

Competitors Intelligence and Organizational Effectiveness of Foods and Beverages Manufacturing firms of South-South, Nigeria.

Aaron O. Agbeche¹, Karibo. B. Bagshaw² and A. O. Oparanma³
Department of Management, Rivers State University
streaps@yahoo.com

Abstract

Competitors' intelligence plays a great role in determining organizational effectiveness in food and beverages manufacturing firms in the South-South, Nigeria. The study looks at organizational effectiveness from goal attainment, strategic constituency satisfaction and systems alignment and went on to explain competitors' intelligence. The purpose for the study is to evaluate the influence of competitors' intelligence on organizational effectiveness. The study applies the competitive heterogeneity theory to aid in the explanation of the basic concepts of the study. In solving the problem of social loafing and problems of getting quality information, the quantitative method of data analysis was adopted; primary and secondary sources of data was used for the study and finally the study was aided with SPSS version 21.0. After a thorough review on competitor's intelligence and organizational effectiveness of food and beverage companies in the South-South Nigeria, the study found that an effective organization will be highly smart in applying their competitors' intelligence. Based on the findings, the study concludes that competitor's intelligence has a thoughtful influence on organizational effectiveness. Finally, the study recommend that managers should catalyze organizational effectiveness processes or behaviour through the building of prerequisite values of ethical and legal competitor's intelligence strategies which relates to corporate and business-level strategies.

Keywords: *Competitors Intelligence, Goal Attainment, Systems Alignment, Strategic Constituency Approach.*

Introduction

It is explicit that today's business environment is fraught with competitors. As such organizations are struggling to achieve competitive edge over one another. In line with this, it is agreed that organizations are facing complex performance drivers, such as the globalization of organizational capabilities, the need to pursue strategies of innovation, the need to build ever leaner, productive, but intelligently efficient and effective processes and to shift the focus of the organizations so that they become customer centric. With this happening, those responsible for people management need to be able to look into the organization in terms of its strategy, mission, business model and performance priorities and articulate how the management of the organization can serve to create value for the organization by capturing that values and leverage on it, whilst also protecting and preserving the interest of the organization.

The desire to have an effective organization is important. This is because if an organization is effective; it will serves as a measure of achieving short and long term goals of food and beverages companies by considering the expectations of beneficiaries and those of business appraisers (Baruh & Ramalho, 2006). Martz (2008) suggested that an effective organization is one that shows a large degree of appropriateness and adaptability or compromise between its elements. This concept is related to issues such as the ability of an organization to access and absorb resources and consequently achieve its aims (Federman, 2006). Furthermore, organizational effectiveness is seen as the extent to which an organization as a social system, given certain resources and means, fulfills its objectives without incapacitating its means and resources and without placing undue strain upon its members.

