



Strategic Leadership And Organizational Performance Of Food And Beverage Firms In Port Harcourt

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Abstract: *This study examined the Strategic Leadership and Organizational Performance of Food and Beverage Firms in Port Harcourt. The study ascertains the relationship between strategic leadership and profitability of beverages firms in Rivers State. The study used a survey design and a total of one hundred and thirty (130) managers of different food and beverage firms were covered. The primary data for the study was collected using copies of well-structured questionnaire. The data was analyzed using the spearman rank order correlation coefficient. Based on the analysis, the result revealed that there exist a significant and positive correlation between the strategic leadership and organizational performance of food and beverages firm in Port Harcourt. In conclusion, Strategic leadership is related to performance of the food and beverage firms in Rivers State.*

Keynote: *Strategy Leadership, Organizational Performance, Strategic Direction and Control, Organisational Agility.*

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Introduction

For some years now, The food and beverage firms in Port Harcourt has been witnessing an exceptional degree of intense transformation, conversion, and forceful competition, and this tremendous growth came into being as a result of the convergence of different business enterprise, strategic controls, strategic leadership, market fragmentation, supplier attitudes, changing customer demands, changing customer expectations, the reduced lifecycle of a product, etc. and all of these have direct and indirect effects on business performance.

Ahmad et al. (2014) assert that business enterprises are encountering significant challenges because it strategic direction and controls put in place. In the same regard, Ahmad and Pirzada (2014) noted that enterprise networks are known to be the mechanism of growth and development which has significant roles in the establishment of laudable economic development.

It's pertinent to note that when we talk about food and beverage firms, we are simply talking about; cafeterias, cafés, restaurants, fast-food joints, pubs, delis, food manufacturing operations, catering businesses, food transportation services, and more. In these kinds of firms raw agricultural goods are being transformed into consumer food products. And the overall chain includes; Food processing, packaging, and distribution. It does not cover raw food production, which falls into the closely related agriculture industry.

Packaging is often shift-work based in factories. Like other manufacturing work, it can involve physical labor and working with machinery. You'll be asked to follow specific food safety and sanitation guidelines.

The food and beverage firms in Port Harcourt, Nigeria are a diverse sector with a large range of products and manufacturing processes. Currently, the industries in this sub-sector are so numerous that they could be sub-divided into various classifications which include: flour and grain; soft drinks and carbonated water; breweries; starch and miscellaneous food products; meat, poultry, and fish; tea, coffee, and other beverages; fruit juices; animal feed; sugar; distilleries and blending of spirits; cocoa, chocolates, and sugar confectioneries; agricultural and food chemicals and industrial packaging (Ojo, 1998).

Increased performance of the food and beverage firm is hooked on its strategic leadership, direction, controls, and value of the product and services that are rolled out by such food and beverage firms in this light. In other words, the heightened strategic direction and controls as guidelines of strategic leadership and great organizational management, and they bring about improved performance of the firm (Dauda, Akingbade & Akinlabi, 2010).

Hence, food and beverage firms in Port Harcourt can take a huge positive U-turn and increase its performance if it employs more effective strategies. This is because, the more effective its strategies are, the more chances it has to survive and flourish throughout the years.

Statement of Problem

Food and beverages firms in Rivers State are faced with many complex and diverse range of issues. Some face internal management issues, such as strategic planning, and leadership. According to Phipps and Burbach (2010) Strategic leadership influence on organizational performance has not been widely extended to the food and beverage firms. Strategic leadership is the way organizational executives impact their organizational performance through their leadership (Phipps & Burbach, 2010; Hambrick & Mason, 1984). This leaves managers in food and beverage firms to either

interpret the empirical findings regarding strategic leadership to fit their sector, or to reject the findings as inapplicable. This has led scholars to call for research to investigate the impact of strategic leadership on organizational performance in food and beverages firms. (Phipps & Burbach, 2010). It is within this backdrop of the growth, the challenges and prominence of food and beverage organizations in Port Harcourt that this study was carried out.

