

## Human Resource Planning and Organisational Agility of Manufacturing Companies in Rivers State

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### **Abstract**

*This study examined the relationship between human resource planning human resource planning and organisational agility of manufacturing companies in Rivers State. The study adopted the cross-sectional research survey design. Primary data was generated through structured questionnaire. The population of this study consists of the 32 manufacturing companies registered with the Manufacturers Association of Nigeria, Rivers State Branch. Four (4) managers were purposively selected from the 32 manufacturing companies in South-South, Nigeria giving a total of 128 respondents. The reliability of the instrument was achieved by the use of the Cronbach Alpha coefficient with all the items scoring above 0.70. The hypotheses were tested using the Spearman's Rank Order Correlation Coefficient. The tests were carried out at a 0.05 significance level. Findings revealed that there is a significant relationship between human resource planning human resource planning and organisational agility of manufacturing companies in Rivers State. Therefore, the study concludes that human resource planning positively enhances organisational agility of manufacturing companies in Rivers State. This implies that effective human resource planning enables manufacturing companies in Rivers State to quickly adapt to changing market demands and operational challenges. The study recommends that manufacturing companies in Rivers State should establish a robust human resource planning framework that includes regular skills assessments, workforce forecasting, and targeted training programs.*

**Keywords:** *Human Resource Planning, Organisational agility, Responsiveness, Flexibility*

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### **INTRODUCTION**

In the contemporary business landscape, marked by rapid technological shifts, market volatility, and heightened global competition, organizations are increasingly recognizing the necessity of aligning Human Resource Planning (HRP) with organizational organisational agility to secure a competitive advantage and enhance resilience. Human Resource Planning, traditionally focused on forecasting and systematically aligning human capital needs with strategic objectives, has evolved to include adaptive and flexible practices aimed at enhancing an organization's responsiveness to change (Jackson & Schuler, 1990). Through proactive HRP, organizations can anticipate and address emerging workforce needs, ensuring that critical skills are readily available and effectively deployed to support organizational goals (Wright & Snell, 1998).

Organizational organisational agility, defined as the ability to swiftly adapt and respond to internal and external changes, requires HRP that is dynamic, flexible, and embedded in an agile organizational culture. This approach emphasizes developing a responsive workforce capable of adapting to shifting business conditions, thereby strengthening overall organisational agility (Breu

et al., 2002). Researchers argue that an agile HR framework is vital for fostering adaptive capacity, which is a critical component of resilience and responsiveness in high-velocity environments (Doz & Kosonen, 2010). For instance, Wright and Ulrich (2017) note that agile HRP incorporates real-time analytics and forecasting, enabling the organization to pivot rapidly and make informed talent management decisions based on up-to-date information.

Agile HRP practices are essential for addressing contemporary workforce challenges, including the rise of remote work, gig economies, and the need for continuous reskilling due to technological advancements. Bhatnagar and Biswas (2010) highlight that by implementing flexible staffing models, fostering cross-functional teams, and promoting a culture of continuous learning, organizations can more effectively leverage their human resources to respond to evolving demands and sustain competitiveness. Furthermore, aligning HRP with organizational agility enhances an organization's ability to attract and retain talent, as employees increasingly value workplaces that prioritize flexibility, innovation, and resilience (Sullivan, 2013). The purpose of this paper therefore was to examine the relationship between human resource planning and organisational agility of manufacturing companies in Rivers State.



Figure 1: conceptual model for the relationship between human resource planning and organisational agility

Source: Desk Research (2024)

## LITERATURE REVIEW

### Theoretical Foundation

#### Resource-Based View (RBV) Theory

According to Barney *et al.* (2011), the Resource-Based View theory best explains how organizations can obtain competitive advantage and improve performance. According to the RBV theory, organizational resources are the primary determinants of the organization's competitiveness and performance. (Shivaraj & Vijayakumara, 2015) The theory proposes that organizations must integrate their resources, which are the key capabilities they are certain to possess, for the sake of their internal operations and continued existence. The Resource-Based View theory is based on two assumptions, according to Muhammad (2010), in order to illuminate the means of integrating organizational resources to gain a competitive advantage. First, the theory implies that organizations in a given business environment are unrelated in terms of their resources

and the manner in which they integrate these resources. Second, the theory implies that the heterogeneity of firms may persist for an extended period of time as a result of the immobility of certain resources that differentiate the strategies of firms in a business environment.

The combination of physical, human, and organizational resources provides the organization with a competitive advantage, which is essential to its success or failure (Penrose, 1959; Wernerfelt, 1984; Barney, 1991; Madhani, 2010). According to Samaha, Palmatier, and Dant (2011), the Resource-Based View theory focuses primarily on the distinctiveness of a company's resources relative to those of its rivals. Employees (human resources) and skills are some of the resources that, according to RBV, enable organizations to generate unique products and outperform rivals despite being in the same market and having the same market share.