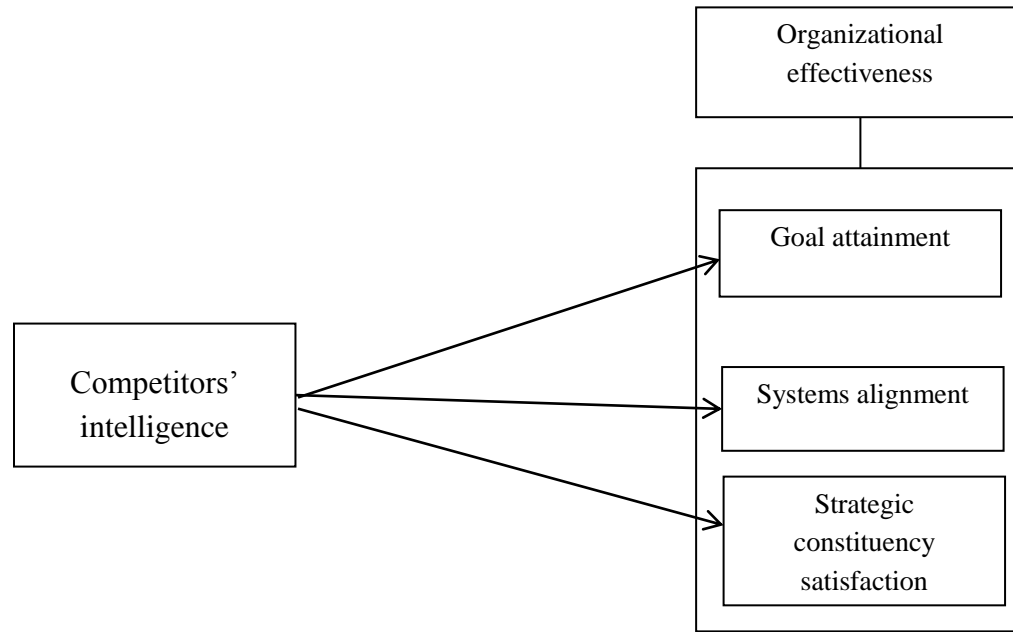
However, in the study of industrial organizations, effectiveness has been viewed and operationalized mainly in terms of productivity. In this connection, Thorndike cited in Baruch & Ramalho, (2006) has noted a general tendency on the part of personnel and industrial psychologists to accept as productivity, net profit, accomplishment as measures for organizational success. In literature however, there is not a single model of organizational effectiveness to fit all organizations. According to Balduck and Buelens (2008), the issue of effectiveness in organizations revolves round four main approaches: the system resource approach, the goal approach, the strategic constituency approach and the internal process approach.

On the other hand or for some decade now, there have been a lot of advocacy on the issue of competitors intelligence, these advocates are working tirelessly to get business to recognize the existence of the externally- oriented intelligence gathering, that is aimed at furthering the business advantages. Competitor intelligence is defined as the activities organizations employ to determine and understand their competitors, their strengths and weaknesses, and at the same time anticipate their actions and inactions. Viviers, Saayman, & Muller, (2005) stated by defining intelligence as the active use of information to guide decision making in order to reach the goals set by an organization. For them the business practice of competitors' intelligence is the turning of information into intelligence (Viviers et al., 2005). Competitors' intelligence (CI) is a systematic process of information gathering, processing, analysis and decomposition. The process is conducted within the context of the external environment of the organization activities, with the major goal of supplying the right information, at the right moment, in the correct structure, to the right person, in order to support the best decision possible.

Despite the increasing interest in the application of competitors intelligence to strategy process and on determining the effectiveness of organization, critical gaps emerge in the literature; there is little empirical work linking the impact of a firm's competitors intelligence activities on organizational effectiveness in Nigeria. Most literature addressing this issue has been either anecdotal and/or case-based research in the context of the developed. Thus, as one of the first studies of its kind in Nigeria, this study explores the relationship between competitors intelligence and organizational effectiveness of Foods and Beverages manufacturing firms in south-south, Nigeria. Thus, this study at the end will presents some of the first ever research findings on the state of competitors intelligence and organizational effectiveness in the Foods and Beverages manufacturing firms being a fastest growing and emerging markets like Nigeria. Hence, this article at the end will makes contribution in the aforementioned aspects.

The problem that necessitates this study is the challenges of getting high-quality and useful information on competitors among firms, and the subsequent inability to collect and analyze data that threatens the effectiveness of most players in the Foods and Beverages industry in South-South, Nigeria. As a result of this unbridled issues Kelikume (2015) said that profit margins are thinning out and organizations operations are being downsized along with its attendant staff redundancy and job losses. The purpose of the study is to evaluate the impact of competitors' intelligence on organizational effectiveness. And the specific objective of the study was to determine the influence of competitors' intelligence on goal attainment, systems alignment and strategic constituency satisfaction of Foods and Beverages manufacturing firms in South-South, Nigeria. In carrying out the study, three research hypotheses were stated, which include:

