. Emeghara (2012) in Oyetunji (2019) further states that forestry plays a variety

of roles in rural development through: provision of food and fodder, medicine, fuel wood, timber, game and wildlife, raw materials for industries and employment. Aiyeloja, Oladele and Furo (2013) assert that timber is mainly marketed as sawn wood (planks) in the developing tropical regions. Sawn mills are the most widespread forest-based industries and one of the largest employers of rural labour. Forestry services such as recreation, hunting and tourism also offer new sources of forestry employment.

(ii.) Income: There are three basic ways in which income can be realized from the ownership of timber property: (a) receipt of ordinary income from rent for use of the property itself or from other services that the property produces such as leases or payments from other recreational activities, (b) receiving ordinary income from the sale of logs, lumber or other products produced from the timber itself. One may receive ordinary income from the sale of non-timber forest products such as medicinal plants, among others. In collaboration, Fuwape (2002) in Sambe, Tee and Dagba (2016) maintains that the sale of non-timber forest products in local market provides income for people in the rural area. Such people are also engaged in the collection and sales of leaves, fruits, seeds and roots of forest trees as source of livelihood. Some of the non-timber products can supply raw materials to sustain different cottage industries in the rural areas and (c) receipt of income from the disposal of standing timber (stumpage) or by cutting the timber and deciding to “treat the cutting as a sale”.

(iii.) Value Chain: Value addition is facilitated through value chain. Against this, background, Oyetunji (2019) maintains that forests have created value-chain industry beginning from loggers to sawmill to carpenters and other wood manipulating enterprises. In addition, Larinde, Popoola and Egbewole (2014) indicate that timber trade generates income for a range of participants in the timber trade chain, including rural people, transporters and urban traders. Other range of stakeholders (participants or timber marketers) as value chain actors in the timber or wood industry are four major actors and their sub-elements as shown in Appendix III: Government (forest owner, regulator, financier); private sector (forest owner, producer, financier, manufacturer, service provider); Global society (Consumer of forest products, user of ecosystem services) and local communities (producer, forest owner, labour, user of ecosystem services). Harrison (n.d.) maintains that timber is an input to other products. From this direction, a derived demand exists for log timber. In fact, various markets exist along the supply chain, from planting, logging, milling, further value adding processes, distribution to timber merchants and final consumption. In practice, there are a number of parallel and to some extent independent sub-markets (such as construction, local furniture making and intrastate exports. Hence, multiple markets exist on the timber supply chain.

The benefits of value addition to forest products will include among other things, job creation, food security, revenue generation, increase in foreign exchange earnings, improved livelihoods and industrialization. Companies can add value to their products through a number of activities, namely: enhancing methods and products for recycling wood-based products and enhancing economic development (Dehoop, Dynn, Shupe, Smith, Viosky & Wu, 2005). Value addition creates jobs, which is critically needed at this time when employment has been shrinking due to economic crisis (Berardo, 2009).

2.2 Empirical Review

Sambe, Tee and Dagba (2016), in their work, titled, “Analysis of Timber Market Structure in Benue State, Nigeria” examined timber market structure and efficiency in Benue State, Nigeria. Seven out of 23 local Government Areas in the State were sampled for the study. A total of 256 respondents (164 timber dealers, 79 chainsaw millers and 13 saw millers) were sampled and interviewed using copies of semi-structured questionnaire to elicit data for the study. These were collated and analyzed using marketing efficiency and Gini-coefficient to determine timber market concentration and efficiency. Gini-coefficient values were 0.1699 in zone A, 0.3394 in Zone B, and 0.1917 in Zone C. This implies low concentration of timber traders in the timber market, indicating a fairly equitable distribution of timber traders in the study area. It was found that timber marketing is, therefore, a viable and efficient enterprise in Benue State. Hence, sustainable management of forest resource in the State should be maintained for continuous supply of timber in the State. Using seven of the 23 Local Government Areas in Benue State to generalize that timber marketing is viable and efficient in Benue State is spurious. The number of samples (LGAs) is highly insignificant and cannot present a true and fair view of such viability and efficiency timber marketing in Benue State.

