

Systemic Operations Management of Imo State Tourism Industry: A Focus on Improving Corporate Performance Through Human Capital Development

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Abstract

This study investigated systemic operations management in tourism organizations, with a focus on improving corporate performance through human capital development. It was based on 15 tourism organizations in Imo State of Nigeria's tourism industry. The respondents comprised 15 managers and 75 customers of these organizations purposefully and accidentally selected respectively. The studies sought to establish the nexus between human capital development and corporate performance; and use the result to buttress the need for managing tourism organizations from the systemic operations management perspective. The result indicated strong positive correlations between the dimensions of human capital development (training and mentoring) and the measures of corporate performance (productivity and profitability). It was concluded that systemic operations management anchored on human capital development enhances employee performance and lead to improved corporate performance. Furthermore, training and mentoring are key development programs that are capable of improving productivity and profitability. Consequently, the study recommended that managers and executives wishing to improve their corporate performance, should endeavour to practice systemic operations management anchored on human capital development. they should establish well thought-out development programs aimed at improving employee skills and competencies. They should intentionally and regularly subject their staff to training and mentoring programs so as to help in improving corporate productivity and profitability. They should however beware of the extent to which they can achieve improvement on corporate performance through human capital development; and be able to control for exogenous factors that are capable of limiting their desired results.

Keywords: *Effectiveness, Efficiency, Mentoring, Productivity, Profitability and Training*

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Background to the Study

Operations management essentially deals with the processing of input resources in order to create value-added outputs (Fowler, 1997). It involves every process or methodological solution applied in the workplace for the improvement of efficiency in the production and operations processes (Battistoni et al, 2013). The systemic perspective of organizational management requires the organization to be seen as interacting with its environment (internal and external) via the reception of inputs and transformation of same to give outputs (Figure 1); thereby underscoring the input-output model (Wehrich et al, 2010 pp. 21-22). Systemic operations management (SOM) therefore entails seeing the organization as comprising interrelated and interdependent units that must function harmoniously as an integrated whole in a given environment in order to achieve a unified goal. It requires operations managers to efficiently and effectively integrate organizational resources through the managerial processes of planning, organizing, directing and controlling in order to create value in form of goods and services (figure 2). It entails approaching organizational management from the holism perspective as against reductionism. A major resource that must be properly integrated in organizations is the human resource; because, efficient utilization of other resources revolves around it. Moreover, contemporary business operations especially in the tourism industry hold in very dynamic environments, characterized by scarce resources and uncertainty of business opportunities.

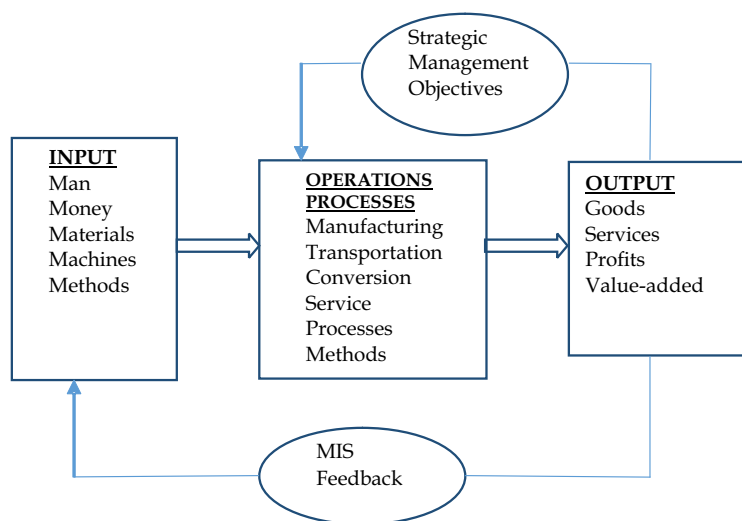


Figure 1: The Input-Output Model of Operations Management.

Source: Adapted from Fowler (1997)

This requires organizations to maintain high levels of efficiency or be marginalized. These vicissitudes according to Battistoni et al (2013), demand prudent optimization of resources as well as continuous improvement of internal processes and routines so as to remain competitive. They further demonstrated that one major way of achieving this is through knowledge management and skills enhancement processes; which centers on human capital development (HCD) anchored on effective SOM. This study focused on

improving the performance of tourism organizations in Imo State of Nigeria through enhancing the skills of their human resources. This was approached from the perspective of establishing the relationship between HCD and corporate performance; and using same to highlight the inherent benefits of SOM.