- HO₁: There is no significant relationship between competitors' intelligence and goal attainment in Foods and Beverages manufacturing firms in South-South, Nigeria.
- HO₂: There is no significant relationship between competitors' intelligence and Strategic Constituency satisfaction in Foods and Beverages manufacturing firms in South-South, Nigeria.
- HO₃: there is no significant relationship between competitors' intelligence and systems alignment in Foods and Beverages manufacturing firms in South-South, Nigeria



Researcher desk, 2020.
Figure 1.1: Conceptual framework

Theoretical Foundation

In search of theories of competitors' intelligence and organizational effectiveness a number of theories have been raised (Beckes, & Coan, 2011). This study looks at competitive heterogeneity theory. Competitive Heterogeneity studies why industries do not congregate on one best way of doing things. According to Hoopes et al. (2003), competitive heterogeneity refers to enduring and systematic (superior) differences in strategic positioning, and, in turn, performance, among relatively close rivals, where a firm that produces the largest gap between the value of a good or service to a buyer and the cost of producing that value holds an advantage, or superior position, relative to that of rivals.

Organizational Effectiveness

Organizational effectiveness points towards effective, prudent and strategic use of all the organizational resources, namely, human, financial and technological resources for creating competitive advantage. Organizational effectiveness also calls for creating sustainable growth and development by taking care of not only the share holders' expectations but also the expectations of other stake holders. It also means that management takes the right ethical decisions in the interest of all the stake holders. Organizational effectiveness can further be defined as the efficiency with which an association is able to meet its objectives. This means an

organization that produces a desired effect or an organization that is productive without waste. Organizational effectiveness is the capacity of an organization to produce the desired results with a minimum expenditure of energy, time, money, and human and material resources (Jorge Morales Pedraz, 2014).

Measuring organizational effectiveness can be an inexact science, since each individual entity will have a different list of criteria and priorities to weight and consider through self-assessment. Understanding a company's level of organizational effectiveness is important for several reasons: it serves as a check-in to see how well systems alignments are meeting an initial vision, it provides investors, donors, or employees with an idea of the company's strengths, and it highlights areas of ineffectiveness that can be the focus of improvements. In many cases, a business' success or failure cannot be measured by financial performance alone, this is because even a company that is currently making a profit may be ineffective if it is failing to meet the core values of its mission statement, attract and retain talented workers, and plan for the next generation of projects. Although looking at effectiveness completely is still impossible due to the disagreement in effectiveness indicators, for this article we looked at organizational effectiveness from goal attainment, Strategic Constituency Approach, and systems alignment.

System Alignment

The systems approach to effectiveness views the organization as an open system, whereby the organization acquires inputs, engages in transformation processes, and generates outputs. Organizational effectiveness involves the ability of an organization to obtain resources in order to ensure viability. Attracting required resources and maintaining a harmonious relationship with the environment is main issue of the system theory (Balduck & Baleens, 2009). The systems alignment pays attention to the transformation process and is dedicated to seeing to what extent the resources are officially used to give services or produce goods (Schermerhorn et. al., 2004).

Strategic Constituency satisfaction

It deals with the effect of the organization on the main stakeholders and their interests. Based on this approach, effectiveness refers to the minimal satisfaction of all of the strategic constituencies of the organization. Strategic constituency involves all the people that are somehow connected to the organization. These people may have different roles such as the users of the services or products of the organization, the resource providers, and the facilitators of the organization's output, the main supporters and the dependents of the organization. This approach assumes an exhaustive attitude toward effectiveness and evaluates the factors both in the environment and within the organization. In this outlook, the concept of social responsibility is taken into consideration (Ashraf & Kadir, 2012).

Goals Attainment

The first extensively used approach in organizational effectiveness is the goal approach. Its focus is on the output to figure out the essential operating objectives like profit, innovation and finally product quality (Schermerhorn, Osborn, & R. Osborn, 2004). There are some basic assumptions for the goal approach. One of them is that there should be a general agreement on the specific goals and the people involved should feel committed to fulfilling them. The next assumption is that the number of goals is limited and achieving them requires certain indispensable resources (Robbins, 2003).

