

Organizational Learning and Competitiveness of Property Companies in Port Harcourt

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Abstract: The study's main goal was to determine how organizational learning affected the competitiveness of property companies in Port Harcourt. In carrying out this study, the researcher used the cross sectional research design in accessing the population of interest. The reachable population is 20 supervisors each of 11 property companies in Port Harcourt, Rivers state. Thus, a total of 220 questionnaires were distributed to supervisors in the 11 selected firms. The simple random sampling technique was used in this study. Regarding organizational learning, supportive leadership and a Shared vision were examined (The independent variable). The dependent variable (competitiveness) was further assessed in terms of innovativeness and cost reduction. Each item on the surveys was graded using a 5-point Likert scale. The SPSS programme was used to conduct the study's correlation. From the results generated by all the hypotheses, it demonstrated that there exist a significant and positive connection between the variables under research since their correlations from the SPSS table were *0.921, *0.874, *0.872, *0.886. From the outcome, it was obvious that all the elements of organizational learning had good link with competitiveness of property enterprises in Port Harcourt. In conclusion, organizational learning in the areas of shared vision and encouraging leadership is necessary for property companies in Port Harcourt to adapt. The study thereby suggested that managers should make every effort to comprehend their industry and put into practice the proper stage of shared vision in order to exploit the overall performance of firms.

Keywords: Shared Vision, Supportive Leadership, Cost Reduction, Innovativeness.

Introduction

Companies must adapt to the dynamic and ever-changing business climate of today in order to succeed. To do this, they must keep learning and put what they have learned into practice (Muhammad & Abdul 2015). It has been suggested that an organization's capacity for learning is the primary source of its competitive advantage (Hussein, Mohamad, Noordin, Ishak 2014). In order to adapt to the changing business environment, organizations must manage the process of creating knowledge, which entails collecting, retaining, and sharing knowledge (Njuguma, 2009). According to Vithessonthi and Thoumrungroje (2011), organizational learning is a flexible approach to business difficulties that permits quick adaptation to industry expansion. Because it enables the business to maintain competitive advantages in a dynamic environment, a firm's strategy is thought to have a strong association with firm performance when an intervening element like organizational learning is present. (Kor & Mahoney, 2005; Vithessonthi & Thoumrungroje, 2011).

Even while businesses must adapt their practices as quickly as possible to the environmental situation, the costs associated with modifications may be high. (Pahalad & Lieberthal, 2003;

Vithessonthi & Thoumrungroje, 2011). In a society where market forces govern economic outcomes, competitiveness is a crucial notion. The capacity to expand into new markets, outperform other players in the market, draw in investment, and outperform rivals depends on competitiveness. Policymakers must understand how competitive their nation is in comparison to others and how their competitive position changes over time, therefore understanding this is crucial. (Fagerberg & Srholec, 2017).

According to Ewans, Olai, and Ofor (2017), the majority of Nigerian managers and organizations do not consider organizational learning to be a necessary component for enhancing success, performance, and competitiveness in the Nigerian business environment. The banking industry in Nigeria is the only sector in which this is the case (Mehmet, Aminu, & Abdurrahim, 2014). This study makes two contributions, by creating a multidimensional framework of business competitiveness; it helps to bridge a gap in the literature on one hand. The aim of this study is to find out how property companies in Port Harcourt's competitive advantage have been affected by organizational learning.

Statement of the Problem

To gain a competitive advantage, businesses must use aggressive marketing tactics to outwit their rivals. An outlet of competitive advantage that enables organizations to enhance their performance and hence thrive in the face of ever-increasing competition is establishing good customer relationships and providing high-quality service. The choice of the real estate industry for this investigation is supported by the fact that it is one of the markets in Port Harcourt that is growing the fastest. Investors that are looking to gain more customers in order to increase earnings and survive in the competitive business sector are constantly introducing affordable housing projects in the state.

The researches that have been referenced in this study have concentrated on the innovation, resources, and leadership that drive the creation and execution of strategies. Cost-driven efficiency is the main source of competitiveness in the Nigerian economic climate. In the studies, this hasn't been explained in detail. Also lacking are the anticipated advantages of innovation for cost-cutting and for Port Harcourt's price-sensitive real estate firms. Additionally, the industry initiatives that are the sources of waste and have not been caught require adequate management of the supply chains. Therefore, the purpose of this research article is to investigate and explain how organizational learning affects the competitiveness of property companies in Port Harcourt.

Aim and Objectives of the Study

The study's main goal was to determine how organizational learning affected the competitiveness of Port Harcourt's property companies. The study's particular goals were to:

1. Determine the relationship between shared vision and competitiveness.
2. Examine the relationship between supportive leadership and competitiveness.