Review of Related Literature

The variables and research parameters are explored from a literary perspective. The conceptual framework is depicted in figure 1 and lists the variables as strategic leadership and organizational performance

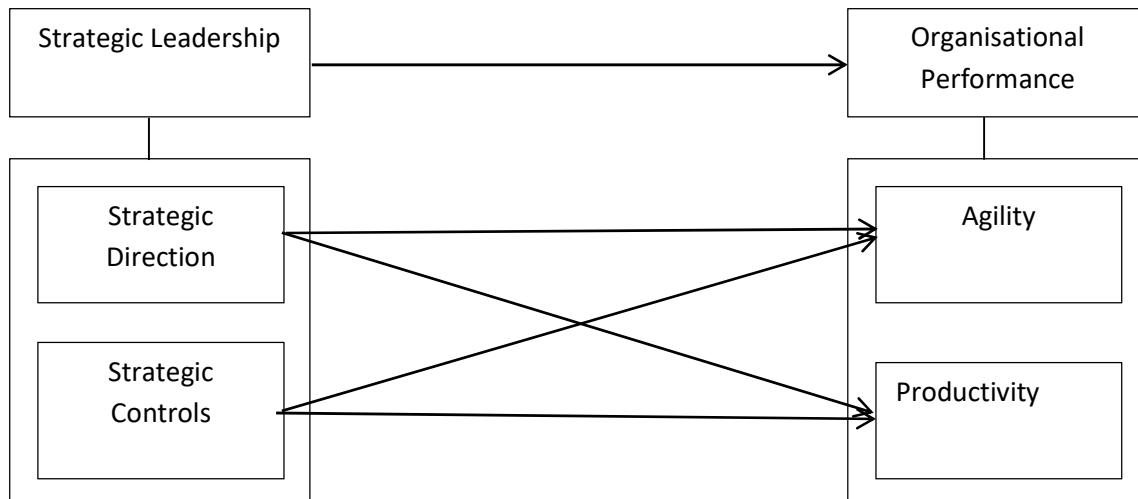


Fig. 1.1: Conceptual framework of Strategic Leadership and Organizational Performance of food and beverage firms in Rivers State

Strategic Leadership

Strategic leadership according Francesca Sales and Brian Hala (1996) is a practice in which executives, using different styles of [management](#), develop a vision for their organization that enables it to adapt to or remain [competitive](#) in a changing economic and technological climate. Strategic leaders are able to use this vision to motivate employees and departments, fostering among them a sense of unity and direction in order to implement change within their organization.

The study and scope of strategic leadership focuses on a small group of executives referred to as the chief executive officers (CEO), top management teams (TMT) and the board of directors who have the overall responsibilities of an organization (Lord et al, 2016; Strand, 2014). Despite its importance to performance, strategic leadership researchers and practitioners are yet to agree on a common definition (Allio, 2013). Irrespective of the diverse terminologies and disconnected constructs used in past strategic leadership studies, Bass (2007) defines it as a group of chief executive officers (CEO) who set overall policies for acquiring and integrating resources for an organization. Ireland & Hitt (1999) conceptualize it as a set of unique capabilities of anticipating, envisioning, maintaining flexibility, thinking in a strategic way, and empowering employees to generate innovative ideas that lead to high performance. House & Aditya (1997) define it as an activity that is directed towards giving purpose to

