

## Corporate Religion and Performance of Manufacturing Firms in Rivers and Bayelsa States

<sup>1</sup>Ndu, Eugene Chigozie & <sup>2</sup>Sylva, Waribugo

<sup>1</sup>Department of Hospitality Management and Tourism, Faculty of Management Sciences,

University of Port Harcourt

<sup>2</sup>Department of Management, Faculty of Management Sciences,

University of Port Harcourt

### Abstract

This study sought to establish how the spirit of corporate religion (CR) can be injected into African work organizations (A focus on Manufacturing firms) as a measure of improving efficiency and effectiveness. Two research questions were asked and answered. It was hypothesized that there is no significant relationship between CR and operational efficiency; and that there is no significant relationship between CR and overall effectiveness. Using a sample of seventy-five managers drawn from manufacturing firms in Rivers and Bayelsa States, it was found that there is a positive and significant relationship between CR and operational efficiency; and that there is a positive and significant relationship between CR and overall effectiveness. Based on this, it was concluded that, firms can use CR to improve their efficiency and effectiveness if they adopt the process steps itemized in the body of this work. Consequently, the study recommended that manufacturing firms should learn to articulate concise and well-defined visions; and as well develop corporate cultures that represent their desired values and beliefs; organizational members should be encouraged to own these visions and propagate them to the external environment so as to form a bond of integrated believers in their organization and reach brand heaven (brand religion brand); they should use the created brand heaven to achieve and strengthen their desired market position as well as a strategy for survival and improvement in operational efficiency and overall effectiveness.

**Keywords:** *African Manufacturing Firms, Brand Heaven, Brand Religion Brand, Corporate Culture, Operational Efficiency and Overall Effectiveness*

Corresponding Author Ndu, Eugene Chigozie

## **Background to the Study**

Business challenges in today's globalized economy have assumed a heightened dimension (Ndu, Ifionu & Ademe, 2014). Consequently, the efficient and effective management of organizations has remained a daunting challenge. The construct of Corporate Religion (CR) which is a relatively re-emerging one (Miller & Ewest, 2013), is one of those current re-thinking's of management philosophers aimed at helping organizations (in this case, manufacturing firms) overcome these business challenges. Globally, manufacturing firms occupy a central position in the development of economies; especially developing ones as is the case with most African states (Nigeria inclusive). Consequently, the need to understand economic growth in developing economies has become a hot topic (Jiang & Wang, 2009); especially in consideration of the role of manufacturing firms. It follows that in the face of the global economic quagmire witnessed in recent years, coupled with the turbulence and complexities that characterize the business world (Alaboemi cited in Ndu, 2013); the effectiveness and efficiency of manufacturing firms form an important discourse. It stems from the fact that failure of the manufacturing sector will not only affect other sectors but will spell doom on the economy as a whole. Hence, the need for manufacturing firms to be more efficient and effective has drawn the attention of investigators in recent times.

Several factors are known to impact on the effectiveness and efficiency metrics (Martin, Sitkin & Boehm, 1985; Ndu, 2009). For example, Apriso (2011) espoused that extending Lean manufacturing principles and practices while establishing a platform for continuous improvement is key to improving efficiencies. While IBM Software (2011) in her Thought Leadership White Paper concluded that organizations can improve the overall efficiency of business activities in a more cost-effective manner through enterprise content management. These notwithstanding, researchers argue that religious values have impacts on and in the workplace (Miller, 2007; Miller & Ewest, 2013; Society for Human Resource Management, 2008). For instance, Mitroff and Denton (1999) posited that companies that have a spiritual dimension and allow the whole person to come to work have employees with higher loyalty, lower absenteeism, and greater creativity. Therefore, the need for the convergence of religious values and workplace management practices as a way of meeting the unique and personal demands of the customers has received significant attention from scholars (Fogel, 2000; Giacalone & Jurkiewicz, 2003; Lambert, 2009; Nash & McLennan, 2001; Williams, 2003). For instance, Kunde and Cunningham (2002) concluded that CR can be used to build a strong market position in a world where consumers no longer demand simply the product, but reliable companies and brands. This of course helps in strengthening the market share of the companies. This notwithstanding, the task of improving efficiency and effectiveness through corporate religion (CR) in African work organizations is yet to receive substantial empirical evidence; and has created a void which this work intends to fill. Consequently, this paper is aimed at exploring ways of injecting the spirit of corporate religion into the management of African work organizations as a measure of improving efficiency and effectiveness; with special focus on manufacturing firms.

The need for this study is further buttressed by the fact that the manufacturing sector forms the hub of economic activities in any economy. Consequently, failure of the manufacturing sector which means low or no production would in turn affect local consumption and import-export balance. A negative import-export balance (which means overdependence on import)

is an easy way of causing economic distress capable of destroying any economy. Specifically, it is capable of reducing the currency value; turn such economy into a dumping ground for other advanced economies; cripple local industries and their production efforts. This is the bane of most African economies; Nigeria inclusive. Therefore, this study is intended to use Kunde and Co's (2015) ultimate brand position –'Brand Religion Brand' to empirically examine its relationship with 'operational efficiency' (Heewergen & Kampschroer, 2010) and 'overall effectiveness' (Hahn, 2007). Specifically, the objective is to ascertain if there is any relationship between brand religion brand and overall effectiveness on the one hand; and operational efficiency on the other hand. Two research questions and hypotheses guided the study.

