

MENTORING AND CONTINUOUS PRODUCTION OF BAKERIES OPERATING IN RIVERS STATE

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Abstract

This study examines the relationship between mentoring and continuous production of bakeries in Rivers State. This study adopted Cross-sectional survey research design. The population of the study consisted 380 respondents from the bakeries in Port Harcourt. The study adopted simple random sampling technique. The structured questionnaire was used for data collection for this study. Descriptive tools such as the mean and standard deviation were used in assessing the univariate distributions for the three variables. The inferential statistical tool, the Spearman's rank order correlation coefficient (Rho), was used in the test for the bivariate hypotheses of the study using SPSS version 22. The study revealed that there is a significant relationship between mentoring and continuous production of bakeries in Rivers State. The study concluded that there is a positive relationship between mentoring and continuous production of bakeries in Rivers State. The study recommended among others that bakeries should implement formal mentoring programs to transfer knowledge and improve employee skills, thereby enhancing both production and financial stability.

Keywords: Mentoring, Continuous Production, Organisational Survival, Succession Planning

Introduction

The objective of succession planning is to ensure that the organization is prepared to fill key positions when the incumbents leave for any reason. For employees, succession planning provides useful information about the direction their career is likely to take if they continue to work in the organization. Furthermore, succession planning is based on information about managers gleaned from supply and demand forecasts talent audits and performance and potential reviews. To keep track of their top talent, many organizations maintain a talent pool. A talent pool is a list of employees who have been identified as having high potential for advancement, usually because they are top performers in their current positions. The employees in a talent pool are those whom the organization is especially interested in retaining and developing. Charan, (2001) argues that it is essential for organizations to train successors before the vacancies are created. Ensuring that employees in the talent pool are considered when job openings occur is one tactic for successful long-term staffing of the organization (Wener, et al, 2012; Eshiteti, Okaka, Maragia, Odera, & Akerele, 2013).

However, none existence of succession plan can pose a great challenge to strategic human resource management in situations where: employee retirement is at hand and a replacement is needed; there have been redundancies and dismissals of employees; sudden demise or physical medical incapacitation of employee (caused by accidents or ill health); unsignalled resignation of employee; and during promotion period. When faced with situation such as any of these, replacement from outside becomes the only option (Hills, 2007). In every sense, it is essential for any goal oriented organization to ensure that successors are available in their appropriate number, places, and time to fill key positions when the incumbents leaves for any reason. It is therefore of utmost importance for success-seeking organization to develop strategic succession plan for the organization as these will help sustain the corporate structure in a competitive environment. Therefore, for an organization to realize its goals, appropriate strategies for retention and succession plan are sine-qua-non for enhanced performance and organizational survival. Effective succession management provides

long-term sustainability, guarantees the survival of business and ensures capable and trained officials are in the organization. Many of the world's renowned organizations with the most longevity have their success rooted in effective succession management; these great companies begin planning their exit strategies right at the start of their appointment (Oluabunwa 2015). Employees are bound to leave the organization through departures or retirement therefore; organization needs candidates who are qualified for key roles when positions become vacant. Not only does an organization lose skills when an employee departs, but it also loses valuable organizational knowledge. Succession management not only helps to ensure that there are candidates willing and able to step into the role of a departing employee, but also support strategies for knowledge transfer before a departure occur. (Flynn 2014).

Mentoring has long been recognized as a vital practice in ensuring the smooth transition of skills, knowledge, and leadership qualities from one generation of employees to the next. Through mentoring, experienced employees can pass down their tacit knowledge, ensuring that the organization retains critical insights even as older workers retire. Studies discover that mentoring significantly enhances employee development and leadership readiness, thereby contributing to a more sustainable organizational framework (Dabale & Sefora, 2020). In the context of bakeries in Rivers State, the mentoring process can be particularly beneficial, as it facilitates the seamless transfer of industry-specific skills, such as recipe management, production techniques, and customer service standards, from seasoned bakers to apprentices or junior staff members. This mentorship not only aids in preserving institutional knowledge but also fosters a culture of continuous learning, collaboration, and innovation within the bakery.

Furthermore, mentoring helps organizations build a strong internal leadership pipeline. Research reveals that businesses with structured mentoring programs report higher levels of employee engagement, job satisfaction, and leadership effectiveness (Noe, 2017). For bakeries, where operational consistency and product quality are critical to market success, mentoring ensures that future leaders are adequately prepared to take on key roles within the organization. Moreover, mentoring relationships promote a sense of loyalty and commitment among employees, which is essential for reducing turnover and maintaining workforce stability. Retention efforts are crucial in succession planning as they ensure that key employees remain within the organization, thus preserving critical skills and reducing the costs associated with high employee turnover. Retention initiatives often focus on creating a work environment that values and supports employees, offering competitive compensation, growth opportunities, and a positive workplace culture. Studies have discovered that retention efforts directly impact organizational performance, as companies with low turnover rates tend to perform better in terms of productivity, innovation, and profitability (Kraimer et al., 2020). For bakeries in Rivers State, focusing on retention can ensure that employees with specialized skills, such as master bakers or production managers, remain committed to the company, thereby enhancing operational stability.