Research Questions

1. To what extent is the relationship between shared vision and competitiveness?
2. To what extent is the relationship between supportive leadership and competitiveness?

Research Hypotheses

H₀₁: There is no significant relationship between shared vision and cost reduction of property companies in Port Harcourt

H₀₂: There is no significant relationship between shared vision and innovativeness of property companies in Port Harcourt

H₀₃: There is no significant relationship between supportive leadership and cost reduction of property companies in Port Harcourt

H₀₄: There is no significant relationship between supportive leadership and innovativeness of property companies in Port Harcourt

Review of Related Literature

This study was hinged on the Social cognitive theory of learning. According to the Social Cognitive Theory, each person's conduct is a component of an unbreakable triadic structure in which that person's actions, traits, and environment all constantly affect one another and determine one another (Compeau, Higgins, 1995). Environmental factors are defined as those that affect a person's physical environment, such as social pressure or situational features, and that offer opportunities and social support. Any cognitive, personality, or demographic traits that define an individual are referred to as personal factors. In other words, people not only influence the environment in which they evolve, but also the environment in which they live. Social cognitive theory informs intervention efforts and explains how people pick up and retain particular behavioural patterns (Bandura 1977).

Conceptual Framework

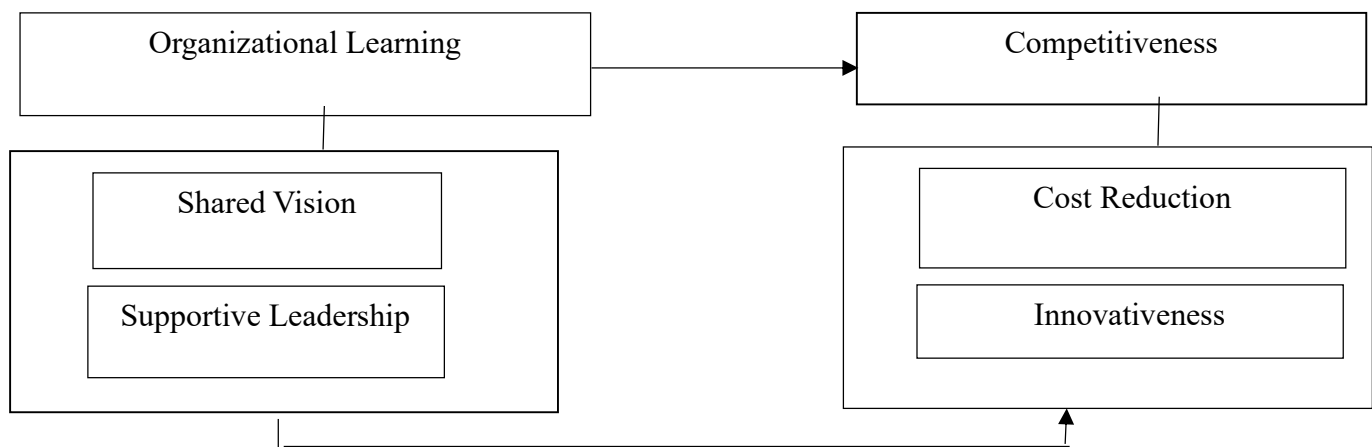


Fig. 1.1: Operational Framework of Organizational Learning and Competitiveness

Source: Mehmet, Aminu, and Abdurrahim (2014); Kimenia, Gakure and Waititu, (2014).

Concept of Organizational Learning

According to Chris (2013), organizational learning is the process through which a company and its employees pick up the information and skills necessary for the growth of their talents, resources, and capacity for effective and efficient performance. His focus is on how knowledge management approaches that are used by everyone in the business may support organizational learning. According to Mylse (2014), organizational learning is a never-ending process by which businesses adapt to their environment by utilizing a range of competencies, know-how, and capacities geared towards achieving competitiveness. According to Robelo et al. (2002), organizational learning refers to a condition in which employees continuously increase their capacity to produce results through the creation of new patterns, liberating group aspirations, and learning as a team. The capacity of an organization to learn and appraise what would help it succeed in the marketplace is where organizational learning places the most attention (Graham, & Nafukho, 2007; Scot 2011; Norashikin, Amnah, Fauziah, & Noorman, 2014).

Shared Vision: The term "shared vision" describes the aims and goals that all of an organization's members share. According to academics, a cooperative relationship's social elements are referred to as shared vision (Roueche, Baker & Rose, 2014). Shared vision, which includes familiarity, camaraderie, and confidence in a relational transaction, is another psychological factor that influences cooperative social ties of partnerships (Rodrguez & Wilson, 2000). Shared vision is an essential cognitive component of social capital that affects knowledge transfer. It refers to the degree to which many people share one common, long-term goals and visions (Inkpen & Tsang, 2005).