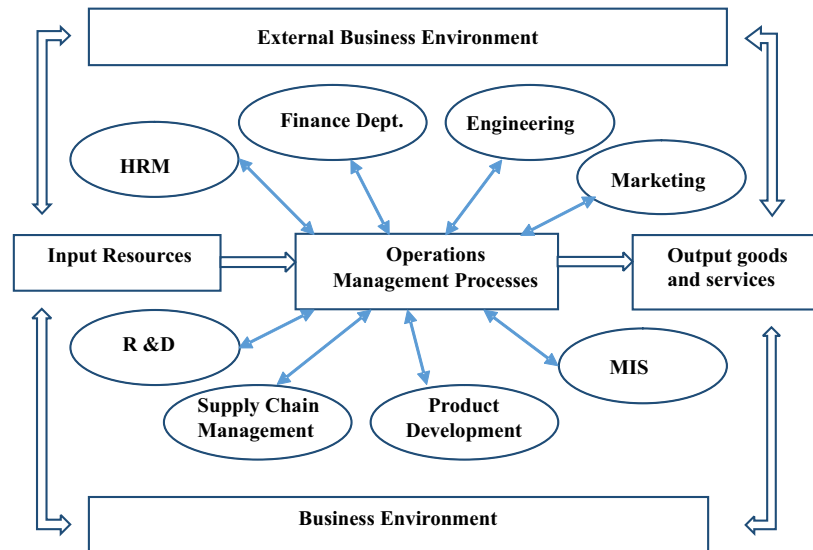


Figure 2: Model of Systemic Operations Management Process

It should be noted that the aim of every profit-making business organization is to gain competitive advantage so as to maximize profit. This chief goal cannot be actualized without sensible, intentional and conscious investment on human capital so as to make available the quality of employees that will empower the organization to accomplish its corporate objectives. Human capital was defined by Bontis et al (1999) as the collective intelligence, skills and expertise that gives the organization its distinguishing attractiveness. For organizations therefore, the underlying element of their corporate performance, is in their HCD. The performance of a business entity and the perceptive conception of its day-to-day procedures necessitate an incisive and nimble-fingered management; as well as an array of productive employees. A capable and knowledgeable labor force becomes very important because of sophisticated customers' demands and other dynamic market forces; especially, in the tourism and hospitality industry. This makes it imperative for organizations to invest in their human resources (at all levels); so as to help them gain relevant and updated service delivery knowledge. It will equally help them meet up with the demand of well-traveled customers who are becoming more sophisticated due to their level of exposure and interaction with foreign countries of more organized tourism and customer-friendly policies. Investing in human-intensive and service-oriented industry like tourism, will bring about adequately trained workforce who are saddled with the responsibility of delivering quality services and high productivity. Unfortunately, scholars have contended that while tourism/hospitality practitioners and shareholders are often mindful of recruiting competent higher managerial staff, the skill of the customer service personnel often

received lesser attention (Kim & Park, 2014; Lopes & Teixeira, 2013). Whereas the corporate performance of business entities is keenly reliant on the output of the people (employees of all cadres) in the organization. Emphasizing the need for skilled workforce in the tourism and hospitality industry, World Economic Forum in 2015, forecasted that the industry could lose about 14 million jobs and \$610 billion worth of GDP by 2024 because of skills shortage. Thus, skilled workforce has become a strategic competitive tool needed in the industry.

An investigation on the effect of HCD on financial performance of banks in Nigeria by Christian and Omodero (2016) contended that, “the only irreplaceable capital an organization possesses is the knowledge and ability of its employees. The productivity of that capital depends on how effectively people share their competence with those who use it. The study proved that the low level of HCD investments in Nigerian banks have a negative effect on their profitability. What this implies is that the human capital of Nigerian banks is not well developed and workers are not sufficiently motivated to make significant impact on corporate performance as compared to their counterparts in most developed nations. The findings further emphasized that the gains of human capital development cannot be substituted. The study revealed that human capital is the most related asset to organizational performance. Furthermore, that for corporate organizations to compete favorably, their work force must be innovative, adaptable and abreast with the latest service knowledge there is. The findings fueled the earlier assertions of Kamath (2007) who contended that corporate performance will not and can never be achieved with a weak, battered, and outdated workforce who are not well equipped with the current service realities. To achieve any corporate goal, the abilities, skills and knowledge of an organization's workforce (employee pool) must be updated to serve current realities of the business environment the organization plays in. This is to say that an obsolete information, knowledge pool and/or skill cannot serve the 21st century business environment, hence the need for organizations to constantly review their corporate strategies so as to remain competitive. This was the position of Christian and Omodero (2016) when they averred that performance of an organization depends on how much knowledge the workforce is exposed to.

The correlate between human capital and economic evolution has been an exciting motive for intellectuals to survey the subject matter. Various studies in Nigeria have investigated among other significant issues, the nature of connection between HCD and economic development in Nigeria (Awe and Ajayi, 2010); the inputs of human capital to economic growth in Nigeria (Diawara, 2009; Lawanson, 2009; Ogujiuba and Adeniyi, 2004; Olaniyan and Okemakinde, 2008; Omotor, 2004), the role of human capital in Nigeria's economic development (Dauda, 2010), and human capital development challenges in Nigeria (Ugal and Betiang, 2003). In spite of these established relationships, the challenges posed by the vicissitudes of the business environment tend to affect the *apriori* expectation on the impact of HCD on the corporate performance of organizations. Concurring with this allusion, Amah (2006) contended that “constant changes in the business world has brought about skills becoming outdated, so much so that competent employees do not remain competent forever”. Similarly, Robins (2001) asserted that skills, knowledge and

abilities depreciate and can become archaic if not developed. Therefore, for organizations (especially, tourism based organizations) to achieve their corporate objectives, they must as a matter of urgency purposely employ various techniques to increase and advance the abilities of their workforce. Human capital is all about engaging, supporting and investing in people (workforce) engaged in organizations using a variety of means which includes education, training, coaching, mentoring, internship in order for organizations to perform effectively and efficiently (Obasi, 2007). The negligence of this fact has led to potential tourism destinations falling short of their corporate targets. It is in the light of the above that tourism firms in Imo state (public and private) must start seeing HCD as premeditated investment rather than a sheer cost; and reserve a good chunk of their annual budget for employees training and development.

Despite being a human capital intensive industry, studies have revealed the deficiencies in the tourism industry and contend that the industry lacks structured employee competency advancement agenda for customer service personnel (Kim and Park, 2014; Lopes and Teixeira, 2013). Though the tourism industry is said to be one of the heavy employers of labor, its employee turnover rate which is on the high side could be a very disturbing challenge (Schaffer and Pearlman, 2013); leading to a very unsatisfying average attraction of potential employees (Wang and Huang, 2014). Preliminary investigations also revealed that most of the tourism organizations in Imo state are managed from a reductionist perspective; in which case most of the component units are seen as semi autonomous units having little or less control from the central operations management. In some cases, departmental leaders felt less concerned with operational challenges that did not emanate from their units. This phenomenon seems to have been responsible for the high level of reductionism in organizational management approach as against the concept of holism which favours the systemic approach to organizational management. This problem underscores the need for putting in place systemic operations management hinged on strategic human resource management (HRM) practices aimed at improving corporate performance. Such systemic approach ought to be centered on effective human capital management which encourages employees and helps to forestalling future loss of workforce. This was the position of Luckstead, Choi, Devadoss and Mittelhammer (2014) when they averred that highly effective HCD is essential to attaining corporate performance. Other scholars equally underscored the importance of HCD and its role in enhancing business performance (Anca-Ioana, 2013; Darwish, Singh, and Mohamed, 2013). Though these scholars emphasized the need to conduct further studies on HCD in various business circles, they however did not cover the impact of HCD on service delivery industries especially, the tourism industry (Anca-Ioana, 2013; Danquah and Ouattara, 2014) in Imo State. The tourism industry in Imo State Nigeria is strategic to job creation, poverty alleviation and development of the State given its growth potentials as outlined by tourism development scholars (Chun-Ming, Cheng, Yih, and Jian-Fa, 2014; Pearlman and Schaffer, 2013; WTTC, 2015). It is this knowledge gap that motivated the researcher to embark on this study which focused on investigating the relationship between HCD and corporate performance in the Imo State tourism industry. To achieve this, training and mentoring were used as dimensions of HCD while productivity and profitability were used as measures of corporate

performance. Hence, the study sought to establish the relationship between these dimensions of HCD and measures of corporate performance; giving rise to four research objectives, and four hypotheses. Specifically, the objectives included the under listed investigations as they apply to tourism organizations in the tourism industry of Imo State Nigeria:

1. Find out if there is any relationship between training and productivity.
2. Ascertain if there is any relationship between training and profitability.
3. Establish if mentoring correlated with productivity.
4. Determine if mentoring related to profitability.

Literature Review/Theoretical Framework

The underlying theories for this study were the Innovation Theory, Resource Based View Theory and Human Capital Theory. These has been discussed in details below.

Innovation Theory

Innovation theory emphasizes on how continuous learning and research enhances personality's character, worth, conviction, belief and conduct. Modern values are being indoctrinated in individuals when they are exposed to a higher mode or means of education and socialization such as academic environments, social media, internet and other traditional means of learning. This theory was propounded in the research work of McClelland (1961). The scholar contended that certain social order is improved and progressive due to participants' characteristics such as, lifestyles, core shared values and cultural differences. The theory supports that societies or entities should be open to new ideas, knowledge and systems so as to maximize their potential. The theory encourages businesses to embrace adaptability as a way of meeting up with modern ways of doing things; as well as accepting scientific upgrades and innovations. The world is fast changing, and for businesses to be competitive, innovative ways of doing business must be accepted and be implemented.

Resource Based View (RBV)

The view of this theory states that for business organizations and society to remain competitive and gain competitive edge, they must improve their organizational and societal treasured capitals and abilities, which are not common and cannot be easily replaced. Resource based view theory was built into a comprehensible theory by Wernerfelt (1984) as cited by Odhong et al (2014). Odhong et al (2013) also have confidence in that any business organizations' competitive edge is protected via improvement and development of knowledge and skills. This theory views human capital as an organizational obligation that cannot be substituted or imitated, which gives a firm a competitive advantage over others.

Human Capital Theory

This theory asserts that a labor force that is sophisticated, educated and having the relevant skill-set makes it easier for a business organization to accept and implement new technological innovation which in turn leads to return on investment in employee's education and training(Izushi and Haggins, 2004). Human capital theorists are certain

that education is an investment since it improves productivity which impacts positively on corporate performance. The theory holds that the competence, knowledge, abilities and skills of an organization's labor force contribute to its competitive advantage. The theories recognize that for any organization or society to be optimal, there is need for them to pull their abilities, resources, assets and all forms of capital together; and not only that, they must also adapt and innovate to meet current development realities that are obtainable.

The Concept of Human Capital Development

Human capital development has been defined as imperceptible asset/resources that produce imminent commercial worth (Christian and Omodero, 2016). These resources according to the scholars include the proficiencies and capabilities of the organizational labor force (employees). Human capital concept believes that all personnel inputs and activities are not equal and that quality of employee can be improved by investing in them. Harbison (1962) also defines HCD as the progressive direction of obtaining and improving the number of individuals with the relevant skills, training, exposure and experience that forms the bedrock of organizational performance or country economic growth. This affirmation is the sole reason employees' level of exposure, interaction with new service information, the wealth of experience; training and some individual skills have a strong encouraging effect on organizations corporate performance. The originator of the term Human Capital in 1960, Theodore Schultz did so as to reflect the role, importance and value of our human capabilities in the progression or development of human society and economy. The scholar in his work asserted that his confidence in human capital investment was like any other capital investment that could be invested on through education, training and enhanced benefits that will be central to an upgrade in the superiority and level of production and service delivery. Specifically, it is the procedure of enhancing employees' skills and competences through continued training and development both on-the-job and off-the-job" geared towards corporate goal achievement (Isaa et al, 2017). Thus, HCD is all about investing in people (employees) that are engaged in organizations using various means which include education, training, coaching, mentoring and internship in order for organizations to compete favorably.

There are four types of capital as identified by Adam Smith. They are fixed capital which he recognized as buildings, machines, land and Human Capital. Smith described human capital as skills, handiness (in relation to physical, intellectual, psychological etc.) and judgment. The aim of human capital management is to make accessible to the organization competent workforce who are capable of going about their activities, so that the organization's corporate goal can be actualized. Issaet al (2017) believe that among every other capital needed by organizations to be competitive and to achieve business performance, human capital is the only one that can be motivated, taught, developed and considered to obtain optimal performance. The tourism industry is very dynamic in nature; as such, commands fierce competition and changes from time to time. Having keenly observed the dynamic changes in Nigerian business landscape especially the tourism sector, Amah (2006) noted that constant changes in the business world has led to

organizations abilities and skills becoming outdated, so much so that knowledgeable labor force will not forever remain competent if they do not progress and enhance themselves through investment in human capital. This may have informed why Akingbade (2008) described HCD as the constitution of a suitable, stable and serious mass of human resource base and providing an empowering environment for all employees to be well equipped and contribute progressively to organizational or national development. Buttressing this, Obasi (2007) suggested that the process should be, methodical, workable and deliberate. For the purposes of this work and to further elaborate on the concept, two main dimensions of HCD as used in this study, have been x-rayed.