Competitors can replicate the organization's other resources, but the organization's talents and human resources are unique. Kyndt, Dochy, Michielsen, and Moeyaert (2009) add that the resources of the firm and the uniqueness of the resources do not necessarily affect the performance of the organization. Rather, other factors, such as the managerial strategies injected on the resources, contribute to the overall performance of the organization. According to Berny (2008), for organizational resources to have an impact on a company's competitiveness and performance, they must be valuable and scarce.

Therefore, a company's human resources are one of its strategic resources that, if well-developed through a deliberate human resource planning program, can distinguish it from its competitors' human resources and provide advantages for the organization's well-being and survival in a dynamic business environment. According to Conner (1991), the presence of unique inputs and capabilities will distinguish the performance of businesses, thereby granting them a competitive edge. However, environmental conditions such as uncertainty, volatility, hostility, the number of relevant components in the environment, and the interpersonal relationships between these components increase the perceived complexity of managing and planning for the organization's human resources (Liedke et al., 2019).

### **Human Resource Planning**

Human resource planning is a process through which organizations anticipate future manpower requirements, thereby evaluating the employee requisite, for future need and attempts to provide sufficient employee required to perform toward the realization of organizational goals and objectives (Satope, 2014; Song, Zhao, Arend & Im, 2015). However, strategic human resource planning starts with a business review and optimal utilization of organization's existing human resource and their potential to meet an organization's current and future needs. As noted by Maina and Kwasira (2015) human resource planning involves organization's determination to have the right persons with prerequisite skills and capabilities to carry out any tasks that may be assigned in helping the organization achieve its objectives in record time. In a related development, Gilbert, DeWinne and Sels (2015) affirm that human resource planning is a process which anticipated future manpower requirement and ensures sufficient pool of candidates with right skills and experience needed are made available.

It is important while carrying out human resource planning, to consider the scope of the activity in order to forecast correctly. Human resource planning also involves making an inventory of current human resources in order to determine the human resource status, for example, the current size and kind of the human resources as well as work scope (Randall, 2000). Lunenburg (2017) agreed that, human resource planning consists of various activities which include; continuous environmental scanning and reviewing of corporate strategies, objectives, and policies,

forecasting human resource requirements, making an inventory of present human resources and assessing the extent to which these resources are employed optimally; anticipating human resource problems by projecting present resources into the future and comparing them with the forecasts of requirements to determine their adequacy, and planning the necessary programs of requirements, selection, training and development, utilization, transfer, promotion, motivation, and compensation to ensure that future human resource requirements are properly met.

According to Ayandibu and Kaseeram (2019), human resource planning is the most important activity for any organization because it identifies areas of need and functions as the foundation for all human resource management activities. Karia, Omari, Mwanaongoro, and Ondieki (2016) listed the human resource management activities associated with human resource planning as job analysis, recruitment and selection, training and development, compensation, rewards, and promotion. Undoubtedly, accurate forecasting and anticipation of the organization's future requirements and direction will be necessary for a thorough analysis of these activities.

When conducting human resource planning, it is essential to consider the scope of the activity in order to make accurate projections. Human resource planning also entails compiling an inventory of current human resources in order to ascertain the human resource status, such as the current quantity and type of human resources as well as the scope of the work (Randall, 2000). Lunenburg (2017) concurred that human resource planning entails a variety of activities, such as: continuous environmental scanning and review of corporate strategies, objectives, and policies; forecasting human resource requirements; making an inventory of present human resources and assessing the extent to which these resources are optimally utilized; anticipating human resource problems by projecting present resources into the future and comparing them with feasibilities; and evaluating the effectiveness of human resource management.

### **Organisational agility**

Organisational agility has to do with the capacity to respond swiftly to changing situations as demonstrated by business organisations. The ability of an organisation to have the foresight to see the trend and forecast the future in order to respond appropriately defines the strategic organisational agility of such an organisation. Strategic agility (SA) is the ability of a firm to respond swiftly to changing environmental conditions. The flexibility in the operational responses of firms to discontinuities and volatility in the business environment defines the SA of a firm. Firms that are embedded with SA capability can successfully predict and adapt to new opportunities and threats. In line with this, Mavengere (2013) posits that SA has to do with an organisation's sensitivity to or being armed with the foresight to understand and predict novel happenings in the environment where the organisation operates. It is the capability of a firm to identify and react to environmental opportunities and threats with affluence, speed, and nimbleness (Tallon & Pinsonneault, 2011).