### **Research Questions**

1. Does CR (Brand Religion Brand) influence operational efficiency?
2. Does CR (Brand Religion Brand) influence overall effectiveness?

### **Research Hypotheses**

- H<sub>0</sub>1:** There is no significant relationship between CR (Brand Religion Brand) and operational efficiency.
- H<sub>0</sub>2:** There is no significant relationship between CR (Brand Religion Brand) and overall effectiveness.

The content scope of the study covered the body of literature on CR and associated constructs; and corporate performance with specific emphasis on efficiency and effectiveness. Geographically, the study covered only manufacturing companies in Rivers and Bayelsa States of the South-South Region of Nigeria. Since the study focused on outcome measures of organizations, the unit of analysis was managers; making it a macro level study.

The significance of the study stems from the fact that its findings will provide empirical support for or against the use of CR in improving organizational efficiency and effectiveness; thus validating or otherwise refuting the propositions of the apostles of CR like Kunde and co. It will go a long way in encouraging product manufacturers on how best they can position their products in the market place so as to capture a large chunk of the market; thereby improving on their market share. The study will equally point out the possibility or not of using CR as a corporate tool for survival in the face of the fierce competition that characterize the business world. By so doing, it will either validate or not validate the age-long claim that religious values and ideas can be used to create significant improvement in organizational outcomes (Weber, 1905; Holl, 1921; Miller, 2007; Goldman, 1990; Koch, 1993; Kunde & Cunningham, 2002). Above all, the study will improve the quality and quantity of the repertoire of knowledge on our subject matter.

## **literature Review**

### **Theoretical Framework**

There are different theories that can be used in discussing the relationship between the two variables of this study; such as the theories of Brand Culture, Existentialism, Value Based Judgement, Internal and External Connection, Breeds Exploitation, Corporate Soul, Economic Theory etc. For purposes of brevity, only the first two have been discussed hereunder.

**The Theory of Brand Culture:** This theory proposes that the old model of branding, based on creating an external, sometimes fictional, brand image, is numb based on the fact that people just don't buy a manufactured brand image anymore; they want the truth (Id Branding, n.d). The suggestion of this theory is that culture in its anthropological meaning can be applied in operating a brand. This is done by creating unchanging values and allowing the product consumers to measure them against their own values. When such brands are identified, consumers are not only invited to join their culture, but are highly concerned about supporting them. According to Id Branding, one of the most important things a brand produces today is meaning; which shows up in a multitude of brand experiences that today are replacing the advertising campaign of old. Id Branding posits further that this meaning must spring from a set of deeply held values living at the core of the brand; and sincerely drive every action and communication, both inside and outside of the brand, such that consumers can count on them. This theory has not only affected the way most contemporary businesses are done but is helping organizations in reshaping their brand image. The process is simple. But first, organizations must need to articulate their brand values in such a way that both the management and staff can embrace them whole heartedly and champion their adoption so that the organization can be aligned around those values. Thereafter, the organization needs to create a vast array of brand experiences that invite consumers to join the brand culture.

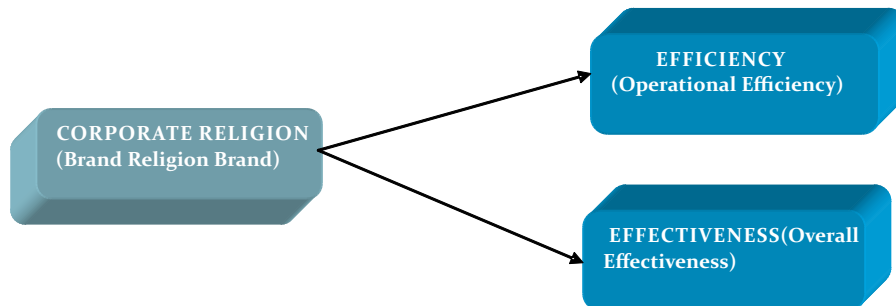
**The Theory of Existentialism:** Existentialism is primarily a philosophical thought which management scientists have borrowed to explain market place realities between business organizations and their customers. It focuses on explaining the reasons behind the buying behaviour of consumers with respect to their patronage, loyalty, brand adoption and the act of becoming brand evangelizers. The core tenet of existentialism is that existence precedes essence. According to Sartre (1946), there are two kinds of existentialists; but what they have in common is that they believe that existence comes before essence; that is, we must begin from the subjective. By this, Sartre means that in the world of existentialists, products are first created in the mind of the producers before they are brought into real existence. Hence, viewing the word from a technical standpoint, we can say that production precedes existence.

