



Talent Management and Competitiveness of Food and Beverages Firms in Rivers State

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Abstract: *The purpose of this survey-based study was to examine the relationship between personnel management and the competitiveness of food and beverage firms in the state of Rivers. From a pool of 125 managers at 10 restaurants and bars in Rivers State, 95 were randomly selected using the Krejcie and Morgan table. The survey was distributed to 95 workers, but only 73 were completed and returned. SPSS was used to analyse the hypotheses via the Spearman Rank Order Correlation Coefficient, and to analyse the characteristics of the respondents via a frequency distribution. There is a positive and statistically significant correlation between effective talent management and business outcomes. Talent management practises, including as talent development and reward management, were found to benefit food and beverage companies in Rivers State. This study concludes that the food and beverage business can benefit from training in people management in order to make better use of its intangible assets.*

Key words: *Competitiveness, Reward Management, Talent Development, Talent Management, Food and beverages firms.*

Introduction

Today, innovation and technological progress are the key drivers of success, making it imperative for businesses find, attract, cultivate, and keep the best people. Organizations should recruit, keep, and engage talented individuals if they want to be competitive. As a result, businesses need to do more than just recruit and keep talent; they also need to give people the tools they need to become leaders (Wandia, 2013). The ability of an entity to seize opportunities within its environment, ensuring its sustainability and outperforming that of its competitors, is a key component of competitiveness (Roman et al., 2012). According to Kareska and Marjanova (2012), one way to examine competitiveness is via the lens of "micro-competitiveness," which focuses on the organisation itself and refers to its ability to compete and flourish in the market for specific local or global offerings of goods or services. Macro-competitiveness, on the other hand, involves relationships between countries or industries.

Talent management, as described by Collings and Mellahi (2009), entails systematically identifying key positions that contribute differently to the organization's sustainable competitive advantage, developing a talent pool of high potential and high performers to fill these roles, and

developing a differentiated human resource architecture to facilitate the hiring of competent individuals and to ensure their continued dedication to the organisation. Talent management is rarely discussed in isolation from its paradigm, which systematically incorporates talent acquisition, talent development, and talent retention (Ahmadi et al., 2012; Tetik, 2016; Wahba, 2016; Ganaie & Haque, 2017). One of the most important aspects of talent management is attracting and maintaining employees who have the knowledge, training, and experience to meet the company's present and future needs. Nazari et al. (2015) emphasise that another facet of talent management is preparing current employees to take on new roles within the firm that capitalise on its fundamental strengths. According to Ochieng (2016), "talent management" describes the steps used to build and maintain a team of suitably skilled workers. According to Kamal and Lukman (2017), "talent management" is a method that has helped numerous companies foster the growth of future leaders. One of the most important aspects of talent management is attracting and maintaining employees who have the knowledge, training, and experience to meet the company's present and future needs. Nazari et al. (2015) emphasise that another facet of talent management is preparing current employees to take on new roles within the firm that capitalise on its fundamental strengths. According to Ochieng (2016), "talent management" describes the steps used to build and maintain a team of suitably skilled workers. Talent management, as defined by Kamal and Lukman (2017), is a coherent strategy that has helped many businesses develop future leaders. Talent management is crucial to a company's prosperity since it provides a strategic advantage (Khoreva, Vaiman, & VanZalk, 2017).

In their work on developing and validating a talent management assessment instrument, Yener, Gurbuz, and Acar (2017) suggested using talent development and reward management as indicators of success. Planning, selecting, and implementing development strategies for the entire talent pool and ensuring development activities are in line with organisational talent management processes are at the heart of talent development, which ensures the organisation has a current and future supply of talent to meet the strategic objectives (Garavan, Carbery, & Rock, 2012). Reward management includes a set of policies, practises, methodologies, and procedures (Armstrong, 2001). Value may be sought by employees in several ways. Extrinsic and intrinsic kinds of reward are both crucial for a person's motivation at work (Cox, 2005; Greenberg & Colquitt, 2005).

Rukunga and Nzulwa (2018) looked into how different personnel management strategies impacted the productivity of telecoms companies. Results showed that the company's talent recruitment strategy had a much larger impact on performance than its talent retention strategy. Business outcomes were found to be significantly influenced by factors including employee loyalty, organisational enthusiasm, low turnover, and a committed workforce. The research also found that a person's approach to career management and their approach to learning and development had major effects on productivity. Jibril and Ye Silta analysed the hotel industry in Northern Cyprus in 2022, paying special attention to customer satisfaction, talent management, and long-term success. What we found of the study demonstrated that the hotels' talent development initiatives had little effect on their long-term competitive advantage. However, human resource management is typically in charge of how hotels handle talent management.