Supportive Leadership: Today, it is believed that effective leadership is crucial to achieving improved organizational results. In other words, a leader's effective assistance will inspire followers to improve the standard of their work and sharpen their focus while they are at work (Oluseyi & Ayo, 2009). To ensure that employees do work-related duties, leaders must adopt a particular behaviour that is tailored to their demands. Many academics, like Dumdum, Lowe, & Avolio, (2002), and Rowold, & Schlotz, (2009), have confirmed that supportive leaders have a beneficial association with performance. In fact, all of these studies discovered that when supportive leaders can demonstrate consideration, inspire followers' understanding and motivation, guide and encourage staff as they develop their skills, and support them should any obstacles arise, this approach will help staff complete their tasks more quickly and effectively. Also, adopting supportive leadership traits like respect, listening to his team, and striking a balance between work and home life would result in improved performance levels and help employees overcome problems related to their jobs (Rafferty & Griffin, 2006).

Concept of Competitiveness

There is no agreed-upon definition of what "competitiveness" means (Reiljan, Hinrikus & Ivanov, 2000). There are several different ways that the phrase is conceptualized, according to Budd and Hirmis (2004). By comparing the characteristics or outcomes of activities expressing superiority or inferiority, competitiveness illustrates the position of one economic entity (household, firm, industry, or nation) in comparison to other economic entities (Reiljan et al, 2000). Competitiveness was described by Porter, Ketels, and Degedo (2007) as a nation's market share in the global market for its product. According to the World Economic Forum (2015), a country's level of competitiveness is determined by a number of institutions, policies, and other elements. According to Adebayo (2010), the main strategy for enabling sustainable development is productivity, which

is measured as part of a nation's competitiveness. The productivity of an economy the value of the goods and services generated per unit of a country's human capital and natural resources determines its level of prosperity. The rate of return on investment in an economy, which in turn serves as a key driver of its growth rates, is also determined by the degree of productivity.

Cost Reduction: Cost reduction must constantly be on the minds of managers of organizations since low production costs have become one of the main ways that businesses compete in a global economy. (McWatters, Morse, & Zimmerman, 2001). Cost reduction is a deliberate strategy to save expenses. In order to increase business efficiency, it is a continual process to evaluate each component of cost and every area of the firm critically. A corrective function is cost reduction. Cost reduction is the process of lowering expenses made by a company in order to increase profits. It begins when cost containment is complete and assumes that no expense is being experienced at its best. Adeniyi (2011) asserts that cost reduction begins with the premise that present or planned cost levels are excessive, notwithstanding the fact that cost control may be effective and organizations may be operating at high levels of efficiency.

Innovativeness: Jungwoo (2004) classified innovation into two categories, namely administrative innovation and product innovation. Also, Sungjoo et al. (2010) affirm that research and development activities includes research facilities and the technical experts are the resources used by manufacturing firms to improve the innovativeness of their products. At this point, the simplest method to identify innovation achievement is through checking for new customers, sales growth, customer loyalty and growth in profits levels (Wibisono, 2006). According to Fontana (2009), innovation is described to be the economic and social achievements which are made possible through new discoveries. The processes involved in transforming inputs to outputs makes a key change when products or services are been offered to consumers, communities and to the larger environment.

Empirical Review

Bello et al. (2018) investigated the relationships between organizational learning, organizational innovation, and organizational performance among a sample of manufacturing companies in Lagos, Nigeria. They discovered that there was a positive relationship between organizational learning and organizational innovation as well as between organizational innovation and organizational performance. In their study of organizational learning and performance of selected paint manufacturing firms in Lagos, Nigeria, Ewans et al. (2017) used a survey design and the Pearson correlation coefficient and discovered that, given the dynamism of the business environment, knowledge sharing fosters innovativeness in operations testing, which results in product diversification.

Similar to this, it was discovered that organizational learning capacity (knowledge and skill development) positively affects employee performance in the banking sector in Nigeria when it was analyzed how it relates to organizational performance (Mehmet, Aminu, & Abdurrahim (2014). In researching the influence of organizational learning on higher education lecturer performance in Indonesia, Edy et al. (2017) discovered that there is a considerable and favourable influence of organizational learning on teaching competency and lecturer performance. Yeo (2003), when attempting to shed light on the connection between organizational learning and organizational success which makes an organization competitive it was discovered that

organizational learning leads to improved staff personal development as well as improved innovation and the introduction of new goods and services.