Strategic organisational agility has to do with the capacity to respond swiftly to changing situations as demonstrated by business organisations. The ability of an organisation to have the foresight to see the trend and forecast the future in order to respond appropriately defines the SA of such an organisation. Tende and Ekanem (2018) opine that SA is the capability of an organisation to predict, anticipate, and forecast trends and events in the business environment to fashion appropriate response with proactive moves. Therefore, survival is no longer guaranteed on the premise of having financial muscle or capital, but in the ability to adjust to

changes in the environment and device means to stay relevant. Akhigbe and Onuoha (2019) posit that it is no longer the fittest organisation that lasts longer, but organisations with high resilience and capacity to adjust.

### **Measures of Organisational agility**

#### **Responsiveness**

Responsiveness refers to the extent to which firms react rapidly to changes in a business environment to seize potential opportunities (Bernardes & Hanna, 2009). This responsiveness reflects “the efficiency and effectiveness with which firms sense, interpret, and act on market stimuli (Garrett, Covin & Slevin, 2009), and has been treated as a competitive advantage. For example, Wei and Wang (2011) proposed that this responsiveness represents a competitive marketing advantage by deploying resources to satisfy customer needs. Inman Sale, Green, Jr and Whitten (2011) noted that a firm with a high level of responsiveness outperforms its competitors in terms of operations. Inman *et al.* (2011) noted that a firm with a high level of responsiveness outperforms its competitors in terms of operations.

Scholars have conducted numerous studies to explore how organizational responsiveness can be enhanced (Wei & Wang, 2011). According to Bernardes and Hanna (2009) central to this concept of organizational responsiveness seems to be the capability to learn fast in an environment where changes are fast-paced and difficult to foresee. Accordingly, scholars have increasingly realized that to develop and maintain responsiveness, a firm must constantly learn from partners with rich experiences in terms of responding to market changes (Yu, Jacobs, Salisbury & Enns, 2013).

#### **Flexibility**

The ability of an organization to respond effectively to the opportunities and challenges presented by the competitive environment (Sanchez, 1995; Nandakumar, Jharkharia, and Nair, 2014) depends on the increasing uncertainty in the business environment and the need for organizations to build flexibility into their systems in order to deal with the dynamic business environment. Flexible organizations require organisational agility and adaptability to change and innovate; strength and resilience to assure the stability and longevity of competitive advantage (Rahrami, 1992). The business environment has become more dynamic and competitive than ever before, and businesses are constantly required to adapt to environmental changes (Grewal & Tansuhaj, 2001; Young-Ybarra & Wiersema, 1999). The ability of a company to rapidly identify major changes in the competitive landscape, reallocate resources to new courses of action, and reconfigure existing organizational routines that support these actions, determines whether a company can create competitive advantage faster than its rivals (Shimizu & Hitt, 2004; Nadkarni & Narayanan, 2007; Gelhard & Delft, 2015).

Strategic flexibility is an essential dynamic capability (Eisenhardt et al., 2010; Teece et al., 1997). In an era characterized by globalization, computerization, information technology, and changing purchasing patterns, organizations operate in a dynamic environment.

Maintaining competitive advantages has become difficult, and there is little to no long-term stability. Therefore, organizations must be flexible and act more intelligently with their environment; high firm performance results from not only having timely and necessary information about changing markets, but also understanding the implications or actions that are necessary as a result of this knowledge and acting accordingly (Javalgi, Whipple, Ghosh, & Young, 2005).



### Human Resource Planning and Organisational agility

Okonkwo, Okafor and Essell (2022) examined the effect of manpower planning on organizational performance in the Brewery industry in South-East, Nigeria. The literature review section touched on all the four main sections of the review which include conceptual review, theoretical framework, theoretical exposition and empirical review. The study adopted descriptive survey design and used summary and descriptive statistics as well as regression analysis as the main tools of analysis. All tests were conducted at 0.05 level of significance. Preliminary results indicated that FStatistic of 18.029 is statistical significant and as such, the model was considered valid for predictions. The regression coefficient showed that 61.7 percent relationship exists between the dependent and independent variables. The coefficient of determination also showed that 52.9 percent variation in the dependent variable can be explained by the regressors. Major findings are that manpower planning in the area of forecasting to anticipate employees number and skills/expertise level have significant positive effect on organizational performance. It was concluded that human resource planning is very essential for optimal performance in the brewery industry.