Training

The need for continuous training as an integral role of administration is recognized in many researches. Many scholars see training as the procedure of refining the present skills, knowledge, exposure and capabilities in an individual. According to Beardwell and Holden (1993), training is a systematized program that is put in place to increase expertise and skills needed for staff members to carry out their duties as well as to effectively and efficiently function in the industry optimally. Training improves the abilities and strength of employees in very effective ways by encouraging and motivating employees and converting them into well organized and well-mannered service delivery agents, which ultimately influence the performance of tourism organizations. Training as defined by Liang (2009), is a pointer to enhance superior skills, knowledge, abilities and attitude of the labor force that results in effective corporate performance of the workers. Barzegar and Shahroz (2011) stated that the most significant impact of training on organizational work force and organization performance is to improve the quality and quantity of organization's productivity, increase in the organization's profitability, safeguarding the organization stability, diminishing the uncertainties surrounding the organization, skillfully reduce organizations operational cost and expenses, improving the management of the organization and establishing the organization as a viable and competitive brand. All these can be achieved through systematic adjustment and keeping of informed behavior, skills and capacities to effectively meet future engagement aspects. A study by Blain (2005), published in 'learning trends in Europe and United States' shows that in Europe, 44% of staff receive job-related technical skills training and 33% receive information technology (IT) skills training. 18% of employees have undertaken sales related training in the past year, while 25% have undertaken personnel development skills training, 21% management skills training and 15% leadership skills development. Thus, training is seen as the dominant means for improving an individual's productivity, it has to be systematic, well planned and effective.

Training must be delivered in such a way that it improves the employee's performance-development needs and is in harmony with their job descriptions. The success of training program largely depends on the approaches of training used by organization (Mohammed, 2016). According to Mohammed, training procedures most commonly used include on job training, off job training, orientation and induction, technical training programs, foundation training programs, refresher training programs, health and safety

training programs, promotional and advancement training programs, remedial training programs and laboratory training programs. These training and development methods according to Mehrdad and Mahdi (2009), are separated into behavioral or on-the-job (orientations, job instruction training, apprenticeships, internships and assistantships, job rotation and coaching) and cognitive or off-the-job (Lectures, computer-based training, games and simulations etc.) Training tends to enhance employee's performance and organizational competitive advantage. It should be noted that some of the factors that have fuelled the value of training is the force of competition; especially, in the tourism industry where the need for investing in personnel development is highly underscored (Mcdowell and Sauders, 2010). Moreso, the rate at which technological advancement and environmental changes occur demand that employees' skills and competencies be continually updated for effective goal attainment; while organizations need to purposefully adjust their budgets to accommodate these investment demands (Khan et al, 2001). Such ideas according to Saleem et al (2011), require not only cautious planning but a greater emphasis on workforce education.

Mentoring

Mentorship is an association between a mentor and a mentee (protégé) whereby the latter understudies the former both in a formal and in an informal way, for the purposes of acquiring certain skills and knowledge from the mentor. Mentoring is acknowledged as a chief stimulus in proficient growth in both the public and private sector. Mentoring associations can yield constructive growth and organizational results. Mentoring procedures and associations occasionally fail due to various causes and problems such as absence of participation, little or no leadership participation, inadequate planning, unlikely expectations and “ambiguous” goals. That is why, effective mentoring plans require appropriate understanding, planning, implementation and evaluation. Learning is the heartbeat of mentoring process and it is imperative that both mentor and mentee appreciate the learning process.

Mentoring as a form of strategic tool of human resource management is an interesting addition to literature because it offers the instrument of adaptability for employees, within business organizations. Organizational efficiency is closely associated to human capital investment and development (Latagana et al, 2010). Human capital plays a vital role in order to achieve success in a business organization. A workforce with high skills and proficiency increase their likelihoods of being retained at the workplace. Hence, successful tourism organizations and destinations that want to be competitive will be those that must have educated, trained, developed, mentored and equipped their workforce. In order to remain competitive and to attract visitors, tourist organizations have to purposefully develop a conducive learning environment for its workforce. Companies are advised to start recognizing mentorship as a priority. According to research by Aberdeen Group, 61% of human resources administrators posited that 'catching and transmitting knowledge from superior officers to those who need it' is a top workforce-related challenge (Aberdeen Group, 2009).

Mentoring relationships in the workplace can flatten employee turnover rate and improve employee organizational commitment. One characteristic of mentoring relationships is the transient of knowledge from an experienced individual, i.e., the mentor, to a non-experienced individual, i.e., the protégé. Recent findings from a longitudinal study by Payne and Huffman (2005) suggest that mentoring raises organizational employee retention in part because the emotional bond invested in the process between a mentor and a protégé contributes to higher levels of organizational commitment and efficiency. Mentoring relationships may operate, thus, through a double path to enhancing organizational employee retention by supporting in the transfer of organizational information while at the same time developing the high-quality interpersonal relationships that reinforce a protégé's vow to an organization. Mentoring as a human resource development tool (HR) can create ethics for an organization by finding ways to enhance workforce managements that have a positive impact on general organization performance. Research has constantly found that a well mentored individuals or workforce are more satisfied and committed to their jobs, receive sophisticated performance evaluations, higher take home pay, and greater career progress speed than non-mentored individuals or work force (Wanberget al, 2003).

The Concept of Corporate Performance

Corporate Performance (CP) is the precise, recognizable and quantifiable result(s) of the events of any business organization after a definite period of its processes. Organizations that are attentive to their CP develop a pathway that assist them evaluate their success so as to certify that they lead to desired level of productivity. Performance can be seen as fundamental determinant factors that is widely used in measuring the failure or advancement of business organizations. Numerous scholarly literatures have been written on performance related studies and how it impacts businesses organizations. Though its definition has not been easy as it poses a great challenge to researchers because of the different metrics for performance measurements that has peculiarities as organization's varies. Roger and Wright (1998) opined that performance is likely the most generally used variable in organizational research today as a dependent variable, yet it is still one of the vaguest and loosely defined constructs. The scholars further confirmed that the agitation to develop and establish a workable and meaningful definition for performance has been ongoing for many years and it is not limited to the field of Strategic Human Resource Management. Gavreaet al (2011), postulated that the multiplicity of meanings and definitions of CP is posing an academic anthill for researchers; making its definition a challenging one.