Borrowing from this philosophical paradigm, management scientists have come to argue that consumers are very subjective in their choice of products and the organizations which they represent. Consequently, they no longer choose products because of their physical qualities or advertisements. Rather, they buy into products because of their perception of the product and belief in the values of the organization which such products represent. Therefore, there is need for organizations to articulate the values and cultures for which they want to be known and use same in creating the right image to the public so that consumers who buy their products will do so because of their deep belief in the organization.

### **Conceptual Framework**

A review of the relevant literature showed five brand types of CR – product, concept, corporate concept, brand culture and brand religion brands (Kunde, 2015). Using the Brand Religion Brand which Kunde called the “ultimate brand position as the predictor variable, the study set out to examine its relationship with operational efficiency (Heewergen & Kampschroer, 2010) and overall effectiveness (Hahn, 2007). This envisaged relationship has been captured in the conceptual model below; and forms the basis for the review.

**Figure 1: Conceptual Model of Perceived Relationship between Corporate Religion, Efficiency and Effectiveness**



*Source: Researchers' conceptualization, 2015*

### **The Concept of Corporate Religion**

Corporate Religion (**CR**) is a relatively new management construct that concerns itself with the place of religious values, shared values and vision in the workplace; and how they help to create a corporate image for the organization. This construct according to (Miller & Ewest, 2010, p.2) is experiencing resurgent practitioner interest and scholarly research in modern times. Specifically, Kunde (2015) defined it as a branding philosophy that includes a model system for solving the task of finding the company's real unique value and using it to create a strong corporate brand that the company can be managed by. According to him, a **CR** is a set of attitudes and values as well as strategies, tools and actions for the company management to use in their work. Essentially, **CR** focuses on the place of the consciousness of values, vision and mission in the corporation; it extends to how the creation of collective spiritual values can be expressed or practiced in the workplace (Accra-Jaja, 2015).

The essence of **CR** is to help organizations build a competitive and strong market position. This was Kunde and Cunningham's position when they averred that **CR** is about building a strong market position in a world where consumers no longer demand simply the product, but reliable companies and brands (Kunde & Cunningham, 2002). To come about this positioning, organizations need to have a shared vision; and be audacious enough to use it to create community of believers (in a **CR** sense) not only in their product, but in the organization itself. This is what Kunde and Cunningham implied when they professed that **CR** is about internal-external integration, creating a bond between the internal culture and the external positioning, to consolidate the chosen market position. When this is achieved, the organization and whatever it represents become a faith to which the believers in it (the customers and clients) profess religiously. Evidences of this state manifest not only in brand loyalty (Day, 1969; Gounaris & Stathopoulos, 2004; Russell-Benneth, Maccoll-Kennedy & Coote, 2007); but also in brand religion (Faris, 2014) which according to Kunde (2015) is the ultimate target (brand heaven) out of the five brand types he distinguished. For the purpose of this study, this brand religion brand was used as the ideal and only dimension of **CR**.

**Table 1: Kunde's Five Brand Types**

<b>Brand Type</b>	<b>Brand Characteristics</b>
Product Brand	Products without any form of added value connected to the generic element.
Concept Brand	Brands that are driven by emotional values - as opposed to product characteristics
Corporate Concept Brand	Brands that merge with the company and present themselves in a sustained and consistent way.
Brand Culture Brand	Brands that are so strong that they - in the eyes of the consumer - have become equated with the function they represent.
Brand Religion Brand	The ultimate brand position is that of brands that - in the eyes of the consumer - have become a 'must', a faith to which they profess.

**Source:** Kunde & Co (2015). *Corporate Religion*. Available at <http://www.kunde-co.com>

### **The Corporate Religion Philosophy and other Related Constructs**

Closely allied to **CR** are a number of other constructs such as corporate soul / company's personality (Marchand, n.d); brand culture / brand image (Schroeder, 2007); brand religion (Faris, 2014; Kunde, 2015); value judgements and belief function (Srivastava, 1996); corporate culture, corporate reputation / corporate image; workforce spirituality (Thompson, 2001); workplace spirituality (Giacalone & Jurkiewicz, 2010; Marques, 2002) etc. While it is not the interest of this paper to discuss these constructs, it is worthy of mention that each of them touches on one aspect of CR or the other. For instance, it can be deduced from Schroeder's work that brand image hinges on the perceived image of the firm; which is one of the important factors in building a **CR** company. Brand religion according to Faris occurs when a firm succeeds in using emotion to create a community of customers, fans or followers who are willing to (happily) endure some inconveniences (like paying more or waiting longer) in order to obtain its product(s). When such customers or fans capture the moment, they leverage on communal moments to evangelize the product and recruit others who are less fanatical about the brand; hence the growth of brand religion. Obviously, **CR** thrives on these same principles as Kunde (2015) postulated that the ultimate target (Brand Heaven) of CR is the 'brand religion brand' which in the eyes of the customer has become a must; a faith to which they profess. The expected effects of these intermingled constructs in the organization is the creation of an atmosphere that encourages shared visions and values, maximum productivity, effectiveness, shared ownership and responsibility.