It is imperative to note that employees leave their jobs either voluntary (retirement or pursue new aspirations) or involuntary (relieve of appointment, death). Organizations are therefore, faced with vacancies in leadership or inadequacy or lack of competent and capable successor to fill the vacancies. Organizations are to act now and begin to plan for succession before top managers are ready for retirement (Korn, 2007). Charan, et al. (2001) argue that it is essential for organizations to train successors before the vacancies are created. Manpower planning is argued to be a straightforward and direct concept, which does not deal with individual or any particular employee (Ekamper, 1996). While on the other hand, Succession Planning is a sub-level approach regarding individual employees on an individual basis, should the incumbent vacate his position, which is uncertain and probably indefinite (Harter, 2008; Landeta, et al., 2009). However, it is therefore essential, for organizations to survive, there is need to plan for succession of older (outgoing) employees (Hazarika, 2009). Succession planning is the process that ensures the stability of tenure of personnel. It is perhaps best understood as any effort designed to ensure the continued effective performance of an organization, division, department or workgroup by making provision for the

development replacement and long-term retention of talented individuals (Akani, 2015). Management succession planning is the process of assessing and auditing the talent in the organization in order to answer three fundamental questions. First, are there enough potential successors available? Second, are they good enough? Third, do they have the right skills and competences for the future? (Armstrong, 2009). Therefore, securing and retaining skilled employees plays an important role in management succession plan that would not only focus on those who might be candidates for current positions but also, attempt to plan for possible changes in those positions as well as the promotion and development needs of subordinates (Milkovich & Boundreau, 1988; Obadan, 2013; Akani, 2015; Fapohumda, 2015).

Research has discovered that organizations that prioritize employee satisfaction experience higher levels of employee retention, innovation, and profitability (Locke, 2019). In bakeries, where the quality of products and services is directly tied to employee performance, ensuring that workers are satisfied with their jobs can lead to better product quality, customer satisfaction, and operational efficiency. Additionally, employee satisfaction influences the organization's ability to attract and retain top talent. Studies reveal that companies with high levels of employee satisfaction are viewed as employers of choice, attracting skilled workers who are more likely to remain loyal to the organization (Bakker et al., 2020). For bakeries in Rivers State, fostering employee satisfaction through competitive wages, recognition programs, and opportunities for career advancement can result in a more stable and motivated workforce, ensuring the long-term success and sustainability of the business.

Studies on organizational survival have frequently distinguished between various measures of this phenomenon. In his model, Mott (1972) identifies three measures by which organization mobilizes center of power. They are: productivity, adaptability and flexibility. Ibe and Olori (2016) gave the measures of organizational survival to include adaptability and innovation. In his assertion, Malik, et al., (2011) argued that organizational survival is an abstract concept and is basically impossible to measure. Instead of measuring organizational survival, he suggested that an organization determines proxy measures, which will be used to represent their effectiveness. In it may be included such things as efficiency of management, performance of employees, core competencies, number of people served, types and sizes of population segments served and so on since every employee in a company contributes to organizational survival, taking into account, skills, experience, motivation and rank. Other scholars included different measures such as productivity, profits, growth, turnover, stability and cohesion.

Methodology

This study adopted Cross-sectional survey research design. The population of the study consisted 380 respondents from the bakeries in Port Harcourt. The study adopted simple random sampling technique. The structured questionnaire was used for data collection for this study. Descriptive tools such as the mean and standard deviation were used in assessing the univariate distributions for the three variables. The inferential statistical tool, the Spearman's rank order correlation coefficient (Rho), was used in the test for the bivariate hypotheses of the study, while the partial correlation technique was used in the test for the multivariate hypotheses of the study using SPSS version 22.

Research Hypothesis

H₀₁: There is no significant relationship between mentoring and continuous production of bakeries operating in Rivers State.

Mentoring

Mentoring is the process of using specially selected and trained individuals to provide guidance, pragmatic advice, and continuing support that will help the person or persons allocated to them to learn and develop. Mentoring is a method of helping people to learn and develop, as

distinct from coaching which is typically observing employee in action and then provide feedback and guidance for how that employee can improve his or her interaction skills in the future. It is relatively directive means of increasing people's competence. Mentors prepare employees to perform better in the future and groom them for career advancement (Armstrong, 2009). The executives and managers who coach, advice, and encourage employees of lesser rank are called mentors. Mentors often assist individuals in developing leadership capabilities by helping them obtain assignments that will foster on-the-job learning. A mentor is a corporate executive or manager who supervises, coaches, and guide selected lower-level employees by introducing them to the right people and generally being their organizational sponsor (Bateman & Snell, 2011).