In order to meet organizational corporate objectives in any industry especially the Tourism industry, senior tourism practitioners and managers most steadily and consciously be motivated to improve the performance of the organizations in the industry. According to Colander (2005), organizational corporate performance processes follows an endless tripartite cycle, which are corporate planning, corporate strategy implementation (execution) and performance control (evaluation). The corporate (Strategic planning) stage includes developing goals and aims that are in tandem with

corporate objectives and available resources (both human and material). Finally, CP is measured to assess whether or not the goals and objectives that were set in the planning phase have been achieved in the implementation phase.

Productivity

Productivity may be seen as the overall measure of an individual's or organization's ability to produce goods and services. Specifically, it measures how specified resources are utilized and managed in order to achieve timely realization of stated objectives in terms of quality and quantity. Simply put, it is the output per unit of input Colander (2004); and is usually measured in terms of efficiency and effectiveness. Nwachukwu (2006) defined efficiency as getting the most output from the least amount of inputs, sometimes referred to as "doing things right. Using resources prudently and with a smallest amount of waste is efficient and this transcends to productivity. Efficiency can be quantified in relation to survival, business status, profit or growth and expansion. In a tourism setting, efficiency could be achieved by delivering quality services that meets and exceeds visitor's expectation. That is to create an all-round experience for the visitors from the destination decision state, during the visit and after the visit. Furthermore, Nwachukwu posited that effectiveness is "doing the right things" for the purpose of getting the organization closer to its encoded goals. That's to say that effectiveness deals with ends. In the tourism and hospitality industry, it can be measured by the level of customer satisfaction and post customer behavior.

Profitability

Profitability is a basic yardstick of the general achievement of any business organization. Truly, it is essential for an organization's survival. Numerous tests of profitability emphasize on determining the appropriateness of revenue by comparing it to other items reported on the financial statements. Daz-Fernandez et al (2014) argued that employees' skills and aptitudes contribute greatly to organizational profitability and competitiveness. They analyzed the human resources and performance accounts of business organizations with more than 500 employees and concluded that there are no best competencies. Rather, they noted that the strategy of an organization determines the best skills of the employees and that employee's competence correlated with profitability.

Empirical Literature

The empirical literature for this study was examined based on the perceived relationship between the dimensions of the predictor variable and measures of the criterion variable.

Relationship between Training and Productivity

The relationship between training and productivity as well as associated constructs has been x-rayed by several scholars with varying outcomes. For instance, Olalere and Adesoji (2013) examined HCD of First Bank of Nigeria Plc using training, mentoring and internship as criteria for employee development. The scholars applied both secondary and primary data. The study found that HCD through training has improved the skills, boldness and productivity of staff of the bank which in turn led to the attainment of organizational productivity. Based on the finding, the study advocated the need for the

bank to put in place training and motivational programs in place that will be attractive to the staff in order to retain them after the training and development exercise. According to them, this will reduce the rate of staff turnover ravaging the banking sector. Similarly, Mohammed (2016) in his study “The impact of training and development on employee performance and productivity: A case study of Jordanian private sector transportation companies located in the southern region”, used a sample of 254 persons, to perform his analysis. The findings indicated that there is a positive correlation between training and productivity. They further opined that the success or failure of any business organization depends on the quality of her employees. He stated that organizations with well trained and highly developed work force are competitively at an advantage. Another study of similar finding is that of James and Daniel (2014) who investigated “The effect of training on employee performance: A survey of health workers in Siaya county Kenya”. The study found that training significantly impacted on employee performance; and that a drop from employee training has a negative effect on general organizational performance. The studies simply affirm the submission of Ekpo (1989) when he pointed out that a community or society without adequate information on how to develop will never be developed. This was contained in his study on manpower development in Nigeria. The study further buttressed the importance of developing manpower (labor force) of any organization through any educative means (training, education, exposure etc.) for the betterment of the organization in terms of productivity. This called for the hypothesis that:

Training does not significantly relate with productivity of tourism organizations in Imo State.

Relationship between Training and Profitability

The relationship between training and profitability has equally been examined by different scholars. Specifically, Onyekwelu et al (2015) examined the impact of human capital investment (HCI) on financial performance and market valuation. The analysis was based on five quoted Nigerian banks; secondary data were obtained from the yearly financial reports of the five selected deposit money banks. The analysis was performed using percentages and Chi-square statistical test. The study showcased among other things that there is a momentous upsurge in organizations worth in terms of profitability and net worth when investments on human capital is preserved as assets and capitalized. This is against the current practice where such expenditures are treated as mere revenue expenses thereby leading to uncultivated undervaluation of organizations annual financial report especially in terms of the balance Sheet and Profit and Loss Account. On his part, Ismaila (2013) studied “The relationship between human capital efficiency and financial performance: An empirical investigation of quoted Nigerian banks”. The findings indicated that efficient utilization of human capital significantly impacts on the return on equity of banks. Though the scholars disagreed on the impact of the size of organization on profitability. They stated that the size of an organization does not have any significant impact on its return on equity, while the return on equity of banks can be predicted by human capital efficiency owing to how quality, efficient and effective the work force is in delivering top notch service. Again, focusing on the banking sector, Oyinlola and Adeyemi (2014) investigated the impact of HCD on organizational

performance in the Nigerian banking sector, with specific reference to banks in Osun State. Basing the analysis on a sample of 302 respondents, the study revealed that significant relationship exists between HCD and organizational performance. The study concluded that as a service-driven sector, bank employees who are known to regularly interact with customers through every technological and traditional means need to be trained so they can constantly satisfy their customers. This calls for investment in staff development especially the marketing and customer care units so as to help them update their skills. These skills have the potentials of bringing in more customers; and more customers means increase in profit levels. Hence the hypothesis that:

Training does not relate significantly with profitability in the Imo State tourism industry.