Adedokun, Ojo and Dairo (2017) in their work treated the “Economic importance and marketing of Timber species in Oyo Town, Oyo State”. Simple random sampling was used in selecting the respondents using structured questionnaire. Descriptive statistical tools and budgetary analytical technique were used to analyze the socio-economic characteristics of the respondent and the cost and return of sawn timber marketing respectively while gross and net profit were used to estimate profitability of sawn timber and marketing respectively. The result obtained revealed that all the sawmill crew were (100%) and the marketers were female (100%) and mostly between the age of 31-40 (50%). The result also showed that majority were married (70%) with 95% of them having formal education. There is gender imbalance between the number of female and male timber marketers in the study. A situation where all the saw mill crew were females without male involvement does not show a fair representation of the working population in the study.

Obasi, Agbo & Onyenekwe (2015), in their study, considered, “Sustainable Timber Utilization and Management in Ebonyi State, Nigeria”. It determined continuous timber usage and timber planning among timber marketers in Ebonyi State. The study was carried out to ascertain the perception of the people on sustainable timber utilization and management in Ebonyi State, Nigeria. Three Local Government Areas (LGAs) were purposively employed to select a total of 150 respondents. Primary data were used for the study. Structured questionnaire was used to collect information from the respondents. Statistical and econometric tools used for analysis included mean, percentages, frequencies and exploratory factor analysis. Results of multiple regression showed that the socio-economics characteristics that influenced timber exploitation were: gender, occupation and education. The study recommended that the law enforcement approach should be complemented with incentive based development of alternative income earning opportunities for local people involved in illegal timber harvesting. The existing gap is the non-indication of the specific names of the three out of the thirteen Local Government Areas of Ebonyi State, Nigeria that were used in the study. It is a fundamental communication gap.

Oyetunji (2015), in his work, treated “The Effects of Forest on Economic Growth in Nigeria (1990-2015)”. The study ascertained the multiplier effects of the existence of forest on the economic growth in Nigeria between the given period. Unit root test were carried out using the Augmented Dickey Fuller (ADF) test and Bounds co-integration test was used to establish a long

run relationship between the forest and other independent variables and economic growth. An Error Correction Mode (ECM) was also employed to determine the nature of the long run relationship. The findings showed that forests have a positive effect on economic growth, however, this is not statistically significant. The study recommends the sustainable use of forest resources through ecotourism and the development of the forestry value chain in Nigeria.

Babatunde, Babatunde, Babatunde and Okeleke (2019) assessed, "Value addition and Constraint of Hardwood Timber Industry in Ijebu Division of Ogun State". The study looked at the positive and negative impact of value addition on the hardwood timber industry within the given environment. The study made use of both the primary and secondary data. The instrument used for collecting the primary data was a set of structured questionnaires. A multistage sampling technique was used in sample enumeration. Descriptive and inferential statistical methods were employed in analyzing the data for the study. The finding showed that 32.6% of the industries were retailers and 30.4% were wholesalers of timbers and also regular supply of the products. The value-added sales ratio was 31% for door, 34% for table, 53% for pupil chair and 39% for benches. The level of access to credit facilities should be improved upon by encouraging the respondents to form cooperative societies so that they can mobilize enough working capital for their business. The existing gap in the study remains the poor implementation and inadequate political will of the State and Federal agencies in Nigeria to actually avail co-operators the needed capital for their business. Such have dwindled the spirit of entrepreneurship and productivity among timber marketers in Nigeria.

2.3 Theoretical Framework

Systems theory was used in the study. It was proposed in the 1940s by the Biologist Ludwig Von Bertalanffy. The fundamental assumption of the study is its focus on interactions. When an element interacts with another element, a change or changes is/are bound to occur. Another core tenet is the distinction between open, closed, and isolated systems. In open systems, there are exchanges of energy, matter, people, and information with the external environment. In closed systems, there are no exchanges of information and matter, only exchanges of energy occur. In isolated systems, there are no exchange of elements. The third assumption of systems theory is self-regulating mechanism (they apply self-correction through feedback).