Akinremi and Adedeji (2019) looked into the topic of talent management and the productivity of employees at several banks in Akure, Ondo State, Nigeria. The chi-square value with 4 degrees of freedom is 106.62, and the corresponding p-value is 0.001. Since the significant result (0.001) is less than the level of significance (0.05), the alternative hypothesis (H1) is accepted while the null hypothesis (H0) is rejected. Therefore, talent management practises significantly affect employee happiness in the banking sector. Research examining the relationship between talent management and organisational performance in the pharmaceutical industry of Anambra State, Nigeria was conducted by Mgbemena, Enetanya, Nsofor, and Ogbogu (2022). According to the results, talent retention has a major effect on workplace output. Systems for performance management have a big impact on how productive employees are. Employee productivity is significantly influenced by training and development as well as by attracting top talent. Despite these studies, it is clear that nothing has been done in terms of exploring the connection between personnel management and competitiveness, especially in Rivers State's food and beverage companies. As a result, there are large gaps caused by contextual variations. The purpose of this study was to examine the extent to which talent management actually does affect the competitiveness of the food and beverage industry in Port Harcourt, Rivers State.

Aim and Objectives of the Study

The study's overarching goal is to better understand how talent management affects the competitiveness of food and beverage businesses in Rivers State. Therefore, the following aims are explained in detail:

- to examine the relationship between talent development and competitiveness.
- to investigate the relationship between reward management and competitiveness.

Research Hypotheses

H₀₁: There is no significant relationship between talent development and competitiveness.

H₀₂: There is no significant relationship between reward management and competitiveness.

Concept of Talent Management

An organisation can't thrive without its talented workers. The owners and management of a company recognise that a lack of qualified workers is a bigger problem than a lack of capital (Kehinde, 2012). Businesses have realised that talent is essential to achieving their goals and objectives at any time (Gebelein, 2006). They inspire others to reach for greater heights of achievement and are themselves at the pinnacle of success. Only a small percentage of employees actually contribute to the company's key competencies (Berger & Berger, 2004). The management of talent is a powerful tool for improving employee training and development programmes. Talent management can make advantage of the company's tech, resource allocation, and performance measurement tools. Existing talent and emerging talent in the market require talent management to evolve (Mary, Enyinna, & Ezinne, 2015). Inadequate planning, management policies, processes, and programmes are to blame for the failure of most businesses' talent management systems, as Kehinde (2012) elucidated. Using these methods, you

can attract top talent, retain them, and put them to work for you to boost productivity and profitability. Every aspect of an organisation needs to be in sync with its performance if it wants to gain a competitive edge and maintain it over time (Mary et al, 2015).

Many organisations have different ways of looking at talent; some believe that the strategic staff is talented, while others believe that every one of the staff is talented. According to Lewis and Heckman (2006), talent management is the process of developing a strategy to identify and develop an organization's most valuable assets—its people—and then putting that strategy into action. Laff (2006) argues that the term "talent management" encompasses more than just the process of finding and training new personnel. For talent management to be effective, a systematic approach is required, one that calls for constant communication and collaboration amongst a wide range of processes and departments. It comprises attracting, developing, motivating, and keeping employees who are competent, well-educated, and capable of taking the lead. Talent management, as defined by Besin (2008), is to find, train, inspire, and keep the best people in an organisation. Talent management strategies that take a systematic approach require close cooperation between a number of different processes and departments. The word "talent management" encompasses a wide range of tasks, such as evaluating workers' output, grooming future leaders, and managing staff.

Concept of Talent Development

Talent development refers to efforts made to improve workers' skills and outlooks (Williamson, 2011). To stay up with the rapid evolution of technologies, business models, and development plans, it is essential for businesses to invest in the education and training of their staff. The integration and strategic matching of existing talent and employee abilities must also be taken into account by development experts when crafting such initiatives (Mendez & Stander, 2011). Findings suggest this approach is utilised to assist already-competent workers become even better.

Talent could be said to exist in a select few who have the potential for management and leadership. When it comes to talent development, opinions vary on who should be prioritised and whether or not the process should be applied to the entire organisation (Iles et al., 2010). Several methods should be used together, according to 2011 CIPD research. For talent to be found, evaluated, and nurtured, an efficient HR system and a transparent disclosure of development requirements are required. The AMO framework for developing talent is founded on the belief that encouraging the proper behaviours will yield the best potential results for the business. Organisations provide encouraging feedback and rewards to elicit the right kinds of behaviours. Competency development aims to broaden people's access to rewarding professions that match their interests and strengths.