Relationship between Mentoring and Productivity

Mentoring has become an acceptable means of HCD; and has been proven to have significant impacts on both individual and organizational outcome measures such as productivity and profitability. In their study titled “Mentoring and organizational performance: A review of mentoring in small scale and medium enterprises”, Muzaffar et al (2016) indicated that mentoring is needed to improve organizational performance and transmitting knowledge from experienced superiors to inexperienced junior staff which in turn influences organizational productivity. The results of this research showed that mentoring has a positive impact on business performance as it helps to curb employee turnover as well as increase employee retention and job satisfaction; in the long run, corporate productivity is improved. On their part, Wasim et al (2011) carried out an empirical investigation on intellectual capital and its impact on corporate performance of the Modaraba sector of Pakistan. The study revealed that human capital amongst all other capitals is the most related directly to productivity. They emphasized that first hand and practical knowledge transmission from a senior staff to a junior staff fast tracks employee productivity and in this regard translate to corporate productivity. Another study, revealed that intellectual capital as a dimension of HCD inspires the output of organizations. This research was carried out by Aziz et al (2010) to determine the effect of intellectual capital (IC) on Jordanian pharmaceutical industry; and they discovered that IC has important and positive impact on performance of the industry in terms of productivity. This same argument was reinforced by Bontis et al (2000) when they examined the elements of IC (i.e. Human Capital, Structural Capital and Relational Capital) and its influence on business performance of service and non-service sectors of Malaysia; and found that relational capital passed from an experienced staff (mentor) to a junior staff (mentee) has positive effect on corporate performance. Similarly, ElBannany (2008) carried a research to measure the impact of intellectual capital performance of U.K financial institutions over a six-year period (1999-2005) and submitted that productivity of U.K banks is based on human capital investment which means a productive bank is the one investing to create and improve its Human Capital Efficiency (HCE). This informed the desire to hypothesize that:

Mentoring does not significantly relate with productivity of tourism organizations in Imo State.

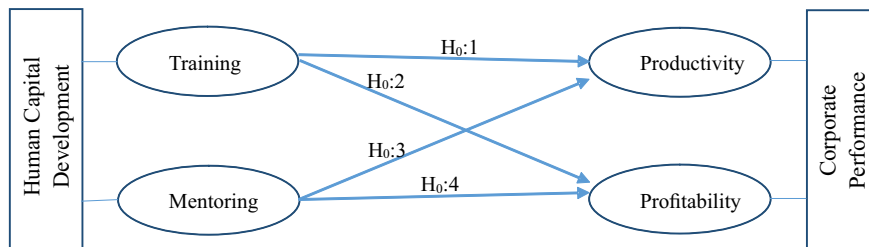
Relationship between Mentoring and Profitability

In an attempt to establish the impact of mentorship on profitability, Goh (2005) explained that capitals expended on HCD have more prospects in improving organizational revenue compared to structural and physical capital. Mavridis (2005) also conducted a study using value added intellectual capital (VAIC) model on seventeen commercial banks and concluded that intellectual Value Added (IVA) brings in more profit/revenue to the organization than physical capital. The scholar opined that values shared and learned amongst staff improves organizational commitment hence, shielding the organization from turnover cost which in turn improves their financial stand. Another study which was conducted by Tan et al (2007) to measure intellectual capital performance {using human capital (HC) and structural capital (SC)} and its influence on financial performance (measured by ROE, EPS and ASR) of 150 registered businesses in Singapore Stock Exchange by using VAIC model. They concluded that mentorship performances have significant relation with firm's financial performance and its future financial performance. This implies that the reward for mentorship investment is both immediate and long term. Hence the need to hypothesize that:

Mentoring does not significantly relate with profitability of tourism organizations in Imo State.

These hypothesized relationships have been modeled in an operational framework diagram as depicted in figure 3.

Figure 3.



Methodology

This study adopted the cross-sectional survey research design. Target population comprised both the managers and customers of 15 tourism organizations operating in Owerri, Imo State (hotels.ng, 2018); making the population size partly known and partly unknown. All the managers of the 15 tourism organizations (one manager from each tourism organization) were considered for the study. Since the number of customers of the tourism organizations is not known, the Cochran's formula for sample size determination in an infinite population was used to obtain a sample size of 73 for the customers. The Cochran's formula is given as:

$$n = (z^2 pq) / e^2$$

Where:

n = sample size sought

Z = standard deviation i.e. the corresponding z-score for the desired confidence value (1.96)

p = estimate of the proportion of the population possessing the desired attribute(s).

q = 1-p

e = level of significance (0.05)

So When

p = 0.95, q = 0.05, Z = 1.96 and e = 0.05

n = 72.99 i.e. 73 customers.

The computations indicated 73 customers, but to allow for even distribution among the 15 tourism organizations, 2 was added to this number, making it up to 75 customers; which when added to the 15 managers totaled 90. Hence, 90 copies of the instrument were administered to the respondents of the selected tourism organizations using both the purposive and accidental sampling techniques (the former for the managers and the latter for the customers); and sampling 6 respondents from each of the tourism organizations i.e. 1 manager and 5 customers. From the responded questionnaire, only 80 copies representing 88.88 percentage return were found useful for data analysis. The variables were measured with 3 items each on a 5-point modified Likert scale ranging from 5 to 1 measured as follows: 5 = strongly agree, 4 = agree, 3 = disagree, 2 = strongly disagree and 1 = undecided. Validity of the instrument was ascertained using face and construct validity; while reliability of instrument was determined via the Cronbach Alpha test which reported acceptable reliability values of 0.767 for Training, .754 for Mentoring, .768 for Productivity and .776 for Profitability. Analysis of respondents' demographics was executed using frequency distribution. The mean and standard deviation techniques were used to analyze responses to the items; with the criterion mean set at 3.0. while the Pearson's Product moment correlation (PPMC) technique was used to test the null hypotheses. The entire analyses were aided by SPSS version 20.0 software technology.

Results and Findings

Table 1: Gender of Respondents

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Male	34	42.5	42.5	42.5
Valid Female	56	57.5	57.5	100.0
Total	80	100.0	100.0	

Source: Field Survey, 2018

Table 1 shows the gender distribution of the respondents. Out of the eighty respondents, thirty-four which amounted to 42.5% were male while fifty-six which amounted to 57.5% were females.

Table 2: Qualification of Respondents

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Higher National Diploma	49	61.1	61.1	61.1
Valid Bachelor Degree	25	31.3	31.3	92.4
Master Degree	6	7.6	7.6	100.0
Total	80	100.0	100.0	

Source: Field Survey, 2018

Table 2 shows the academic qualification of the respondents. It indicate d that 49(61%) of the respondents have higher National diploma, 25 (31%) have bachelor's degree while the remaining 6(8%) have masters' degree.