It then means that where the three selected timber markets were to apply relatively open systems, it will produce the timber marketing activities of harvesting, transportation and trading. It will also produce optimal and sustainable productivity in the timber industry of Ebonyi State. Hence, a satisfactory implementation of the three activities of timber marketing would enhance economic development in Ebonyi State, Nigeria in the areas of generation of employment, income and value chain creation in the timber industry while poor implementation of same causes unemployment, inadequate capital, poor disposable income and untapped resources among the citizenry.

METHODOLOGY

3.1 Research Design

Descriptive research design was used in this study. The descriptive research collected raw data and created data structure that describe the existing characteristics of a defined target population (timber marketers such as harvesters, transporters and traders) and market structure (such as selected three timber markets in Ebonyi State as located in Nkwegu, Abakaliki, Okposi and Afikpo).

3.2 Sources of Data

Data for this study were collected from primary and secondary sources. The primary data were obtained through structured questionnaire on the respondents while the secondary data involve the utilization of library research, journals, textbooks and Internet sources. There was no conflict of interest in the use of data as appropriate acknowledgement was made to all sources of data.

3.3 Population of the Study

The population of the study include the timber marketers in the three selected timber markets in Ebonyi State, namely: timber harvesters, timber transporters and timber traders. The said category of timber marketers represents the target population in the timber industry. The total population of timber marketers of the three selected market in Ebonyi State is 679 (six hundred and seventy nine) comprising timber harvesters or producers, timber transporters and timber traders (Appendix IV) as obtained from the Timber Offices of the selected Timber markets as at 10th October, 2020.

3.4 Determination of Sample Size

In order to determine the sample size of timber marketers, Taro Yamen's formula was used as follows:

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

where:

n = sample size from the aggregate population to be determined

N = Total population size (679)

e = level of significance at 0.05 percent indicating 95 percent level of confidence

1 = constant

The required sample size (n) is 251 as contained in Appendix V and Appendix VI

3.5 Sampling Technique

Sampling units (timber markets) were selected through purposive sampling of the timber markets which are located in Ebonyi State. Three timber markets in Amegu (Nkwegu) Abakaliki, Okposi Court Area and Afikpo produced the respondents for the categories of timber marketers such as timber harvesters, timber transporters and timber traders respectively that influenced economic development in Ebonyi State and Nigeria.

3.6 Research Instrument

Structured questionnaire was the measuring instrument for this study. The questionnaires were administered with the aid of three ad hoc Research Assistants (RAs) for each selected timber market. A 5-point Likert and 5-point rating scales were used to structure the research instrument (questionnaire). The statement of findings was based on the highest, lowest and average mean values of the empirical results among variables.

3.7 Validity of the Research Instrument

The validation of the research instrument was carried out by two Chief Lecturers in the School of Business Studies (one from Marketing Department and other from Business Administration and Management), Akanu Ibiam Federal Polytechnic, Unwana, Ebonyi State. Comments by these Chief Lecturers formed part of the questionnaire to further improve its content.

3.8 Reliability of the Research Instrument

To give credence to this study, a pilot survey was done using typical sample of the sample under study. The outcome of the pilot test was subjected to serious modifications where flaws exist.

The study employed test-retest technique to ascertain how reliable the instrument is. The Cronbach's alpha or co-efficient was calculated to ensure that the test shows reliability before the administration of the questionnaire to the different compositions of the sample size. Therefore, Cronbach's Alpha Formula was utilized as contained in Appendix VII.

3.9 Method of Data Analysis

Data generated through the questionnaires were analyzed using descriptive research technique involving the use of simple percentages, frequencies and standard deviation. Pearson Product Moment Coefficient of Correlation (PPMCC) with linear relationship was used to test the formulated hypotheses. Rejection or acceptance of the hypotheses was based on the decision rules and interpretations guiding the statistical device (PPMCC).