The workability of this was succinctly captured in what Kunde described as the *Corporate Religion Philosophy* which according to him can be viewed from different perspectives such as the 'technological development 'and' marketing strategy' perspectives. The marketing strategy perspective emphasizes the need for a product to be competitively positioned in the market in such a way that it will be identified by the company's values and ideologies; such that when people think of such a product, they think of the company and what they stand for. For example, it is common knowledge in Nigeria that when people think of road construction, they think of Julius Berger construction company because of their belief in quality; and value of no compromise. Obviously, this is a shared value amongst management and employees of

the firm. Similarly, Accra-Jaja (2015) examined CR philosophy under three dimensions – Philosophy for life, Living art and performing art. The challenge thrown up by the insights from these CR philosophies is that it is not just enough for organizations to have the right attitude if it is not deeply rooted. This is so because modern-day consumers according to Kunde are intelligent enough to see through attitudes and values that are not firmly anchored in the company. Hence CR philosophy tasks the management of firms to detect, develop and drive the organization both internally and externally according to unique, credible and desirable values and ideologies that are deeply entrenched in the organization. The important factors for achieving this are: how we perceive ourselves, how others perceive us and how we want to be perceived by others. The more integrated the three perspectives, the stronger and more consistent we are (Kunde & Cunningham, 2002)

### **The Concept of Performance**

The concept of performance often referred to as corporate performance (CP) in its simplest understanding can be viewed as a way of observing, monitoring, reporting and evaluating the activities of an organization; probably with a view to ensuring that the outcome conforms to the predetermined goals and objectives. Investigation of the performance of organizations is about the relationships between resource inputs, output and eventual outcomes. Different measures of corporate success / performance have been advocated. For instance, Hahn (2007) observed that some scholars use single factor measures, such as overall effectiveness, readiness, productivity, stability, absenteeism, and so on. Others have advocated multi factor measures like the balanced scorecard (Kaplan & Norton, 1992; Paladino, 2009; Rohm, 2008) and a plethora of metrics (Heewergen & Kampschroer, 2010). Since this study was only intended to establish how CR can be used to improve the performance of African work organizations, two measures of performance have been adopted. They include operational efficiency (Heewergen & Kampschroer, 2010) and overall effectiveness (Hahn, 2007).

Efficiency according to Schneider and Leslie (n.d), allows organizations to do the same amount of work with fewer resources; while effectiveness allows organizations to generate higher revenues, independent of resources required. An example of efficiency according to them is automation of manual processes and organizational restructuring / outsourcing. While an example of effectiveness is expansion of online presence and increased insight into customer behaviour / preferences. Thus, it can be deduced that efficiency has to do with producing the desired result with minimum waste, expense or unnecessary result. It is “the relationship between the result achieved and the resources used” (ISO 9000, 2000 cited in Croft, 2004, p.3). Effectiveness on the other hand, is the capability of producing or achieving the desired effect or intended outcomes. In other words, it measures the “extent to which planned activities are realized and planned results achieved” (ISO 9000, 2000 cited in Croft, 2004, p.3; Richard et al cited in Wikipedia, 2011).

The main benefit of performance outcome measurement is that it helps in providing feedback. Goals and objectives usually precede most production activities; hence outcome measures like effectiveness and efficiency help the organization to know how well or poorly it has performed. This is very essential for setting standards, monitoring deviations and process improvement efforts.

### **Relationship between Corporate Religion and Efficiency / Effectiveness**

Establishing a relationship between **CR** and performance metrics such as efficiency and effectiveness is yet to receive substantial empirical evidence. However, there seem to be quite a number of theoretical and behavioural appeals to the perceived association of **CR** and these metrics. Such as those postulated by Accra-Jaja(2015), Hamel(2000), and Marques (2002), that **CR** helps in creating shared vision, values, ideas and ideologies which are essential ingredients for corporate efficiency, effectiveness and growth (Goldman, 1990; Koch, 1993; Kunde, 2015; Holl, 1921; Miller, 2007). Similarly, **CR** is believed to help firms build a strong market position (Kunde & Cunningham, 2002); which is a determinant of the firm's market share in the industry.

In a volatile and fast-changing business environment, the ability to survive is a very important measure of performance. After all, survival is one of the major organizational goals of firms (Nwachukwu, 2009, p.17). Consequently, spiritualized management which according to Hamel (2000) helps companies re-invent themselves and industry more than once; impacts positively on their survival abilities. For the individual worker, spiritualized management helps him feel wanted in the organization thereby creating an atmosphere that encourages maximum productivity. This stems from the fact that when a worker owns the vision and values of his workplace, he feels at home knowing that his opinion, presence, and contribution matters. It makes him feel worthwhile (Marques, 2002) and obliged to put in his best in terms of creativity, productivity, efficiency and effectiveness. It allows for personal development and individual self-realization(Accra-Jaja, 2015); which is a major catalyst for creativity and by extension, productivity.