Table 3: Mean Analysis of Training

S/N	Items	Mean	SD	Decision
1	Employees are satisfied with their jobs when they are trained	3.42	.614	Accepted
2	Training is important for quality service delivery	3.54	.618	Accepted
3	Training improves employee's productivity	3.45	.730	Accepted
	Grand Mean	3.47		

Source: Field Survey, 2018

Data on table 3 indicates that the respondents stand on the same position on items 1-3. The items in these areas were accepted since their mean value was above the criterion mean of 3.0. In summary, from the grand mean of 3.47, it is evident that the respondents accepted that for them to be satisfied, and there is need for them to be trained in their current job. A satisfied workforce is a very important to the organization, as they can make maximum input for the organization to succeed. They further stated that enhancing their skills with updated knowledge will improve their productivity and in turn profit their organization in terms of goal attainment as they will be able to deliver top notch service

Table 4: Mean Analysis of Mentoring

S/N	Items	Mean	SD	Decision
1	Mentoring helps to improve the confidence level of the employees	3.23	.898	Accepted
2	Mentoring is a cost-effective strategy that should be adopted by management	3.92	1.055	Accepted
3	Mentoring helps to flatten employee turnover.	3.86	.937	Accepted
	GRAND MEAN	3.67		

Source: Field Survey, 2018

Data on table 4 indicates that the respondents are of similar view on items 4-6. The items in these areas were accepted since their mean value was above the criterion mean of 3.0. From the grand mean of 3.67, it is evident that the respondents accepted that mentorship programs will boost employee confidence, enhance loyalty and reduce employee turnover. This implies that employees of these tourism organizations need to be mentored and encouraged by more experienced individuals.

Table 5: Mean Analysis of Mentoring

S/N	Items	Mean	SD	Decision
1	A productive workforce is most likely to achieve organizational goal	3.44	.634	Accepted
2	Corporate Performance is dependent on the efficiency and effectiveness of its work force	3.22	.788	Accepted
3	The survival of any organization is dependent on the capacity of their workers to perform	3.22	.764	Accepted
	GRAND MEAN	3.29		

Source: Field Survey, 2018

Data on table 5 indicates that to a large extent, the respondents reported similar opinions on items 7-9. The items under consideration were accepted since their mean value was above the criterion mean of 3.0. From the grand mean of 3.29, it is evident that the respondents accepted that organizational productivity is a function of the efficiency and effectiveness of her labor force.

Table 6: Mean Analysis of Profitability

S/N	Items	Mean	SD	Decision
1	A profitable organization is one whose financial goals are achieved at the end of the financial year	3.32	.874	Accepted
2	Customer satisfaction and employee job satisfaction has an influence on whether or not the company makes profit	3.09	.803	Accepted
3	Organizations that invests in human capital development are more likely to gain competitive advantage	3.31	.872	Accepted
	Grand Mean	3.24		

Source: Field Survey, 2018

Data on table 6 indicates congruence of opinions by the respondents on items 10-12. The items were accepted since their mean value was above the criterion mean of 3.0. The grand mean of 3.24 is a proof that the respondents accepted that financial objectives of the company is a factor to consider in terms of profitability and that quality service delivery as well as employee development will improve the organizations prospects.

Test of Hypothesis One

H_0 :1 Training does not relate significantly with productivity in the tourism industry of Imo State.

Table 7: Correlation Analysis of Training and Productivity

		Training	Productivity
Training	Pearson Correlation	1	.562**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	80	80
Productivity	Pearson Correlation	.562**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	80	80

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

Source: Data Analysis Result, 2018

Decision Rule: Reject the null hypothesis if the p-value is less than the level of significance.

Table 7 indicates the existence of significant relationship between training and productivity. Since the p-value (0.000) is less than the level of significance (0.05), the null hypothesis was not supported. Consequently, the alternate hypothesis was upheld; indicating that there is a significant relationship between training and organizational productivity in the tourism industry of Imo State. The correlation coefficient (r) value 0.562 indicates a moderate positive relationship.

Test of Hypothesis Two

H₀:2 Training does not significantly relate with profitability in the tourism industry of Imo State.

Table 8: Correlation Analysis of Training and Profitability

		Training	Profitability
Training	Pearson Correlation	1	.753**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	80	80
Profitability	Pearson Correlation	.753**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	80	80

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

Source: Data Analysis Result, 2018

Table 8 signifies that training significantly relates to productivity. This is because the p-value (0.000) is less than the level of significance (0.05). Hence, the null hypothesis was not supported while the alternate hypothesis was upheld; affirming that there is a significant relationship between training and profitability in the tourism industry of Imo State. The correlation coefficient (r) value 0.753 indicates a high positive relationship.

Test of Hypothesis Three

H₀:3 Mentoring does not significantly relate with productivity in the tourism industry of Imo State.

Table 9: Correlations Analysis of Mentoring and Productivity

		Mentoring	Productivity
Mentoring	Pearson Correlation	1	.778**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	80	80
Productivity	Pearson Correlation	.778**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	80	80

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

Source: Data Analysis Result, 2018

Table 9 shows that mentoring significantly relates to productivity since the p-value (0.000) is less than the level of significance (0.05). Consequently, the null hypothesis was not supported while the alternate hypothesis was upheld; confirming that there is a significant relationship between training and profitability in the tourism industry of Imo

State. The correlation coefficient (r) value 0.778 indicates the existence of high direct association between the two variables.

Test of hypothesis Four

$H_0:4$ Mentoring does not significantly relate to profitability in the tourism industry of Imo State.

Table 10: Correlations Analysis of Mentoring and Profitability

		Mentoring	Profitability
Mentoring	Pearson Correlation	1	.681**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	80	80
Profitability	Pearson Correlation	.681**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	80	80

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

Source: Data Analysis Result, 2018

Table 10 reported a p-value of 0.000 which is less than the 0.05 level of significance, implying that the null hypothesis was not supported. Therefore, the alternate hypothesis was upheld affirming that mentoring significantly relates to profitability in the tourism industry of Imo State. The correlation coefficient (r) value 0.681 implies that there is a high direct correlation between the two variables.