Concept of Reward Management

The term "reward" is used to describe any and all remuneration that employee receives in exchange for their services. "Rewards" are "the benefits that result from completing a task, providing a service, or meeting a responsibility" (Colin; referenced in Waruni, 2014). Employees

are referred to as being "rewarded" when they receive monetary compensation from their employers for work they have completed (Lin, 2007). Ajila and Abiola (2004) use this term to define the network of brain areas whose function is to control behaviour through the induction of pleasure. Human resources can be utilised to their maximum capacity if they are compensated in a number of critically important ways.

The organization's reward system is based on its philosophy, strategies, and policies on rewards. Pay, perks, and other types of compensation are all part of the system of rewards, which is comprised of processes, practises, structures, and procedures. According to Obisi (2003), a reward system is a method of incentivizing and recognising employees for their efforts. Robert (2005) defines a reward system as "the process of developing and implementing strategies, policies, and systems that help the organisation achieve its goals by attracting, retaining, and motivating the personnel it requires to do so."

Concept of Competitiveness

According to the changing global socioeconomic backdrop, the concept of competitiveness has changed over time (Gonçalves et al., 2019). A company's competitive edge is a result of the industry's businesses' competition with one another (Farhikhteh et al., 2020). The goal of competition is to attain economic superiority (Tambade et al., 2019). In their definition of organisational competitiveness, Khan et al. (2019) claim that an organisation is competitive if it can outperform its rivals. According to Rengkung et al. (2017), competitiveness is typically used as a comparison indicator between two or more enterprises operating in the same industrial base, indicating a probable connection between competitiveness and the current competitive advantage. Hussain et al. (2015) state that the innovation, cost, flexibility, process, delivery, and quality of a business are the most important factors in determining its competitiveness.

It has been established that competitiveness is a key factor, along with innovation and complexity, in determining the organisational efficiency levels of OECD member countries (Salas-Velasco, 2019). Business globalisation and global integration, according to Baral (2017), are what really push the economy forward in the present day. The best chance for change and innovation is through integration, whereas globalisation has sharply raised the level of international competitiveness (Abbas & Waheed, 2017).

Theoretical framework

Talent-Based Theory

As the only factor capable of providing a long-term source of differentiation in the market, talent should be at the centre of management's consideration and decision-making, according to the talent-based approach of the organisation (Roberts, 2008). The firm has earned a reputation as a place where talented people may flourish. It is not the responsibility of the organisation to identify and nurture genius; rather, doing so is entirely on the shoulders of the individual. By setting up institutional mechanisms for the coordination and cooperation of specialists employed by the company, the latter effectively combines the talent that is individually owned. Each person

have a unique set of skills. In other words, the company is focused on the organisational processes that individuals need in order to learn, remember, and use their skills (Roberts, 2008). The idea of talent in relation to talent-based theory is still in its infancy in many businesses. There are worries about the variety of initiatives created and carried out in the varied activities of various organisations. They bring up the prospect of inconsistency in talent management. Therefore, the term "talent management" has been proposed to be replaced with "talent development," which describes the procedure of creating a setting in which talent can be discovered, nurtured, and exploited. Talented people are more likely to find opportunities for self-actualization in an organisation that prioritises and sees the benefits of organisational culture growth. Success factors, or processes, are what need to take shape before people will want to give their all (and more) (Lepak & Snell, 2012). The study can benefit from this notion because it sheds light on the process of learning and development. It also includes a management approach that opposes haphazardness and substitutes ongoing management and working environment development.

Resource-Based Theory

The focus of resource-based theory, also known as the resource-based view (RBV) of an organisation, is on its internal assets, including its human resources. It emphasises developing human capital as a source of long-term competitive advantage rather than simply coordinating staff efforts with short-term goals. However, if a company is implementing a value-creating strategy that its competitors aren't doing at the same time and if the advantages of this approach can't be copied by the competition, then the company will have a sustained competitive advantage. Barney (1991) examined the connections between business resources and long-lasting competitive advantages using four empirical indicators: valuations, rarity, imitability, and substitutability.

Barney (1991) posits, in an effort to explain the source of competitive advantage, that a firm's resource may be heterogeneous and fixed, with four unique traits. The first characteristic requires the resource to be recognised for the value it provides to the organisation as it carries out its strategy. The second advantage is that the resource is scarce and difficult for rivals to obtain. Last but not least, imitability is a characteristic of resources that implies rivals not only lack but also cannot acquire a given resource. The fourth feature is substitutability, which indicates that the resource cannot be duplicated and that there are no possible alternatives with other companies.