Competitors' Intelligence

Choo (2000) states that competitors' intelligence primarily focuses on information about competitors. This competitors' information helps to anticipate competitive actions and inactions. Competitor's intelligence focuses on competitors, their capabilities, abilities, current activities, plans, and intentions (Gabber, 2007). In other words, the competitors' intelligence is an activity that the organization performs to determine and understand the competitors' activity, abilities, and weaknesses so that it can predict the future performance of the rivals (McGonagle and Vella, 2000). By analyzing the capabilities, vulnerabilities, intentions, actions and moves of the competitors, Competitive intelligence allows Foods and Beverages industry to anticipate market developments proactively and take immediate action.

Competitors Intelligence and Organizational Effectiveness

HO₁: There is no significant relationship between competitors' intelligence and goal attainment in Foods and Beverages manufacturing firms in South-South, Nigeria.

Amara, Soilen and Vriens (2012) in the study using the SSAV model to evaluate business intelligence software in marketing noted that CI enables senior managers in manufacturing firms of all sizes to make informed decisions about everything from marketing, R&D and investing tactics to long-term business strategies. Moreover, CI is considered a value-added concept that outperforms the top of business development, market research and strategic planning. Arrigo (2016) in his study deriving competitive intelligence in the social media in Italy suggests that the main output of the CI process should be the ability to make good forward-looking decisions in order to be the market leader. He went forward to recommend that firms that adapt and adjust their strategies based on this continuous flow of information will enhance their competitiveness relative to firms that do not attempt to adjust or adapt in that.

HO₂: There is no significant relationship between competitors' intelligence and Strategic Constituency satisfaction in Foods and Beverages manufacturing firms in South-South, Nigeria.

Yaya, Japheth; Chonna, Andy, Umunna and Osisanwo, Tope (2014) researched on Competitive intelligence as a tool for effective job performance in academic library established in the Universities, Polytechnics, Colleges of Education and other tertiary institutions in Nigeria. It employs descriptive research method to explain the application of competitive intelligence to the services rendered by academic library in any institution of higher learning. At present, libraries and information centers are continually developing innovative and creative services to keep pace with the fast changing society. ICT developments, particularly those providing easy access to information on the web, have considerably increased the expectations of library users, who expect the same speed, breadth, and comprehensiveness in information services provided by libraries. Hence, there is an urgent need for the introduction of competitive intelligence into the library and information science profession so as to enrich the services provided to our clients. Dhanya and Thomas (2010) who posit that intelligences on product quality, service quality and relative experience of customer perceived value help businesses in achieving a competitive edge over competitors and also achieve customer patronage.

HO₃: there is no significant relationship between competitors' intelligence and systems alignment in Foods and Beverages manufacturing firms in South-South, Nigeria.

Hajjat and Hajjat (2014) in their study corroborate this findings as they posits that value offered by the intelligence on product quality is composed of two components, extrinsic and intrinsic value; and second, organizational effectiveness is composed of two components, external and internal performance. Their results also revealed that the result of extrinsic value is more on external performance than internal and that the effect of intrinsic value is more on internal performance than external. The positive link between being intelligence on product offering and organisational effectiveness has also been reported by other researchers (Douglas & Judge, 2001; Almansour, 2012; Duggiral, Rajendran, & Anantharaman, 2008; Hendricks & Singhal 2001; Kaynak, 2003).

Methods

The research method is quantitative, the research philosophy is positivism, the research approach is deductive and the research design adopted in this study is the survey research design. The target population of this study is forty seven (47) Food and Beverages firms in the South-South, Nigeria. Primary and secondary data source was used to generate data for the study. Inferential statistical tool of Pearson Product Moment Correlation was applied to test the level of significance among variables. Finally the analysis was aided with SPSS version 21.0.