organizations. Boal & Hooijberg (2001) views it as the ability to create and maintain absorptive and adaptive capacities and the ability to discern environmental opportunities through their managerial wisdom. Rowe & Nejad (2009) define it as an activity of communicating the shared values and a clear vision to employees, and the ability to make decisions with minimum organizational controls. A review of the literature on the various definitions of strategic leadership reveals the different roles played and the unique capabilities strategic leadership possess for accomplishing organizational tasks that are beyond that of one individual, micro level or what Meindl & Ehrlich (1987) refer to as heroic leadership. By going beyond heroism, this paper defines strategic leadership from the perspective of an organization's macro level or the top management team. Specifically, it concerns integrating the micro and macro perspectives of leadership and the organizational context (Crossan et al., 2008; Boal & Hooijberg, 2001). Conceptualizing strategic leadership from a macro view highlights how the two levels are integrated. Strategic leadership is concerned with capabilities of creating a sense of purpose and direction, critical enablers that allow interaction with key internal and external stake holders in pursuit of high performance (House & Aditya 1997). Carter & Greer (2013) view of strategic leadership is anchored on the thinking and visionary capabilities of strategic leadership whose aim is to create an organization that is transformative. Shoemaker & Krupp (2015) argue that strategic leadership is not only concerned with the possession of unique abilities that allows for the absorption and learning of new information and ideas, but having the adaptive capacity to appropriately respond to the dynamism and complexity of the external environment. They further posit that such abilities allow strategic leaders to continuously and tactically adjust the organization in response to the uncertain environment. Scholars have generally enriched the quality of strategic leadership with insights from charismatic, transformational, visionary, adaptive, transactional, servant, reflective, transcendental and empowered leadership respectively (Bass, 1985; Waldman et al., 2001; Castelli, 2016; Crossan et al., 2008). Adaptive, transactional, servant, reflective, transcendental and empowered leadership can be viewed as types of charismatic, visionary and transformational styles that focus on the leadership of the self, others and of the organization respectively (Crossan et al., 2008; Boal & Hooijberg, 2001; Waldman et al., 2001; Bass, 1985). Specifically, strategic leadership has been described by most scholars as encompassing a core of critical practices, which include: determining the long term goals of the organization; exploring and exploiting an organization's core capabilities; managing the human and social assets; inculcating a sustainable organizational culture; emphasizing ethical values and formulating and implementing balanced control systems that will not hinder continuous transformation but at the same time ensure organizational stability (Ireland & Hitt 1999; Hagen et al., 1998). Most recent studies on the influence of strategic leadership on performance suggest that it is substantial (Quigley & Graffin, 2017). Thus, it is critical for scholars to pinpoint essential strategic leadership behaviours or practices that will lead to high levels of performance (Mutia 2015; Jansen et al., 2009; Joste & Fourie 2009). Unfortunately, due to inertial forces in the form of organizational and other environmental constraints, some studies have demonstrated that on average, strategic leadership has limited leverage on performance (Fitza, 2017; Hambrick & Quigley, 2014). A possible explanation for these empirical gaps could be how strategic leadership and performance have been conceptualized and measured and the probable intermediate effects of the moderating and mediating variables. European Scientific Journal December 2018 edition Vol.14, No.35 ISSN: 1857 – 7881 (Print) e - ISSN 1857- 7431 129 This paper thus argues that the strategic direction and controls could be the moderating variable that limits the direct influence of strategic leadership on performance..

Strategic Controls

According to Julian and Scifres (2002), Strategic control involves the monitoring and evaluation of plans, activities, and results with a view towards future action, providing a warning signal through diagnosis of data, and triggering appropriate interventions, be they either tactical adjustment or strategic reorientation."

Thus, there are two aspects in strategic controls (Bessong Bessong, 2018)—evaluation of a strategic action and its results and taking necessary corrective actions in the light of this evaluation. Sometimes, control phase of strategic management is divided into two distinct parts—strategic evaluation and strategic control.

Pramath Raj Sinha (1997) defined strategic control as a method of managing the execution of a strategic plan. It's considered unique in the management process, as it can handle the unknown and ambiguous while tracking a strategy's implementation and the subsequent results. In other words, strategic control is a way to find different methods of strategy implementation by adapting to changing external and internal factors to achieve strategic goals.

Njoku, J. (2021) emphasizes the importance of strategic control as an element of strategic leadership. Strategic control can help measure organizational progress. As a strategy is chosen or implemented, an outcome is determined based on the likelihood. In strategic management, it's important to measure results during and after implementation. This allows timely corrective actions as well.

Solanki Kirti (2022) stated the importance of strategic control as follows;

Control and Efficiency: To measure the efficiency of the production process the managers need to know how efficiently the inputs are being combined to produce the required output. This information is provided to the managers through the control system in the organisation. These control systems provide managers means to measure how efficient the strategy is. It also allows them to measure the success or failure of new initiatives and strategies. In the absence of a control system, managers will be totally handicapped and they will have no clue as how well their strategy is working and what kind of improvements are necessary in removing the shortcomings.

Control and Quality: Competition nowadays increasingly focused on improving the quality of the goods and services being produced. Products compete within their segments and sub-segments on the basis of features, design and quality. Strategic control helps managers to get a feedback on the quality of their products. The managers can keep a track on the quality of their products by keeping track of customer complaints received or the customer satisfaction level. Nowadays, online feedback is also available to organisations.

Control and Innovation: Strategic control also helps the organisation to increase the level of innovation in the organisation. Successful companies like Nokia or Apple create the right environment in the work place which encourages creative thinking and they have incorporated these aspects in their strategic control systems. This helps in creating the right culture for risk taking in these organisations.