### **Methodology**

Survey design was adopted for this study. The population comprised all manufacturing firms in Rivers and Bayelsa States of Nigeria. Available data from Manufacturers Association of Nigeria [MAN] (2011) showed that there are thirty-four registered manufacturing firms in the two States. Since this is a macro study, the managers of each of these manufacturing firms would have sufficed for the population; which in this case would have given rise to a population of thirty-four. However, in order to improve the quantity and quality of response, the researchers decided to increase the number of respondents to five per firm; giving rise to a total of two hundred respondents. Using the Krejcie and Morgan's table for sample size determination (Krejcie & Morgan, 1970, p. 2), a sample of 132 managers was determined for the study; giving rise to an average of 4 managers / assistant managers per firm. Data was collected from the primary source using a questionnaire designed by the researchers (Corporate Religion and the Performance of Manufacturing Firms); and from the secondary source using available published articles on the subject matter. This helped to guarantee data triangulation(Cohen & Manion, 1997; De Vos, 1998); especially the between-method type (Denzine, 1978).

The instrument was validated at the face level through the constructive inputs of research experts; and at the content level using factor analysis, which showed a score of 0.6 and above for all the factors used for the study. The reliability was ascertained using the Cronbach's alpha at a stability level of 0.73. The instrument was structured to generate both quantitative and qualitative data thus guaranteeing within-method triangulation (Denzine, 1978). Questions



for eliciting quantitative data were structured with responses in a 5 point Likert-like scale measured as follows: Very High extent (VH) - 5, High extent (H) - 4, Moderate extent (M) - 3, Low extent (L) - 2, and Not at all (N) - 1. While questions for qualitative data were structured in the open ended form so as to enable respondents comment freely. Percentage analysis technique was used to analyze the data that was generated and answer the research questions. While the Spearman's rank order correlation (Rho), which is a non-parametric test, was used in testing the hypotheses at the 0.05 level of significance. The quantitative aspect of the observed variables which were measured in ordinal scales and the as well as the assumptions of normality, linearity and homoscedasticity (Pallant, 2013; Tabachnick & Fidell, 2005) made the data suitable for the chosen correlations. The Statistical Package for Social Scientists (SPSS) version 21.0 aided the analysis.

## **Data Presentation, Analysis and Discussion**

### **Data Presentation**

A total of one hundred and thirty-two copies of the questionnaire were administered, out of which ninety-five were responded and returned; giving rise to an approximate response rate of 72%. Only seventy-five of these were found to be valid for the analyses; resulting to a 78.94% valid response rate. Fifty-four of the respondents are male (72%); while twenty-one of them are female (28%). Eighteen (24%) of the respondents indicated that they are single; thirty nine (52%) are married; twelve (16%) are separated; while the remaining six (8%) indicated that they are widows / widowers. Four (5.3%) of the respondents indicated that they are within the age bracket of 15 - 24; eight (10.7%) indicated 25 - 34 years as their age bracket; twenty-two (29.3%) indicated 35 - 44 as their age group; twenty four (32%) indicated 45 - 54 as their age group; while the remaining seventeen (22%) indicated their age as 55 and above. Also, twelve (16.0%) of the respondents indicated that they have spent between 1 to 5 years as managers; twenty-eight respondents representing 37.3% indicated 6 to 10 years; twenty-four respondents representing 32% indicated 11 to 15 years; while the remaining eleven representing 14.7% indicated 16 years and above.

### **Data Analysis**

**Research Question 1:** Does brand religion brand influence the operational efficiency of manufacturing firms?

To answer this research question, responses to question B7 were used. The result has been shown in table 1 below. For the purpose of the analysis, only 'Very High', 'High' and 'Moderate' extents were accepted as applicable.

**Table 1: Influence of Brand Religion Brand on Operational Efficiency**

Decision	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Very High Extent	18	24.0	24.0	24.0
High Extent	25	33.3	33.3	57.3
Moderate Extent	12	16.0	16.0	73.3
Low Extent	11	14.7	14.7	88.0
Not at all	9	12.0	12.0	100.0
Total	75	100.0	100.0	

**Source:** *Survey Data, 2015*

Table 1 showed that out of the 75 respondents, 18 representing 24.0% answered 'Very High extent'; 25 representing 33.3% answered to a 'High Extent'; 12 representing 16% answered to a 'Moderate Extent'; 11 representing 14.7% answered to a 'Low Extent'; while 9 respondents representing 12.0% answered 'Not at all'. This means that 55 managers out of the 75 agree that brand religion brand influences operational efficiency. This shows a 73.3% acceptance rate.

**Research Question 2:** Does brand religion brand influence overall effectiveness of manufacturing firms?

Responses to question C6 of the instrument were used to answer this research question. The result has been shown on table 8 below. Again, only 'Very High', 'High' and 'Moderate' extents were accepted as applicable.

**Table 2: Influence of Brand Religion Brand on Overall Effectiveness**

Decision	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Very High Extent	20	26.7	26.7	26.7
High Extent	26	34.7	34.7	61.4
Moderate Extent	13	17.3	17.3	78.7
Low Extent	10	13.3	13.3	92.0
Not at all	6	8	8	100.0
Total	75	100.0	100.0	

**Source:** *Survey Data, 2015*

Table 2 showed that out of the 75 respondents, 20 representing 26.7% answered to a 'Very High Extent'; 26 representing 34.7% answered to a 'High Extent'; 13 representing 17.3% answered to a 'Moderate Extent'; 10 representing 13.3% answered to a 'Low Extent'; while the remaining 6 respondents representing 8% answered 'Not at all'. This result showed that 59 managers out of the 75 agree that Brand Religion Brand influences overall effectiveness; thus showing a 78.7% acceptance rate.