Methodology

Research Design

This study relied on a survey approach. Port Harcourt, Rivers State, was chosen as the study's sample location since it is home to 10 eateries and beverage distributors. There were 125 managers and supervisors, and 95 of them were picked at random using the Krejcie and Morgan table. Using Cronbach's alpha, we can see that the instrument's dependability falls between the thresholds of .70 and .80 advocated by Nunnally and Bernstein (1994). The strategy used face

validity and content validity. There were 95 total copies of the survey given out, however only 73 were filled out and returned. We used a four-item survey measuring opinions on two aspects of talent management (talent development and incentive management) and competitiveness on a five-point Likert scale (strongly agree = 5; agree = 4; neutral = 3; disagree = 2; severely disagree = 1). Using SPSS Version 25.0, a statistical tool designed for the social sciences, we conducted a Spearman Rank Correlation Coefficient analysis of our hypotheses and a Frequency Distribution Analysis of our respondents' demographic information (gender, age, and level of education).

Result and Discussions

Table 1: Analysis of Descriptive (Demographic) Data

Gender	Response Rates
Male	54
Female	19
Total	73 (100%)
Age of the Respondents	Response Rates
30-39Yrs	21
40-49Yrs	37
50-59Yrs	9
60 and Above	6
Total	73 (100%)
Education Qualification	Response Rates
HND/BSC	42
M.Sc./MBA	29
Ph.D	2
Total	73 (100%)

Table 1 reveals that there were a total of 54 male representatives (73.97%) and 19 female representatives (26.02%). From what we can tell from these statistics, the majority of responses are male.

The respondents were split into four categories based on their ages: those between the ages of 30 and 39, 40 to 49, 50 to 59, and 60 and up. With 50.68 percent of respondents falling within that age range, it's clear that the organisations in question benefit from an energetic and experienced workforce.

According to Table 1, 42 respondents possess a First Degree from a University or College, 29 hold a Second Degree, and 2 hold a Doctorate.

The fact that the majority of employees hold either a Higher National Diploma or a First Degree demonstrates the value the company places on their employees' continued education and personal growth.

Analyses of Hypotheses

Hypothesis One

H₀₁: No causal link can be established between talent development and competitiveness

Table 2: Talent development on competitiveness

		Talent_Development	Competitiveness
	Talent_Development	Correlation Coefficient	1.000
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.789
		N	.
	Competitiveness	Correlation Coefficient	.789
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.000
		N	73

The Spearman Correlation correlation between nurturing new talent and increasing competitiveness is 0.789 (see Table 2). The significance level of the Correlation test is also quite high (p0.005). The more people train their talents, the more competitive the market becomes. This finding suggests a connection between nurturing young talent and strengthening a company's ability to compete in the market. This led to the conclusion that the alternative hypothesis was valid.

Hypothesis Two

H₀₂: No causal link can be established between reward management and competitiveness.

Table 3: Reward management on competitiveness

		Reward_Management	Competitiveness
Reward_Management	Correlation Coefficient	1.000	.883
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.	.000
	N	73	73
Competitiveness	Correlation Coefficient	.883	1.000
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.
	N	73	73

The Spearman Correlation correlation between incentive management and competitiveness is 0.883 (see Table 3), indicating a significant positive linear link. The significance level of the Correlation test is also quite high (p0.005). Managing incentives positively correlates with an uptick in competition. This finding shows a connection between reward management and competitiveness, according to the study. This led to the conclusion that the alternative hypothesis was valid.

Discussions

This research confirmed the hypothesised beneficial relationship between competitiveness and talent management characteristics (talent development and reward management). Iles et al. (2010), Rudito (2015), Fang et al. (2020), and Papasolomou and Vrontis (2006) all reach similar conclusions. Talent development has a considerable impact on business results, as shown by the research of Savoc et al. (2020). Every business relies on its employees, who are essential to its success and growth. When viewed from a different angle, talent management model pillars like talent development and reward management provide employees with access to novel ideas and information, which in turn boosts competitiveness (Gateau & Simon, 2016; Alma et al., 2013). Talented people are therefore a source of innovation for organizations' and a tool to gain a sustained competitive advantage (Chadee & Raman, 2012).

Conclusion

Human resource managers believe that talent management should include helping employees advance in their careers, rather than leaving that up to the employees alone. This study concludes

that food and beverage companies in Rivers State may become more competitive by implementing strategies for managing talent including training and motivating employees.

Recommendations

This study concluded, and the findings suggested:

1. In order to make sure that strategic people management strategies are completely executed, food and beverage companies should regularly audit their operations. Positions should be given to people in accordance with their skillsets and qualifications so that their full potential can be realised. The result will be a rise in the level of professionalism, originality, creativity, and innovation among the staff.
2. The food and beverage industry should provide incentives for employees to work harder. Companies in the food and beverage industry owe it to their employees to offer them with adequate non-monetary perks, such as awards, recognition, and study leave. Improving retirement benefits is another way to keep workers from jumping from job to job. The business will be able to compete better as a result of this.
3. To ensure staff competitiveness, food and beverage companies should continually assess their workforce to identify present strengths, fill skill gaps, and anticipate future talent requirements.

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