Control and responsiveness to customers: Strategic control also helps organisations to measure the level of customer satisfaction by evaluating how well the employees are in the customer facing jobs (like customer care and retention). The organisation can also use the information generated to impart training to employees to improve their weak areas so that the proper service can be provided to the customer. There is also an indirect pressure on employees to improve their responsiveness to customers when they know that their behavior is being tracked.

Adeoye, A. Elegunde, A. (2012) in his book highlighted the processes of strategic control as determination of what to control, setting of standards, measuring performance, comparing performance with standard, determination of reasons for deviations and taking corrective actions. Professor David A. Aker, in his book *Developing Business Strategies*—Published by John Wiley and Sons of N.Y in 1984 P. 128, suggests a “formal yet simple strategic information scanning system which can enhance the effectiveness of the scanning effort and preserve much of the information now lost within food and beverage firms.

Njoku, J. (2021) in his book "Leadership and Continuous improvement in the Nigerian" highlighted the techniques for strategic controls as budgeting (forecast about the future and thus the organization needs to revisit it from time to time), auditing by objectively obtaining and evaluating the evidence regarding assertion about economic actions and events to ascertain the degree of correspondence between those assertions and established criteria and communicating the results to interested users), Time-Related Control Methods by uses analytical tools and techniques for strategic control. The methods typically used. are management by objectives (MBO) created by Peter Drucker, management information systems (MIS) as the form of highly customized and interactive software which collects relevant data from various sources and which utilizes decision making models to effectively analyze these raw data into meaningful output for top management.

Strategic Direction

Eisenhardt, K. and Martin, J. (2000) defined strategic direction is the set of activities and decisions a firm needs to make in order to achieve its goals and objectives.

According to Amber Krosel and Arlene Helbert (2000) Strategic direction is an approach to planning in the workplace that helps management define short-term and long-term goals. It comprises the foundational ideas or actions that allow for greater consistency in strategy. Organizations often use this approach to create mission and vision statements. These statements allow both managers and employees to have a clear sense of the purpose of their work.

Catherine Sherman and Russ Garcia (2000) stated that setting strategic direction in the workplace can help outline a company's direction. It's an opportunity to test what works and doesn't work to address clients' or customers' expectations. It's important to focus on the employees' concerns when developing a direction so that it can align with everyone in the workplace. Although it may take some skill to accommodate everyone, it's important to take the time to listen to feedback and host brainstorming sessions so you can adopt the most efficient plan of action.

Setting progress milestones toward the vision of a company's future can be an extremely helpful way to see progress in a company. Inspiring staff members to stay motivated is often an essential aspect of developing a direction plan. By keeping the workforce involved in short- and long-term goals, a company can adapt to change quickly. Consistent communication and empathy can guide a business to achieve its goals and increase profitability. To gain the most value from a direction, firms can analyze every area and process of an organization. Here's a list of steps manufacturing firms can consider to set a direction as

Consider the vision for the company

Reflect on the company's mission

Develop a plan

Set periodic goals

Set quantifiable goals

Food and Beverage firm in Rivers state scan analyse and create new strategic directions through the following process:

First, the firm has to identify **issues** with their current strategy. It is important to notice strategic issues as soon as possible, so the company can stay on track in achieving its overall business objectives.

The second step is to conduct an **external analysis** (PESTLE). The [external environment](#) is important to overall strategy, as external factors can impact the internal processes of the business - including certain internal decisions made by the business.

It is also important to conduct a competitive analysis, like **Porter's Five Forces** analysis, to examine the [competitive environment](#). This allows the organization to see which strategic direction would prove the most profitable in the [competitive environment](#).

A **SWOT** analysis is also essential for understanding where the company's competitive advantages and weaknesses are, in regards to the overall strategy.

Finally, once the overall issues and objectives have been defined, the company can use a **strategic direction matrix** like the [outsourcing decision matrix](#) or the **Ansoff Matrix**, to set a detailed strategy that will help them achieve its overall business objectives.

Organizational performance

Strategic leadership plays a major role in determining performance by enabling their organizations cope with their external environment (Jansen et al., 2009). Unfortunately, other studies have found out that such an influence is paradoxical since the complex nature of the external environment may likely constraint or limit the CEO effect (Fitza, 2017). Conger (1999) further points out that there is scarcity of empirical studies focusing on the moderating role of the external environment in the relationship between strategic leadership and performance. Generally, empirical studies have demonstrated that the external environment is a critical moderating variable that determines the relationship between strategic leadership and performance (Jansen et al, 2009; Goll et al., 2007).