DESCRIPTIVE AND EMPIRICAL RESULTS

4.1 Questionnaire Distribution

Table 1 Distribution and Retrieval of Questionnaire

Option	Frequency			Total	Percentage (%)
	Timber Market Afikpo	Timber Market Nkwegu, Abakaliki	Timber Market Okposi Court Area		
Number Distributed	86	156	9	251	100%
Number retrieved And used	83	154	4	241	96%
Number not Retrieved	3	2	5	10	4%

Source: Ejirihugha (2021) Field Work Survey

Table 1 shows that out of the 251 (two Hundred and fifty one questionnaires issued), 241 (96%) were filled and returned, while 10 (4%) were lost. This shows that the response rate for the survey is 96% while the non-response rate is 4%,

4.2 Socio-Demographic Data

Table 2 Descriptive Statistics On Demographic Profile of Respondents

Option	Frequency	Percentage
Gender:		
Male	234	97.1
Female	7	2.9
Age:		
Less than 30	20	8
31-41	80	33
42-52	120	50
53-63	17	7
64 years and above	4	2
Marital Status:		
Single	20	8
Married	170	71

Divorced	36	15
Widowed	15	6

Academic Qualifications:

Non-Formal Education	50	21
Primary	61	25
Secondary	101	42
Tertiary	29	12

Years of Business Experience:

1-6	30	12
6-12	101	42
13 -18	50	21
19-24	31	13
25years and above	29	12

Monthly Net Income (₦):

Less than 50,000	50	21
50,000 -100,000	100	41
Above 100,000	91	38

Major Timber Occupations:

Sawmilling	19	8
Timber Trading	150	62
Timber Exploitation	15	6
Timber Distribution	31	13
Timber Contractors	10	4
Tree Takers	5	2
Civil Servants	11	5

Names (Types) of Timber:

Cedar	20	8
Cotton (Akpu)	49	20
Bush Pear (Oko Ohia)	31	13
Cam Wood (Uhie)	21	9
Black Afara	49	20
White Afara	19	8
Obeche	12	5
Mahogany	10	4
Sapele	5	2
Iroko	12	5
Opepe	9	4
Others	4	2

Timber Products:

Fuel Wood	49	20
Saw Logs (Planks)	151	63
Veneer Logs	12	5
Pulp Wood	9	4

Particle Wood 20 8

Composition of Timber

Harvesters:

Processors 61 25
 Mill Operators 101 42
 Extractors 28 12
 Tree Cutters (Fellers) 15 6
 Independent Registered Loggers 36 15

Composition of Timber

Transporters:

Haulers 52 22
 Loaders 98 41
 Off-Loaders 49 20
 Truckers 42 17

Composition of Timber Traders:

Log Buyers 101 42
 Timber Suppliers 61 25
 Timber Contractors 36 15
 Timber Exporters 23 10
 Timber Importers 20 8

Source: Ejirihugha (2021) Field Work Survey.

Table 2 shows that there were more males (234 = 97%), more middle aged (42-52 years olds = 120 or 50%), more married timber marketers (170 = 71%) and more ordinary level holders (101 = 42%), more timber marketers with 7-12 years of business experience (101 = 42%) , more 50,000-100,000 Naira monthly net income earners (100 = 41%), more timber trading (150 = 62%), more cotton (Akpu) and black afara (94 or 40%), more saw logs (planks) (151 = 63%), more mill operators (101 = 42%), more loaders (98 = 41%) and more log buyers (101 = 42%) from our sampled population.

4.3 Empirical Result On Relationship Between Timber Marketing And Economic Development .

Table 3 Descriptive Statistics on Employment Creation in Nigeria.