Discussion of Findings

In hypothesis one, the study revealed the existence of a significant and direct relationship between training and productivity. This implies that training is an antecedent of productivity. In other words, the more employees are trained, the more productive they are likely to become. This finding is not surprising as it was anticipated because; it is understandable that business growth or failure is largely dependent on the quality of the workforce in place. A quality workforce will (*ceteris paribus*) lead to improved productivity. This is in line with the finding of Mohammed (2016) who sought the impact of training and development on performance and productivity in the Jordanian transport sector; and found that there is a positive relationship between training and productivity. Based on this finding, Mohammed concluded that organizations with well trained and highly developed work force are competitively at an advantage. Support was also found in the work of Olalere and Adesoji (2013), whose study of Nigerian banks revealed improved productivity as result of training. Another supportive work is that of James and Daniel (2014) who used their work to advocate training as a major factor in improving employee and organizational performance. These notwithstanding, the coefficient of determination in this study (r^2 i.e. 0.681²) which is 0.4638 indicates that training can only be used as an explanatory factor of productivity to the tune of 46.38%; leaving the remaining 53.62% to other factors not accommodated in the model. This means that training alone cannot maximally improve organizational productivity as there are other contributing

factors a company has to consider for optimum performance. This position was supported by Ekpo (1989) who opined that a community or society without the needed information to develop or evolve will remain stagnant and never develop.

Hypothesis two, established that training significantly and directly relates to Profitability. This would ordinarily mean that the more investment organizations make in training, the more profitable they become. This finding is not surprising at all; as it agrees with that of Onyekwelu et al (2015) who found that profitability and net worth of banks experienced a big surge as a result of training and investment in human capital. It equally agrees with Oyinola and Adeyemi (2014) who asserted that there is a correlation between HCD through training and organizational performance in terms of annual financial statements in the banking sector. Ismaila (2013) was also of a similar finding. Nevertheless, the R^2 value of 0.5670 showed that training can only be used to explain the variance in profitability to the tune of 56.7 %; leaving the remaining 43.3% to other variables not factored into the model.

The third hypothesis affirmed that there is a significant relationship between mentorship and Productivity. This finding is in tandem with that of Aziz et al (2010) who found that a healthy relationship between a superior and a subordinate improves employee productivity. Other supportive studies include Wasimet al(2011) and Muzaffar et al (2016).The R^2 value of 0.6053implies that the variation in productivity can only be explained by mentoring to the tune of 60.53%; leaving the remaining that 39.47% to other factors not accommodated in the model.

The last hypothesis revealed that mentorship impacts profitability of organizations positively. Support for this was found in the works of Mavridis (2005) who used his study to establish that values shared and learned improves organizational financial position as it will cut down cost of employing external human capital developmental programs. According to the scholar, mentorship will shield the organization from turnover cost. Other supportive studies include Goh (2005) and Tan et al (2007). The R^2 value of 0.4638 means that predictive power of mentorship on profitability is only 46.38% leaving the remaining 53.62% to other exogenous factors not contained in the model.

Implications

This study revealed that HCD strongly correlates with corporate performance; and that this relationship was determined and strengthened by the resultant correlations between the dimensions of the predictor variable and measures of the criterion variable. This has implications both for theory and practice. Theoretically, corporate performance is linked to the innovativeness, capabilities and skills of a corporate workforce; confirming the human capital and resource-based view theories. Meaning that the theories of innovation, resource-based view and human capital are apt for explaining the nexus of HCD and corporate performance.

In terms of practice, the study emphasizes the need for tourism organization managers to be more systemic in their approach to operations management; and understand that

human resource is the focal point of operations management as all other resources revolve around it. Hence, they should pay more attention to the development of their employees as a means to achieving their corporate objectives; especially in terms of efficiency and effectiveness. Consequentially, they ought to treat investments in human capital development as worthy and profitable ventures instead of regarding them as mere working expenditures that are perhaps unavoidable. This equally implies that whatever human capital developmental programs they have, should be purposefully coordinated in such a way as to aid the achievement of their predetermined organizational objectives. This is so because the purpose of every corporate organization is to be productive (efficient and effective) and profitable (competitive advantage) so as to enhance corporate performance, which this study has established can be achieved through intensive and intentional programs targeted at improving the labor force. Additionally, the reduction in staff turnover and the desire of employees to remain committed to achieving corporate goals are part of the benefits thereof. Suffice it to say that the success of tourism organizations in terms of corporate performance, is largely dependent on the ability of the operations managers to develop their workforce and arm them with latest service trends in the industry.

Conclusions and Recommendations

This study focused on the need for systemic operations management in the Imo State tourism industry with a special focus on improving corporate performance through HCD. The study investigated the nexus between HCD and corporate performance by using a sample of 80 respondents drawn from the 15 tourism organizations in Imo State, Nigeria and the Pearson's product moment correlation technique to establish a strong positive association between the two variables. Based on this, the study concluded that systemic operations management anchored on HCD can enhance employee performance and lead to improved corporate performance of tourism organizations in Imo State, Nigeria. Furthermore, training and mentoring are key HCD programs that are capable of improving employee job satisfaction, flatten employee turnover rate, improve service delivery as well as contribute to maintaining loyal and satisfied customers; which ultimately will enhance the productivity and profitability of these tourist organizations.

The study therefore recommended that:

1. Tourism operations managers and other top executives of tourism organizations (especially in Imo State) wishing to improve their corporate performance, should endeavour to practice systemic operations management anchored on HCD. Hence, they should establish well thought-out development programs aimed at improving employee skills and competencies for efficient and effective service delivery.
2. Such programs should be viewed as profitable investments and should be reviewed regularly so as to ensure their currency and potency of meeting the needs of both the employee and organization.
3. Specifically, they should intentionally and regularly subject their staff to training and mentoring programs which this study has proven to be capable of improving corporate productivity and profitability.

4. They should however beware of the extents to which they can achieve improvement on corporate performance through HCD as revealed in this study. Hence, they should be able to control for other exogenous factors not captured in this study's model which are capable of limiting their desired results.

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