## Research Hypotheses

The two hypotheses that were tested in the study have been presented and analysed below.

**H<sub>01</sub>:** There is no significant relationship between Brand Religion Brand and Operational Efficiency.

This hypothesis was tested using the aggregated scores for Brand Religion Brand and Operational Efficiency. The result has been shown on table 9 below.

**Table 3: Correlation of Brand Religion Brand and Operational Efficiency.**

Correlations		Brand Religion Brand	Operational Efficiency
Brand religion Brand	Correlation Coefficient	1.000	.672 **
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.	.010
	N	75	75
Operational Efficiency	Correlation Coefficient	.672 **	1.000
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.010	.
	N	75	75

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

**Source:** Survey Report, 2015

As can be seen from table 3 above, the result showed a moderately high direct and significant relationship ( $\rho = 0.672$  and  $P = 0.010$ ). Since  $P < 0.05$ , the correlation is significant at the 0.05 level. Consequently, the null hypothesis of no significant relationship was rejected and it was accepted that there is a significant relationship between Brand Religion Brand and Operational Efficiency.

**H<sub>02</sub>:** There is no significant relationship between Brand Religion Brand and Overall Effectiveness.

This hypothesis was tested using the aggregated scores for Religion Brand and Overall Effectiveness. The result has been shown in table 10 below.

**Table 4: Correlation of Brand Religion Brand and Overall Effectiveness.**

**Correlations**

		Brand Religion Brand	Overall Effectiveness
Spearman's rho	Brand religion Brand	1.000	.721**
	Correlation Coefficient	.	.010
	Sig. (2-tailed)	75	75
	N	.721**	1.000
Overall Effectiveness	Correlation Coefficient	.010	.
	Sig. (2-tailed)	75	75
	N		

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

Source: Survey Report, 2015.

As can be seen from table 4 above, the result showed a moderately high direct and significant relationship ( $\rho = 0.721$  and  $P = 0.010$ ). Since  $P < 0.05$ , the correlation is significant at the 0.05 level. Consequently, the null hypothesis of no significant relationship was rejected and it was accepted that there is a significant relationship between Brand Religion Brand and Overall Efficiency.

**Discussion**

**Hypothesis 1:** The result of the analysis which showed a direct and significant relationship between brand religion brand and operational efficiency is not surprising as it agrees with the postulations of (Goldman, 1990; Koch, 1993; Kunde, 2015; Kunde & Cunningham, 2002; Holl, 1921; Miller, 2007). This means that manufacturing organizations can improve their efficiency by incorporating CR practices into their work ethics and culture. It is understandable that organizational members are largely responsible for the implementation of efficiency efforts and programs of the organization. But as the theory of brand culture posits, their ability to do so is largely dependent on their belief in the values of the organization and their judgement of the outcomes (Jaffray 1989, 1994; Srivastava, 1994;Tversky & Kahneman, 1986, 1981). Consequently, organization that make serious efforts at helping their employees internalize its vision and value sand even own them (Accra-Jaja, 2015; Hamel, 2000; Marques, 2002), are more disposed to having these employees implement their efficiency efforts and programs; as well as communicate same to the customers and external environment of the business. This raises serious concern on the competitiveness and survival of most African manufacturing firms that are still enmeshed in crude business practices of soulless organizations (Marchand, n.d) that have long been jettisoned by many corporations in advanced economies.

**Hypothesis 2:** The result of this analysis which showed a direct and significant relationship between brand religion brand and overall effectiveness is equally expected. It agrees with the articulations of Kunde and Cunningham (2002) when they averred that CR helps organizations build a competitive and strong market position in a world where consumers no longer demand simply the product, but reliable companies and brands. The result also

pointed out that to create this type of positioning; organizations need to have shared visions, values and beliefs. This position was supported by Faris (2014) when he opined that companies can leverage on their brand image to create a brand religion for their organization and its products. Such brand religion believers usually turn into brand evangelizers. This agrees with the theory of existentialism which professed that, products are first created in the mind before they are brought into real existence. Thus, the need for this bond of belief in helping the organization achieve effectiveness goals as stressed by this finding is well understood. Hence, this study lends credence to belief-function framework (Srivastava, 1996) and the need for organizations to create spiritualized workplace (Hanel, 2000; Marques, 2002) environments. As well as leveraging on the value judgements and belief systems (Kahneman & Tversky 1979; Tversky & Kahneman 1986; Simon 1986) of their employees and customers to create a bond (between the internal culture and external positioning) and consolidate their chosen market position (Kunde & Cunningham, 2002; Kunde, 2015).