Findings

Result and Frequency Analysis

Table 1 Descriptive Statistics for organizational effectiveness

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Goal attainment	121	1.00	5.00	3.036	1.3742
Systems alignment	121	1.00	5.00	3.383	1.3240
Strategic constituency	121	1.67	5.00	3.333	1.1255
Valid N (listwise)	121				

SPSS 21.0 data Output, 2020

Table 1 above illustrates the descriptive statistics for organizational effectiveness of Foods and Beverages manufacturing firms in South-South, Nigeria with goal attainment with a mean score of 3.036, with a mean score of systems alignment 3.383 and strategic constituency approach with a mean score of 3.333 indicates that most of the respondents were on the moderate range of the measurement scale.

Table 2 Descriptive Statistics for the study variables

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Competitor’s intelligence	121	1.17	5.00	3.223	1.2958
Organizational effectiveness	121	1.44	5.00	3.251	1.2277

Source: SPSS 21.0 data Output, 2020

The data in Table 2 illustrates the descriptive statistics summary for the study variables which are competitors’ intelligence (Independent variable), organizational effectiveness (dependent variable).

The secondary data analysis was carried out using the Pearson product moment correlation tool at a 95% confidence interval. Specifically, the tests cover hypotheses HO₁ to HO₃ which were bivariate and all stated in the null form. We have relied on the Spearman Rank (*rho*) statistic to undertake the analysis. The 0.05 significance level is adopted as criterion for the probability of either accepting the null hypotheses at (p>0.05) or rejecting the null hypotheses at (p<0.05). We used this to answer research questions one to three. Correlation coefficient can range from -1.00 to +1.00. The value of -1.00 represents a perfect negative correlation while the value of +1.00 represents a perfect positive correlation. A value of 0.00 represents a lack of correlation.

Relationship between competitor’s and Organizational Effectiveness
Table 3: Correlation Matrix for competitors’ intelligence and organizational effectiveness

		Competitor’s intelligence	Goal attainment	Systems alignment	Strategic constituency	
Spearman’s rho	for competitors’ intelligence	Correlation	1.000	.926**	.969**	.828**
		Coefficient				
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.	.000	.000	.000
		N	121	121	121	121
	Goal attainment	Correlation	.926**	1.000	.968**	.882**
		Coefficient				
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.	.000	.000
		N	121	121	121	121
	Systems alignment	Correlation	.969**	.968**	1.000	.851**
		Coefficient				
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.	.000
		N	121	121	121	121
Strategic constituency	Correlation	.828**	.882**	.851**	1.000	
	Coefficient					
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000	.	
	N	121	121	121	121	

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

SPSS 21.0 Data Output, 2020

Table 3 illustrates the test for the three previously postulated bivariate hypothetical statements. The results show that for hypothesis one which says that there is no significant relationship between competitors’ intelligence and goal attainment at $r = 0.926$ and $p = 0.000 < 0.01$, hypothesis two which says that there is no significant relationship between competitors intelligence and systems alignment at $r = 0.969$ and $p = 0.000 < 0.01$, and hypothesis three which says that there is no significant relationship between competitors’ intelligence and strategic constituency approach at $r = 0.828$ and $p = 0.000 < 0.01$. Therefore, based on the results illustrated in Table 4.16, all previous bivariate null hypothetical statements are hereby rejected as the study finds that:

- H₁: There is a significant relationship between competitors’ intelligence and goal attainment of Foods and Beverages manufacturing firms in South-South, Nigeria.
- H₂: There is a significant relationship between competitors’ intelligence and systems alignment of Foods and Beverages manufacturing firms in South-South, Nigeria.
- H₃: There is a significant relationship between competitors’ intelligence and strategic constituency approach of Foods and Beverages manufacturing firms in South-South, Nigeria.

Discussion of Findings

The result of the analysis in this study shows that competitors’ intelligence has a significant relationship on goal attainment of Foods and Beverages manufacturing firms in South-South, Nigeria. Therefore, this result is consistent with the assertion of Dhanya and Thomas (2010) who posit that intelligences on

product quality, service quality and relative experience of customer perceived value help businesses in achieving a competitive edge over competitors and also achieve customer patronage. Their study also showed that product quality has a positive influence on corporate performance because consumers all over the world are gradually demanding better quality with lower prices.