Methodology

In carrying out this study, the researcher used the cross sectional research design in accessing the population of interest. This is due to fact that the subjects of investigation are human beings, and their behavior cannot be controlled because they are prone to changes. The reachable population is 20 supervisors each of 11 property companies in Port Harcourt, Rivers state. Thus, a total of 220 questionnaires were distributed to supervisors in the 11selected firms. The simple random sampling technique was used in this study. This technique was used because it gives a true representative of the entire population and reduces the tendency for researcher bias in selecting the sample case. Regarding organizational learning, supportive leadership and a Shared vision were examined (The independent variable). The dependent variable (competitiveness) was further assessed in terms of innovativeness and cost reduction. Each item on the surveys was graded using a 5-point Likert scale. The SPSS programme was used to conduct the study's correlation.

Statistical Analyses using Spearman Ranking Correlation

Shared Vision and Competitiveness

H₀₁: There is no significant relationship between shared vision and cost reduction of property companies in Port Harcourt

H₀₂: There is no significant relationship between shared vision and innovativeness of property companies in Port Harcourt

		shared vision	cost reduction	innovativeness
Spearman's rho	shared vision	Correlation Coefficient	1.000	.921**
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.	.000
		N	220	220
	cost reduction	Correlation Coefficient	.921**	.883**
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000
		N	220	220
	innovativeness	Correlation Coefficient	.874**	1.000
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.
		N	220	220

The association between shared vision and measures of competitiveness such as cost reduction and innovativeness are experiential to be significant at a $P_v < 0.05$ in the two hypotheses. The result shows that shared vision has a strong significant relationship and positively correlates with cost reduction at a $Rho = 0.921$ and a $P_v = 0.000$ and shared vision further contributes strong and positive correlation towards innovativeness at a $Rho = 0.874$ and a $P_v = 0.000$. Therefore, we reject

null hypotheses one and two relating to shared vision of cost reduction and innovativeness, because the $P_v (0.000) < 0.05$ level of significance.

Supportive Leadership and Competitiveness

H₀₃: There is no significant relationship between supportive leadership and cost reduction of property companies in Port Harcourt

H₀₄: There is no significant relationship between supportive leadership and innovativeness of property companies in Port Harcourt

		supportive leadership	cost reduction	innovativeness
Spearman's rho	supportive leadership	Correlation Coefficient	1.000	.872**
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.	.000
		N	220	220
	cost reduction	Correlation Coefficient	.872**	1.000
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.
		N	220	220
	innovativeness	Correlation Coefficient	.886**	.896**
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000
		N	220	220

The association between supportive leadership and measures of competitiveness such as cost reduction and innovativeness are experiential to be significant at a $P_v < 0.05$ in the two hypotheses. The result shows that supportive leadership has a strong significant relationship and positively correlates with cost reduction at a $Rho = 0.872$ and a $P_v = 0.000$ and shared vision further contributes strong and positive correlation towards innovativeness at a $Rho = 0.886$ and a $P_v = 0.000$. Therefore, we reject null hypotheses one and two relating to supportive leadership of cost reduction and innovativeness, because the $P_v (0.000) < 0.05$ level of significance.

Discussion of Findings

From the results generated by all the hypotheses, it demonstrated that there exist a significant and positive connection between the variables under research since their correlations from the SPSS table were *.921, *.874, *.872, *.886. From the outcome, it was obvious that all the elements of organizational learning had good link with competitiveness of property enterprises in Port Harcourt. The first and second hypothesis suggested that shared vision has a positive linear noticeable association with competitiveness based on the P-value less than 0.05 ($P\text{-value} = 0.000 < 0.05$) which means that both variables have direct positive relationship which advances in the same positive direction. The third and fourth hypothesis showed that supportive leadership has a positive linear notable correlation with competitiveness based on the P-value less than 0.05 ($P\text{-value} = 0.000 < 0.05$) which implies that both variables have direct positive relationship which

moves in the same positive direction. Similarly, the positive correlation is attuned with the findings of previous studies like Bello et al. (2018); Mehmet, Aminu, & Abdurrahim (2014); Edy et al. (2017); Ewans et al. (2017). From their findings, organizational learning has a positive impact on organizational performance.

Conclusion and Recommendations

In conclusion, organizational learning in the areas of shared vision and encouraging leadership is necessary for property companies in Port Harcourt to adapt. Given the findings of the study and its conclusions, the following suggestions are made:

- i. Managers should make every effort to comprehend their industry and put into practice the proper stage of shared vision in order to exploit the overall performance of firms.
- ii. For firms to compete supportive leadership should be undertaken and corporate level managers should be aware of the environment in which they operate.

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