Statements	N	Mean	Standard Deviation
Timber Harvesters engage above 5 to 10% of the people in Nigeria on daily basis.	241	4.4315	0.95551
Timber Harvesters are capable of inducing expanded investment in other branches of timber production	241	4.4398	0.77829
Timber Harvesters' activities contribute 5 to 10% employment generation in Ebonyi State	241	4.4398	0.8200
Timber Transporters rank among the highest employment generating sub-sector in Nigeria	241	4.4025	0.89898
Timber Transporters improve the well-being of the local people in Nigeria with depleting resources	241	4.3444	1.02147
Timber Traders employ about 5 to 10% of people in	241	4.3278	0.99395

Nigeria on daily basis

Timber Traders utilize profitable business as a formidable tool for poverty alleviation 241 4.3651 0.88475

Source: Ejirihugha (2021) Field Work Survey.

Table 3 shows that the highest mean value (4.4398) came from responses on “Timber Harvesters’ activities contribution of 5 to 10% employment generation in Ebonyi State, Nigeria and “Timber harvesters are capable of inducing expanded investment in other branches of timber production” respectively. These are therefore seen as sources of employment creation in Ebonyi State. On the average, timber marketers perceived all the remedies to have high impact (4.39) on employment creation in Nigeria on a five-point scale. Hence timber marketers have positive effect on the economic development of Ebonyi State, Nigeria on a five-point scale.

Table 4 Descriptive Statistics on income generation in Nigeria.

Statements	N	Mean	Standard deviation
Timber Harvesters’ income in Ebonyi State increases every year by about 2 to 5%	241	4.0207	1.25979
Timber Harvesters generate income through range of timber industry activities in Nigeria	241	4.2033	1.14571
Timber Harvesters through different activities in the timber industry increase foreign exchange in Nigeria	241	4.1535	1.09415
Timber Transporters distribute products that lead to income generation in Ebonyi State	241	4.1452	1.17954
Timber Transporters is one of the income generation sub-sectors in Nigeria	241	4.1369	1.13740
Timber Traders engage in 5 to 10% income earning opportunities in Ebonyi State and Nigeria	241	4.0913	1.16903
Timber Trade is one of the highest revenue generating sectors in Nigeria	241	4.2199	1.08271

Source: Ejirihugha (2021) Field Work Survey.

Table 4 shows that the highest mean value (4.2199) emanated from responses on “Timber Trade is one of the highest revenue generating sectors in Nigeria”

The least rating (4.0207) came from responses on “Timber Harvesters’ income in Ebonyi State increases every year by about 2 to 5%”. On average, timber marketers are associated with 4.14 income generating capacity on a five-point scale. This implies a fair rating in income generating and economic development efforts in Nigeria.

Table 5 Descriptive Statistics on value chain creation in Nigeria

Statements	N	Mean	Standard Deviation
Timber Transporters in Nigeria use combination of rail, road and water to facilitate value addition of timber products	241	4.0871	1.17822
In the case of road as the mostly utilized mode of transportation of timber in Nigeria, timber transporters use trucks to supply logs of timber to timber tractors and users	241	4.4357	0.77796

Timber traders add value to their products through a number of activities to enhance timber supply chain in the marketplace	241	4.3693	0,79092
Timber Traders by adding value to their products create jobs	241	4.1618	1.06983

Source: Ejirihugha (2021) Field Work Survey.

Table 5 shows that the highest mean value (4.4357) was associated with the response on “In the case of road as the mostly utilized mode of transportation of timber in Nigeria, timber transporters use trucks to supply logs of timber to timber traders and users”. This indicates the most acceptable mode of transportation that facilitates timber value chain creation among timber marketers in Nigeria. The least rating (4.0871) came from the response on “Timber Transporters in Nigeria use combination of rail, road and water to facilitate value addition of timber products”. On the average, timber marketers perceived all the remedies to have high positive effect (4.26) on value chain creation and economic development in Nigeria.

4.4 Testing of Hypotheses

4.4.1 Statement of Hypothesis I

Ho: There is no significant relationship between the operation of timber marketers and employment creation in Nigeria.