According to Agulanna, Edward and Awujo (2005) mentors provide to those assigned to them the following:

- (i) coaching In specific skills
- (ii) (ii) advice in drawing up self – development programme
- (iii) general help with learning programmes
- (iv) guidance on how to acquire the necessary skills and knowledge to do a new job;
- (v) help in tracking projects by putting the trainee in the right direction, that is helping them to help themselves.

When mentoring is more formalized, however, both the mentor and the mentee understand that they are engaging in activities intended to benefit the long-term development of the employee. Mentoring can increase employees' competencies, achievement, and understanding of the organization. Therefore, if leadership skills cannot be developed and improved through mentoring, all an organization can do is to search for good leaders and hope to find them somewhere.

Results

H₀₁: There is no significant relationship between mentoring and continuous production of bakeries operating in Rivers State.

Table 4.3.1: Correlation Analysis Showing the relationship between mentoring and continuous production of bakeries operating in Rivers State.

		Correlations		
			Mentoring	Continuous production
Spearman's rho	Mentoring	Correlation Coefficient	1.000	.712**
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.	.000
		N	162	162
	Continuous production	Correlation Coefficient	.712**	1.000
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.
		N	162	162

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

Source: Researcher survey data (2024) via SPSS Output V.22

H₀₁: There is no significant relationship between Mentoring and Continuous production in bakeries operating in Rivers State. The result reveals a significant relationship between Mentoring and Continuous production ($\rho = .712$, $p = 0.000$). and based on the decision rule of $p < 0.05$ for null rejection; we reject the null hypothesis and accept the alternative hypothesis: *That there is a significant relationship between Mentoring and Continuous production in bakeries operating in Rivers State.*

Discussion of Findings

Mentoring and Continuous Production

The results of H01 indicate a significant relationship between mentoring and the continuous production of bakeries operating in Rivers State, as evidenced by the correlation coefficient ($\rho=0.712$) and the p-value of $p = 0.000$. The correlation coefficient of 0.712 suggests a strong positive relationship between mentoring and the ongoing production capacity of bakeries, meaning that as mentoring programs become more prevalent or effective, and the ability of bakeries to maintain continuous production increases. This finding is statistically significant because the p-value of 0.000 is less than the significance level of 0.05. According to the decision rule, when the p-value is lower than 0.05, we reject the null hypothesis (which asserts that there is no significant relationship) and accept the alternative hypothesis, which asserts that a significant relationship does indeed exist between mentoring and continuous production.

This result aligns with the work of Mundia and Iravo (2014), who argued that mentoring programs are essential for enhancing employee performance. Their study suggested that when employees are involved in mentoring relationships, they benefit from knowledge transfer, skill development, and career guidance, all of which can significantly improve their work output and long-term career growth. In the context of bakeries in Rivers State, these findings support the notion that mentoring programs provide employees with the tools, knowledge, and encouragement needed to maintain high levels of performance, which in turn supports the continuous production of bakery goods.

By facilitating mentoring, bakeries can foster an environment where employees are motivated to perform at their best, remain engaged, and are continuously improving their skills. This not only enhances individual productivity but also contributes to the bakery's overall operational efficiency, ensuring that production processes are maintained smoothly and without disruption. Furthermore, mentoring programs can help employees manage challenges and adapt to changes, ensuring that they remain competent and confident in their roles, even during periods of high demand or operational stress.

Thus, the strong correlation between mentoring and continuous production underscores the importance of investing in employee development through structured mentorship. This not only benefits employees but also helps bakery businesses in Rivers State sustain their production operations and remain competitive in a fast-evolving market.

Conclusion

The study concludes that: Mentoring, retention efforts, and management development significantly influence the continuous production and solvency of bakeries in Rivers State. The findings suggest that bakeries that invest in these human resource practices tend to experience improved operational efficiency and financial stability. Succession planning plays a vital role in the survival of bakeries. Effective succession planning ensures continuity by preparing employees for future leadership roles, which ultimately supports the long-term sustainability of the organization.

Recommendations

Based on the study findings, the following recommendations are proposed:

1. Bakeries should implement formal mentoring programs to transfer knowledge and improve employee skills, thereby enhancing both production and financial stability.
2. It is recommended that bakeries establish clear succession plans to ensure smooth leadership transitions, which will safeguard the survival of the business in the long term.

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