From the above, we can see that Food and beverage manufacturing firms opt for thoughtful consideration and science to select the correct container and packaging materials for safe food and beverage. The packaging preserves and protects against contamination by harmful bacteria, toxins, and any type of damage to food and beverage. It helps to prevent products from spilling or leaking and provides vital information on nutrients, ingredients, and expiration dates for food and beverage to consumers and stores as well.

Organisational Agility

According to David Anderson (2019) Organizational agility can be defined as the ability of a company to:

Adapt to external and internal changes.

Rapidly meet customer demands and expectations.

Lead change improving culture, practices, and outcomes.

Maintain a continuous competitive advantage.

For **Monica Murarka (2022)** a business is only agile when it has the capability to predictably meet the rapidly changing needs of customers and deliver on its promises.

Aaron De Smet (2022) see organisational gility as the ability of an organization to renew itself, adapt, change quickly, and succeed in a rapidly changing, ambiguous, turbulent environment. Agility is not incompatible with stability—quite the contrary. Agility *requires* stability for most companies.

Wouter Aghina Wouter Aghina (1996) stated that agility has always been important for companies. Take the high-tech sector, where I've done most of my work. In that sector, you're often only as good as your last product. That means you have to be agile. Now, having said that, you could think, "I'm not in the high-tech sector, so that's less relevant for me." But with today's levels of uncertainty, ambiguity, volatility in the markets, and globalization, this is starting to be true for any company. It's critical to be agile and quickly respond to change and actually benefit from change. And if you think that you're still in a corner where this doesn't hold true, wait for the disruption to come. Tomorrow it will be relevant for you.

Being an agile organization is to have the ability to rapidly reconfigure services within an organization to adapt to the the changes in customer demands. Kanban can adapt to the customer expectations not just a change in the product specification.

Methodology

A survey design was used to study the association between strategic leadership and organizational performance of Rivers State food and beverage firms. This study's population consists of 130 managers and supervisors from food and beverage companies. The study was a census study because the population was within the researcher's reach. To gather information on the variables under inquiry, participants were given a standardized questionnaire. Each dimension and measure item were measured with five inquiry items. Strategic direction and strategic controls were used to assess profitability and agility. The data from the study and the testing of hypotheses were analysed using the Spearman rank order correlation coefficient.

Result

Out of the 130 questionnaires issued, 125 were returned, which makes 96.1% of the total. The hypothesis test is carried out with a 125% confidence interval, and the decision rule is shown below.

Where $P < 0.05$ = Reject the null hypotheses

Table 1: Relationship between strategic direction setting and profitability

Correlations				
			Strategic Direction	Profitability
Spearman's rho	Strategic Direction	Correlation Coefficient	1.000	.785**
		Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
		N	125	125
	Profitability	Correlation Coefficient	.785**	1.000
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
		N	125	125

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

The findings of the data analysis in Table 1 show a substantial relationship between strategic direction and profitability, with $P \leq 0.05$ (0.000 0.05) and $\rho = 0.785$. This means that a change in one of the variables will positively impact the other, i.e. a change in strategic direction will have an impact on the level of firm's profitability. Therefore, the study findings reveal a positive and significant relationship between strategic direction and profitability. Considering the foregoing, we therefore reject the null hypothesis and accepts the alternate hypothesis which states that there is a significant link between strategic direction and profitability of the food and beverage firms in Rivers State.

Table 2: Relationship between strategic direction and organizational agility

Correlations				
			Strategic Direction	Organisational Agility
Spearman's rho	Strategic Direction	Correlation Coefficient	1.000	.795**
		Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
		N	125	125
	Organisational Agility	Correlation Coefficient	.795**	1.000
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
		N	125	125

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

The study in Table 2 shows a moderately positive rho value of 0.795 and a P-value of 0.000, which is less than .05 (0.000 0.05), indicating a significant relationship between strategic direction and organizational agility. The implication of this is that an improvement in strategic direction will enhance the level of agility of the firm. Thus, the null hypothesis is rejected and we therefore accept the alternate hypothesis that there is a significant relationship between strategic direction and organizational agility of the food and beverage firms in Rivers state.