H: There is significant relationship between the operation of timber marketers and employment creation in Nigeria.

Level of significance: $\alpha = 0.05$

Test Statistic: Pearson Product Moment Coefficient of Correlation Analysis was used to rate the frequency of agreement of the respondent on an opinion.

Rejection Rule: Reject Ho if P-value (Sig value) $< \alpha = 0.05$, otherwise accept.

Statistical Software Output (SPSS)

N	R	P-Value (Sig value)
241	0.882	0.000

The SPSS correlation output above, with $r = 0.882$ indicate that there is high positive relationship among the response of the 241 respondents. Hence, the correlation result is $r=0.882$ as contained in Appendix VIII (a) and Appendix VIII (b).

Again, P-value (Sig-value) $< \alpha = 0.05$, indicate that the correlation among the responses of the respondents is statistically significant at alpha level $\alpha = 0.01$ and 0.05 under 2 tailed test respectively. Based on the data, there is sufficient evidence to reject the null hypothesis and accept the alternative, since P-value, (Sig-value) $= 0.000 < \alpha = 0.05$. Therefore, it is concluded that there is significant relationship between the operation of timber marketers and employment creation in Nigeria. This finding justifies the contribution of Federal Ministry of Environment (2006) that the forestry sector employs about 2 million people, mostly part-time, to supply fuel wood and poles, and around 75,000 people in the industrial sector processing logs. This represents over one quarter of the labour force in the manufacturing sector. The wood industries still rank very high, employing about 44.3% of the manufacturing labour force both skilled and semi-skilled. An unquantified proportion of the rural population is involved in a daily and routine gathering, processing and marketing of such products as nuts, mushroom, honey, fruits, resins, gums, medicinal plants, among others. With the growing population, increasing urbanization and economic activities, the demand for recreation is bound to increase. This leads to more employment from the development of more facilities in urban forestry in such areas of

ornamental gardening, landscaping and recreational parks located in most urban centres and major cities in Nigeria.

Eno-Abasi (2017) in Awe and Idumah (2018) indicates that from 2011-2015, Nigeria exported \$400.2 million worth of timber. It is therefore argued that timber exportation should be accompanied with value addition in timber exploitation to obtain needed job creation for Nigerians.

4.3.2 Statement of the Hypothesis 2

Ho: There is no significant relationship between the operation of timber marketers and income generation in Nigeria.

H1: There is significant relationship between the operation of timber marketers and income generation in Nigeria.

Level of significance: $\alpha = 0.05$

Test Statistic: Pearson Product Moment Coefficient of Correlation Analysis was used to rate the frequency of agreement of the respondents on an opinion.

Rejection Rule: Reject Ho if P-value (Sig value) < $\alpha = 0.05$ otherwise accept.

Statistical Software Output (SPSS)

N	R	P-value (Sig value)
241	0.867	0.000

The SPSS correlation output above, with $r = 0.867$ indicates that there is a high positive relationship among the responses of the 241 respondents as contained in Appendix IX (a) and Appendix IX (b).

Again, P-value (Sig-value) < $\alpha = 0.05$, indicates that the correlation among the responses of the respondents is statistically significant at alpha level $\alpha = 0.01$ and 0.05 under 2-tailed test respectively.

Based on the data, there is sufficient evidence to reject the null hypothesis and accept the alternative, since P-value (Sig-value) = $0.000 < \alpha = 0.05$. Therefore, it is concluded that there is significant relationship between the operation of timber marketers and income generation in Nigeria. Larinde, Popoola and Egbewole (2014) indicate that timber trade generates income for a range of participants in the timber trade chain, including rural people, transporters and urban traders.

4.3.3 Statement of Hypothesis 3

Ho: There is no significant relationship between the operation of timber marketers and value creation in Nigeria.

H1: There is significant relationship between the operation of timber marketers and value creation in Nigeria.

Level of significance: $\alpha = 0.05$

Test Statistic: Pearson Product Moment Coefficient of Correlation Analysis was used to rate the frequency of agreement of the respondent on an opinion.