Dirisu, Iyiola and Ibidunni (2013) in their study of Product Differentiation: A Tool of Competitive Advantage and Optimal Organizational Performance (A Study of Unilever Nigeria Plc) examined the influence of product differentiation as a tool of competitive advantage on the organizational performance of manufacturing manufacturing firms and posits that there is an existence of positive significant relationship between higher product quality and the sales growth of an organization. The same also applies to the relationship between new product innovation and customer satisfaction. And positive significant relationship between product design and sales growth of Unilever Nigeria Plc. The study however focused only on consumers/customers of the case study, whereas, the people that make these products should have also been surveyed to understand the desire they were trying to satisfy with the products.

Wenpin, Kuo-Hsien and Chen (2011) in their study, seeing through the eyes of a rival: competitor acumen based on rival-centric perceptions, investigated the constructs of competitor behaviour, or the extent to which a focal firm's assessment of a given rival's prioritization of its competitors reflects the rival's own view and posits that, to truly know an opponent, a firm needs to stand in that opponent's shoes and understand how it thinks or set priorities. Their study revealed that a company with a larger (or smaller) market share with a high level of competitor acumen with regard to a target competitor is likely to increase (or decrease) the share gap between itself and the competitor. This finding also corroborated the work of Asikhia and Binuyo (2012) in their study of competitive intensity as a moderator in customer orientation performance relationship in Nigeria. The study concluded that competitive intensity affect customer orientation and firm performance.

These results are consistent with the result of Ulrich, Younger, Brockbank and Ulrich (2013) and Banjoko (2006). They agree that competitive advantage in the global economy is driven by intangible assets that are tied to people and those assets must be managed with the same discipline, integrity, and transparency with which traditional capital assets were managed. This can be explained easily because people are the most valuable asset who put other assets to use. This is widely discussed in the literature. Again, the finding was supported by Wright et al. (2008) who observed that human resource practices leads to higher corporate performance and be the essence of sustained competitive advantages.

Kilduff, Elfenbein and Staw (2010) in consonance with this finding investigated competitors' relationships, determined by their proximity, attributes, and prior competitive interactions, influence the subjective intensity of rivalry between them, which in turn affects their competitive behaviour. In their study, rivalry was construed as largely a dyadic, relational phenomenon. The study found strong support for the idea that similarity in geographic location fosters rivalry. They also found that prior competitive interactions play a substantial role in rivalry formation which in turn determine their competitive capability and influence their competitive behaviours and effectiveness.

Onuoha (2013) in his study titled, factors militating against the global competitiveness of manufacturing firms in Nigeria, highlights the major challenges of the sector to include: failing and pitiable infrastructures; high production costs; unpredictable government policies, stark competition from imported goods; limited scope of operation; financial limitations; among a countless of other obstacles. Though the challenge of imported goods seems not to be that pronounced in the flour milling industry, as there seems to be negligible quantum of imported finished flour based products, other impediments are however very visible in the industry. Onuoha's posits that despite a lot of government policies and incentives on entrepreneurship development generally in Nigeria and on the

manufacturing sector in specific terms, they are yet to add much value to the nation's Gross Domestic Products or compete internationally therefore appears plausible.

Conclusion

From the data analysis and research findings, the study concludes that a significant positive relationship between competitors' intelligence and organizational effectiveness. Foods and Beverages firms need to demonstrate and hold on to competitors for it will enhance their chance of being effective. Firms need to have better strategies for being effective and ensuring the effective utilization of information.

Recommendations

From the foregoing findings and conclusions, the study recommends that relevant Food and Beverages firms in South-South, Nigeria should pay special attention to the drivers of competitive behaviour such as awareness, motivation and capability. Foods and Beverages manufacturing firms in the South-South should constantly seek intelligence and scientifically or honestly determine their position in the competitive industry. Their competitive behaviours in terms of moves, actions and reactions should be based on sound understanding of competitors' capabilities and antecedents.

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