Table 3: Relationship between strategic controls and profitability

Correlations				
			Strategic Controls	Profitability
Spearman's rho	Strategic Controls	Correlation Coefficient	1.000	.825**
		Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
		N	125	125
	Profitability	Correlation Coefficient	.825**	1.000
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
		N	125	125

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

The analysis on table 3 shows a positive relationship between strategic controls and profitability. This can be seen from the P-value of .000 and a coefficient value of .825. This implies that a change in one of the variables will positively affect the other, i.e. strategic controls will positively influence the level of profitability of the organizations. Therefore, we infer that there is a positive and significant relationship between strategic controls and the firm's profitability. Following the result, the null hypothesis is hereby rejected and the alternate hypothesis accepted that there is a significant relationship between strategic control and profitability of the food and beverage firms in Rivers state.

Table 4: Relationship between strategic controls and agility

Correlations				
			Strategic Controls	Organisational Agility
Spearman's rho	Strategic Controls	Correlation Coefficient	1.000	.845**
		Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
		N	125	125
	Organisational Agility	Correlation Coefficient	.845**	1.000
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
		N	125	125

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

Table 4 demonstrates a favourable association between market strategic controls and organizational agility. This is demonstrated by the P-value of .000 and the coefficient value of .845. This indicates that a change in one of the variables will have a positive impact on the other, i.e. strategic control will have a positive impact on organizational agility. As a result, we conclude that strategic controls and firm agility have a positive and significant association. As a result of the findings, the null hypothesis is rejected and the alternate hypothesis, that there is a substantial relationship between strategic controls and the agility of the food and beverage enterprises in Rivers state, is accepted.

Discussion of Findings

Strategic Direction and Profitability

The results of the data analysis showed a strong relationship between strategic direction and profitability. The P-value of 0.000 demonstrates relationship existence between strategic direction and profitability of food and beverage firms in Rivers State, Nigeria, and the rho value of 0.785 demonstrates a strong and positive link between strategic direction and profitability. Thus, it can be deduced that for firms that want to make more profit must embrace strategic direction.

Strategic Direction and Organisational Agility

The result of hypothesis 2 demonstrated a significant connection between strategic direction and firm's agility. The P-value of 0.000, and the rho value of 0.795 shows a strong relationship between the two variables. This confirms that a change in any of the variable will affect the other. Furthermore, when there is strategic direction involvement, it enhances the level of the firm's agility.

Strategic Controls and Profitability

According to the findings of the third hypothesis, strategic controls are substantially related to profitability of the firm. This demonstrates how strong controls improve productivity in Rivers State's food and beverage industries. The coefficient value of 0.825 indicates that changes in strategic controls have an impact on the productivity of food and beverage enterprises. As a result, strategic controls appear to improve business profitability in food and beverage firms.

Strategic Controls and Organisational Agility

The fourth hypothesis' results suggest that strategic controls are highly related to the agility of the firm. This demonstrates how strategic controls improve the agility of Rivers State's food and beverage industries. The coefficient value of 0.845 indicates that changes in controls have an effect on the agility of food and beverage enterprises. As a result, strategic controls appear to improve organizational agility of food and beverage firms.

Conclusion

This study examined the impact of strategic leadership performance on the performance of food and beverage enterprises in Port Harcourt.

The study examines strategic direction and profitability of the food and beverage firms in Rivers State. It is important to state that the study found that embracing strategic controls enhances improved agility of the food and beverage firms, as strategic direction also enhance agility and profitability the business activities. The study thereby concludes that for profitability of the food and beverage firms, strategic direction and control are necessity.

Recommendations

- The importance of the strategic leadership performance of food and beverage firms in Port cannot be overemphasized as it Serves as a vital tool to the economic growth and development in Port Harcourt. In this regard, the research recommends the following:
- The leadership organization should take strategic direction seriously as this will promote Participation, Teamwork, and Communication.
- Furthermore, Management should increase strategic controls as this would bring about checks and balances on the conception, production, inspection, and delivery of its products and services and could foster increased profitability and performance of such firms.
- Management should structure Organizational work arrangements which can allow for less stringency in supervision so that workers can express themselves in proactive ways and also be accountable for their actions and behavior, such that their confidence and trust in their proactiveness is directly linked to their success and their contributions to the organization.
- Management should be more attuned toward the potential and proactive capabilities of their subordinates and should be more flexible about shared responsibilities and roles in their leadership and controls such that workers are offered the required opportunities and platforms to be proactive in their roles and responsibilities.
- Food and beverage firms established s controls allow employees to showcase their proactive skills.

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