Rejection Rule: Reject Ho if P-value (Sig value) < $\alpha = 0.05$, otherwise accept.

Statistical Software Output (SPSS)

N	R	P-value (Sig value)
241	0.945	0.000

The SPSS correlation output with $r = 0.945$ indicates that there is a high positive relationship among the responses of the 241 respondents. This implies that only about 95% of the respondents are strongly in agreement about the opinion as contained in Appendix X (a) and Appendix X (b).

Again, $P\text{-value (Sig-value)} < \alpha = 0.05$, indicates that the correlation among the responses of the respondents are statistically significant at alpha level $\alpha = 0.01$ and 0.05 under 2-tailed test respectively.

Based on the above data, there is sufficient evidence to reject the null hypothesis and accept the alternative, since $P\text{-value (Sig value)} = 0.000 < \alpha = 0.05$. Therefore, it is concluded that there is significant relationship between the operation of timber marketers and value chain creation in Nigeria. Against this, background, Oyetunji (2019) maintains that forests have created value-chain industry beginning from loggers to sawmill to carpenters and other wood manipulating enterprises). Value addition creates jobs, which is critically needed at this time when employment has been shrinking due to economic crisis (Berardo, 2009).

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Summary of Findings

Based on the analysis of collected data, the key findings of the study are identified. First, there is significant relationship between the activities of timber marketing (timber harvesting) and economic development (employment creation) in Nigeria. This is shown where correlation (r) value is 0.882 at 0.05 level of significance. This is in line with afforestation programmes undertaken in the timber producing areas in Nigeria to ensure availability of timber for harvesting at all seasons thereby increasing employment generation in the timber industry.

Secondly, there is significant relationship between the activities of timber marketing (timber transporters) and economic development (income generation) in Nigeria with respect to correlation value of 0.867 at 0.05 level of significance. Good road network facilitates unhindered distribution of timber and allied products thereby attracting increased timber buyers and improved income for timber marketers.

Third, there is significant relationship between the activities of timber marketing (timber traders) and economic development (value chain creation) in Nigeria in line with the correlation value of 0.945 .

5.2 Conclusion

The activities of timber marketing (timber harvesting, timber transportation and timber trading) in Ebonyi State and Nigeria have positive multiplier effects on the economic development (employment creation, income generation and value chain creation) of Nigeria. There is need for enhanced reporting and documentation of these timber marketers' activities with a view to achieving sustainable optimal goals and objectives of timber industry in Nigeria.

It is also acknowledged that sustainable consumption of timber and non-timber products will enhance employment creation, income generation and value chain creation. Timber marketers should be fair in their dealings with other stakeholders (government, local communities and global society) in the timber industry. This is done through positive collaborative efforts with these concerned segments, at all times.

5.3 Recommendations

The following suggestions for improving activities of timber marketers towards enhanced economic development in Nigeria with particular reference to Ebonyi State are hereby stated:

1. Proper harvesting of timber would lead to avoidance of uncontrolled, exploitative cutting of timber species in a given environment. As mature timber is brought for sale and profitably sold, more timber marketers and allied employees would be attracted to the timber industry thereby leading to employment creation in the timber industry.
2. Optimal distribution of timber products would lead to affordable transportation costs that would not reduce income of operators in timber marketing. Improvement in road network would mean that hitherto extra costs on transportation would boost income generation. Again, multiple taxation by Ebonyi State Government (though utilized as a tool for internally generated revenue) is a disincentive to all forms of investment including timber operations and should be discouraged thereby improving income generation.
3. Timber trading should be consciously done to avoid wastage and promote value addition through a number of activities such as enhancing methods and products and facilitating economic development. Government should establish a Timber Council to regulate trade and harmonise business practices in forest industries in Nigeria, The Council would regularly consider issues relating to timber harvesting, timber distribution and timber trading alongside their impact on employment creation, income generation and value chain creation. The Representatives of Timber Marketers should be members of the Council.

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