From the foregoing discourse, the study hypothesized thus:

**H<sub>01</sub>:** There is no significant relationship between human resource planning and responsiveness of manufacturing companies in Rivers State

**H<sub>01</sub>:** There is no significant relationship between human resource planning and flexibility of manufacturing companies in Rivers State

### METHODOLOGY

The study adopted the cross-sectional research survey design. Primary data was generated through structured questionnaire. The population of this study consists of the 32 manufacturing companies registered with the Manufacturers Association of Nigeria, Rivers State Branch. Four (4) managers were purposively selected from the 32 manufacturing companies in South-South, Nigeria giving a total of 128 respondents. The reliability of the instrument was achieved by the use of the Cronbach Alpha coefficient with all the items scoring above 0.70. The hypotheses were tested using the Spearman's Rank Order Correlation Coefficient. The tests were carried out at a 0.05 significance level. Only data for 105 respondents were used for data analysis.

### DATA ANALYSIS AND RESULTS

**Table 1: Correlation for Human Resource Planning and Measures of Organisational agility**

			Human Resource Planning	Responsiveness	Flexibility
Spearman's rho	Human Resource Planning	Correlation Coefficient	1.000	.744**	.800**
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.	.000	.000
		N	105	105	105

Responsiveness	Correlation Coefficient	.744**	1.000	.870**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.	.000
	N	105	105	105
Flexibility	Correlation Coefficient	.800**	.870**	1.000
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.
	N	105	105	105

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

Source: SPSS Output

**H<sub>01</sub>:** There is no significant relationship between human resource planning and responsiveness of manufacturing companies in Rivers State.

Table 1 shows a Spearman rank order correlation coefficient (rho) of 0.744 on the relationship between human resource planning and responsiveness. This value implies that a strong relationship exists between the variables. The direction of the relationship indicates that the correlation is positive; implying that an increase in responsiveness was as a result of the adoption of human resource planning. Similarly displayed is the statistical test of significance (p-value) which makes possible the generalization of our findings to the study population. From the result obtained, the sig- calculated is less than significant level ( $p = 0.000 < 0.05$ ). Therefore, based on this finding the null hypothesis earlier stated is hereby rejected and the alternate upheld. Thus, there is a significant relationship between human resource planning and responsiveness of manufacturing companies in Rivers State.

**H<sub>02</sub>:** There is no significant relationship between human resource planning and flexibility of manufacturing companies in Rivers State.

Table 1 shows a Spearman rank order correlation coefficient (rho) of 0.800 on the relationship between human resource planning and flexibility. This value implies that a strong relationship exists between the variables. The direction of the relationship indicates that the correlation is positive; implying that an increase in responsiveness was as a result of the adoption of human resource planning. Similarly displayed is the statistical test of significance (p-value) which makes possible the generalization of our findings to the study population. From the result obtained, the sig- calculated is less than significant level ( $p = 0.000 < 0.05$ ). Therefore, based on this finding the null hypothesis earlier stated is hereby rejected and the alternate upheld. Thus, there is a significant relationship between human resource planning and flexibility of manufacturing companies in Rivers State.

## DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

The finding showed that there is a strong positive significant relationship between human resource planning of manufacturing companies in Rivers State. This finding corroborates the finding of Okonkwo, Okafor and Essell (2022) examined the effect of human resource planning on organizational performance of selected breweries in the South-East, Nigeria and found that manpower planning in the area of forecasting to anticipate employee number and skills/expertise level have significant positive effect on organizational performance. Anya, Umoh and Worlu (2017) evaluated the effect of human resource planning on organizational performance in the oil and gas industries located in Port Harcourt, Rivers State, Nigeria and

found significant positive relationship exists between human resource planning and organizational performance in the sector.

Furthermore, the current finding agrees with Olusanya, Awotungase and Ohadebere (2012) who examined the impact of effective human resource planning on firm's productivity by using Sterling Bank, Nigeria, PLC as the study area and found from the analysis of data that effective human resources planning has positive and strong correlation with organizational productivity. It was concluded that human resource planning is a necessary and sufficient condition for improving and sustaining productivity in the service industry such as banking. Also, Nwichi and Chukwuka (2017) examined manpower planning as a veritable tool for enhancing performance in the public sector organizations and found that effective regulatory capability on the part of government for necessary enforcement of manpower policies, will improve performance in the sector.

## CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

The study concludes that human resource planning positively enhances organisational agility of manufacturing companies in Rivers State. This implies that effective human resource planning enables manufacturing companies in Rivers State to quickly adapt to changing market demands and operational challenges. By aligning workforce capabilities with strategic goals, companies can ensure they have the right talent and resources to respond to shifts in production needs, customer requirements, and industry trends.

The study recommends that manufacturing companies in Rivers State should establish a robust human resource planning framework that includes regular skills assessments, workforce forecasting, and targeted training programs. This will ensure a continuous alignment of employee capabilities with the evolving needs of the business, enhancing organisational agility.

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