### **Conclusion**

This study sought to establish how the spirit of **CR** can be injected into work organizations as a measure of improving efficiency and effectiveness. It drew from the origin and meaning of **CR** and other related constructs to establish that firms can create **CR** work environment through the creation of shared visions and values. Such visions and values must be owned by both the employees and customers of the firm. Using a sample of seventy-five managers drawn from manufacturing firms in Rivers and Bayelsa States, the study established that there is a positive and significant relationship between Brand Religion Brand and Operational Efficiency; and that there is a positive and significant relationship between Brand Religion Brand and Overall Effectiveness. Consequently, firms can leverage on this relationship to strengthen their positioning in the marketplace as well as a strategy for survival in the turbulent business world.

### **Recommendations**

Based on the findings of the study, the following recommendations are worthy of note and implementation by firms that wish to use **CR** to improve on their performance. They should:

1. Articulate concise and well-defined visions; as well as establish values, beliefs and ideologies that define what they wish to be known for and share same with employees and customers in such a way that they own them.
2. Foster spiritualized workplace environments that recognize and believe in the employees' abilities and contributions; thereby giving them a sense of belonging and ownership that encourages maximum productivity and faith in the organization.
3. Leverage on the ability to create shared values and beliefs among the employees and customers to form a bond of internally and externally integrated believers in their product and organization.
4. Use the created bonds and belief-function framework to positively influence the value judgement of these integrated believers so as to create the desired brand heaven (brand religion brand).
5. Use the created brand heaven to achieve the desired market position as well as a strategy for survival and improvement in operational efficiency and overall effectiveness.

## References

- Accra-Jaja, (2015). *Corporate religion and management ideas*. Unpublished PhD class lecture notes at the department of management, University of Port Harcourt.
- Apriso Corporation (2011). *Keys to improving manufacturing efficiency*. Retrieved from <http://www.apriso.com>
- Cohen, L. & Manion, L. (1997). *Research in education*. (4<sup>th</sup> ed.). New York: Routledge
- Croft, N. H. (2004). *Effectiveness and efficiency -a strategic view of the organization*. Puerto Vallarta: InlacForo Mundial
- Day, G.S. (1969). A two-dimensional concept of brand loyalty. *Journal of Advertising Research*, 9 (3), 29-33.
- De Vos, A.S. (1998). *Research at grass roots: A primer for the caring professionals*. Pretoria: Van Schaik.
- Denzin, N. K. (1978). *The research act: A theoretical introduction to sociological methods* (2nd ed.). New York: McGraw-Hill.
- Faris, R. (2014). *How to build brand religion*. Retrieved from <http://www.hbr.org/2014/01/howtobuilbrandreligion>
- Fogel, R.W. (2000). *The fourth great awakening and the future of egalitarianism*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Giacalone, R., & Jurkiewicz, C. (2003). *Handbook of workplace spirituality and organizational Performance*. Available at <http://www.alfonso-montouri.squarespace.com>
- Giacalone, R., & Jurkiewicz, C. (2010). *Handbook of workplace spirituality and organizational Performance*. Armonk, NY: M.E. Sharpe, Inc.
- Goldman, H. (1990). Review: Max Weber in German history and political thought. *Journal of Modern History*, 62 (2), 346-352.
- Gounaris, S. & Stathakopoulos, V. (2004). Antecedents and consequences of brand loyalty: An empirical study, *Journal of Brand Management*, 11(4), 283-306.
- Hahn, M. (2007). *Measuring corporate effectiveness*. Retrieved from <http://www.en.articlesgratuits.com/on 12- 10 - 2011>
- Hamel.G. (2000). *Leading the revolution*. Boston: Harvard Business School Press.
- Heerwagen, J. H. & Kampschroer, K. (2010). *The strategic workplace: Development and evaluation, in building research & information*.

- Holl, K. (1921). *Gesammelte Aufsätze Zur Kirchengeschichte*. Tübingen: J.C.B. Mohr.
- Id Branding (n.d). *The theory of brand culture*. Retrieved from <https://www.ana.net/getfile/15328>
- International Business Machine [IBM] Software (2011). *Improving the efficiency, accuracy and cost effectiveness of core business activities*. Retrieved from <http://www.ibm.com/software/data/content-management> ISSN 1472-2939
- Jaffray, J. Y. (1989). Utility theory for belief functions. *Operations Research Letters*, 8, 107-12.
- Jiang, K. & Wang, S. (2009). *Firms in economic distress: Survival strategies and economic factors*. Ibadan
- Kahneman, D. & Tversky, A. (1979). Prospect theory: An analysis of decision under risk. *Econometrical*, 47(2), 263-91.
- Kaplan, R. S. & Norton, D. P. (1992) The balanced scorecard - measures that drive performance, *Harvard Business Review* (January-February), 71-79.
- Koch, A. (1993). Rationality, romanticism and the individual: Max Weber's "Modernism" and the confrontation with "modernity". *Canadian Journal of Political Science*, 26(1), 123-144.
- Kunde & Co (2015). *Corporate religion*. Retrieved from <http://www.kunde-co.com>
- Kunde, J. & Cunningham, B.J. (2002). *Corporate Religion*. United Kingdom: Pearson Education Limited, ISBN 10: 0273661116 ISBN 13: 9780273661115
- Krejcie, R. V. & Morgan, D. W. (1970). *Determining sample size for research activities*. Retrieved from <https://www.researchgate.net/file.PostFileLoader.html?id=55c567e76307d930f58b45c1&assetKey=AS%3A273827613872131%401442296998840>
- Lambert, L. (2009). *Spirituality Inc*. New York: New York University Press.
- Manufacturers Association of Nigeria [MAN] (2011). *Manufacturing companies in Port Harcourt*. Retrieved from <http://www.manufacturersnigeria.org/branch.php?var=11&v=10d735e581fe2505cd69675691925490e447c44>
- Marchand, R. (n.d). *Creating the corporate soul: The rise of public relations and corporate imagery in American big business*. University of California Press
- Marques, J. (2002). *How spirituality in the workplace can create gray-haired revolutionaries*. Retrieved from <http://www.joanmarques.com>

- Martin, J., Sitkin, S. M. & Boehm, M. (1985). Founders and the elusiveness of cultural legacy, in Frost, P.J. et al. (eds.) *Organizational Culture*. Beverly Hills, CA; Sage, pp.99-104.
- Miller, D. (2007). *God at work: The history and promise of the faith at work movement*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Miller, D. & Ewest, T. (2013). *Rethinking the impact of religion on business values: Understanding its re-emergence and measuring its manifestations*. Doi: <http://dx.doi.org/10.1007/978-3-642-36022-0>
- Mitroff, I., & Denton, E. (1999). *A spiritual audit of corporate America: A hard look at spirituality, religion, and values in the workplace*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.
- Nash, L. & McLennan, S. (2001). *Church on Sunday, work on Monday: A guide for reflection*. Jossey-Bass
- Ndu, E.C. (2009). *Human capital development and corporate performance: A study of selected construction companies in Rivers State*. University of Port Harcourt: An unpublished MBA thesis submitted to the department of Management.
- Ndu, E. C. (2013). Challenges of managing in the Nigerian hospitality industry: A study of selected hotels in Port Harcourt. *Journal of Management Sciences*, 1(1), 110-121.
- Ndu, E. C., Ifionu, E. P. & Ademe, D. T. (2014). The role of mission statement in strategic marketing planning: An assessment and validation. *West African Journal of Business and Management Sciences*, 3(2A), 197-204. Available at <http://www.imsujournals.org>
- Nwachukwu, C. C. (2009). *Management: Theory and practice*. Onitsha: Africana-Fep Publishers
- Paladino, B. (2009). Five Key Principles of corporate performance management. 2007 ISBN 978-0470009918
- Pallant, J. (2013). *SPSS Survival Manual: A step by step guide to data analysis using IBM SPSS (5th ed.)*. Maidenhead Berkshire, England, Mcgraw-Hill.
- Rohm, H (2008). *Using the Balanced Scorecard to Align Your Organization*. Retrieved from [www.balancedscorecardinstitute.com](http://www.balancedscorecardinstitute.com)
- Russell-Bennett, R., Mccoll-Kennedy, J.R.&Coote, L.V. (2007). Involvement, satisfaction, and brand loyalty in a small business services setting. *Journal of Business Research*, 60(12), 1253-1260.
- Schneider, T. & Leslie, B. (n.d). *Efficiency vs. effectiveness: Defining the difference*. Available at <http://switchpointllc.com>



- Sartre, J. P. (1946). *Existentialism is a humanism*. (P. Mairet, Trans.) Retrieved from <http://www.jonathanwebber.co.uk/articles/Existentialism.pdf>
- Strategic Human Resource Management (2008). *Religion and corporate culture: Accommodating religious diversity in the workplace*. Retrieved from <http://www.shrm.org>
- Simon, H. A. (1986). Rationality in psychology and economics. *The Journal of Business*, 59 (4), Pt. 2 :S209-S224.
- Srivastava, R. P. (1994). *Decision making under ambiguity: A belief-function perspective*. Working Paper No. 262, School of Business, the University of Kansas, Lawrence (June).
- Srivastava, R.P.(1996). Value judgments using belief functions. *Research in Accounting Ethics*, 2, 109-130.
- Tabachnick, B., & Fidell, L. (2001). *Using Multivariate Statistics (4th ed.)*, New York: Harper Collins.
- Thompson, W. (2001). Spirituality at work. *Executive Excellence* 18 (9), 10.
- Tversky, A, & Kahneman, D.(1981).The framing of decisions and the psychology of choice. *Science*, 211, 453-58.
- Tversky, A, & Kahneman, D.(1986).Rational choice and the framing of decisions. *The Journal of Business*, 59 (4), Pt. 2 (October):S251-S278.
- Weber, M. (1905/2010). *The protestant ethic and the spirit of capitalism*. Penguin classics, New York, NY: Simon Shuster.
- Wikipedia (2011). *Business Performance management*. Retrieved from [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Business\\_performance\\_management](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Business_performance_management).
- Williams, O. (2003). *Business, religion, & spirituality: A new synthesis*. Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press.