The Outcomes of Logistic and Human Capital Outsourcing on Firm's Performance

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Abstract

This study examined the relationship between inter-industry outsourcing and firm's performance. Three firms in Agbara, Igbesa and Ota, were chosen for the study. An ex post - factor design was adopted and the primary data was collected with the use of structured questionnaire. Ninety copies of the questionnaire were administered and 90 retrieved representing a 100% return rate and cronbach Alpha was 0.0734. Multiple regression was used to analyze the hypotheses, where the findings revealed that logistics outsourcing and human capital significantly affected firm's performance at $p<0.05$. The study concluded that inter-industry outsourcing affects firm performance. It is therefore recommended that firms should outsource non-core functions and also hire competent staff to interface with customers.

Keywords: Outsourcing, Logistics, Performance, Competence, Strategy

Introduction

The business terrain over the years have become more competitive and innovative, totally driven by technology, leading to high cost of doing business. This brings about the challenge for many organizations to try to reduce the cost of business and this may likely be achieved through the adoption of inter-industry strategic outsourcing.

In today's business environment, the competitive and demanding forces make participants to become active, more focused towards being efficient and to be innovative to remain ahead of the competition. (Jabir and Jawab, 2018)

Outsourcing appears to be one of the major strategies that companies utilize in order to remain competitive in the current dynamic environment. Several organizations and institutions have started outsourcing some of the value chain activities in their firms to third parties.

Many organizations may have been performing poorly in terms of activities and profit resulting from global competition and high cost of doing business. For organizations to remain in the global market, there may be need for strategic repositioning and reduction in the operational cost of doing business. Studies according to (Abdul-Halim & Che-Ha, 2010; Sheehan & Cooper, 2011) have shown that inter-industry strategic outsourcing may be one of the strategic ways an organization may use to reduce cost.

According to Ezekwesili and Okoye (2019), Outsourcing was expressed as a management practice which may involve the transfer of job responsibility from an organization, or from a part of the industry to outside of the business. It may be seen as direct transfer of jobs done by employees of an organization to external agents or people.

Outsourcing according to Hashai (2016) has become an important strategy for most firms especially manufacturing firms. This is as a result of intensified global competitiveness from developed and developing nations to focus on cost effectiveness while directing resources to improve product quality and innovation.

Statement of the Problem

Extant literature has shown that many organizations attempting to manage all dimensions of their business operations suffer loss of profits and low productivity owing to high cost of executing all business operations. Inability to outsource logistics aspects of the business has been found to constitute a major constraint to business performance (Hammer, 2001; Supo & Wale, 2013; Kotabe, Murray, & Javalagi, 1998) quoted by (Gilley & Rasheed, 2000).

In the same vein, staff competence appears to be critical to firm performance. Many organizations do not have the capacity to employ high skilled workers, suffer in terms of low production. To deal with this constraint, the firm may have to outsource for competent and high skilled staff, which then allows the firm to concentrate on their core area.

Therefore, this study will assess to what extent outsourcing these two areas logistics and competency of employees will aid the organizations towards increasing their profit, market share and overall growth of the firm.

Concept of Outsourcing

Most organizations engage in outsourcing for economic or strategic reasons. Economically, outsourcing is attractive when the tasks being outsourced can be performed by the provider at a lower total cost. Strategically, outsourcing is attractive when organizations have capacity or capability constraints that prevent them from servicing a market.

On the other hand, Outsourcing is referred by (Aubert, Rivard & Patry, 2004), as the handover of an activity to an external supplier as an alternative to internal production Outsourcing known as a good technique for management can be defined as the strategy of using outside resources to implement activities traditionally managed by internal staff. Kolawole and Agha (2015) defined "outsourcing as a decision by organizations to have an external supplier to perform a function that would have otherwise been performed internally by organization staff". Oyedijo, (2012) says that "Beyond a good knowledge of the basic characteristics of major strategic alternatives, a company must determine which of the strategies to use to achieve maximum performance. Different companies in Nigeria practise one or a combination of strategies.

The effects of outsourcing as a strategy on firms' performance are not completely clear. Previous outsourcing studies (Gholami & Rashidi (2012); Hayes (2000), presented a positive effect. Those of Isaksson &Lantz (2015); Yeboah (2013) and Gilley, Greer & Rasheed (2004); found out no effect or relationship between outsourcing and performance showing contradictory results; while some claim a positive relationship between outsourcing and performance outcomes. Akinbola, Ogunnaike and Ojo (2013) found that outsourcing so far has positively affected performance. Others report no significant or even negative effects.

Strategic Outsourcing

Otokiti (2007) says "Outsourcing is the practice of hiring functional experts to handle business units, sub units that are outside organization firms and in core business or sector. It is a method of staff augmentation without adding to head count." Outsourcing is performing some activities in the value chain in one firm or country and linking them to work done elsewhere. Outsourcing enables an organization to focus on certain activities in the value chain and delegate other activities in the chain to other specialized firms. To a large extent, outsourcing is cost driven as companies, organizations and firms search for high productivity through lower cost quality production input, labour, raw materials and energy. An analysis of the value chain and the firm's core competences must be taken into account when deciding which of the different activities of the firm to outsource. since outsourcing might not lead to cost savings, it can also focus a firm's attention on those activities which are of vital importance, encouraging a greater degree of flexibility on the part of the firm as well as a desire to take advantage of the capabilities of specialized suppliers and so obtain a greater degree of quality than would be possible if the processes in question were developed internally.

Strategic outsourcing spreads the companies risk for component and technology developments among a number of suppliers. It has become a major strategy to leverage internal technical capabilities and to tap the rapid response and innovative capabilities of small enterprises. It can either open new opportunities and lead to success, or end in disaster. One of the primary advantages of outsourcing is that it enables a company to respond quickly to changing market needs. Ashank and Joydeep (2005), talking about costs, averred that outsourcing is not about firing people in the home country and hiring people in the outsourcing vendor's country and saving a big part of the labour costs. it is more about reallocating human as well as financial resources.

The key strategic question which the firm should pose to itself when considering whether or not to outsource is whether or not it can achieve a sustainable competitive advantage carrying out the task internally. For this reason the firm should be capable of identifying which of its activities it can afford to outsource without facing unnecessary risks which could have negative effects on its competitive advantage (Quinn, 2000).

Logistics and Outsourcing

The concept of logistic outsourcing is to help in the flexibility of the firm owing to the changing environment of different markets. (Ahimbisibwe, Nangoli, & Tusiime, 2012).

Logistic outsourcing is an integral strategic alternative to manufacturing companies and many firms have taken to outsourcing their logistics to handle different areas of transport, warehousing and distribution. Globalization has also helped to quicken the emergence of new products and services, which has given rise to demand in both international and domestic markets. (Freytag, Clarke & Evald. 2012; Fabbe- Costes, Jahre, & Roussat, 2009). Many large manufacturing companies have outsourced all or part of their logistics activities to logistics providers to help in operational efficiency (Qureshi, Dinesh & Pradeep, 2007).

Firm's Performance

A firm's performance is measured in different ways depending on the intent. Whatever criteria is used, firm performance is the output of the organization. Kotabe, Murray and Javalagi (1998) identifies three types of performance measures as necessary components in any outsourcing performance measurement system. These measures are; financial measures and quality measures. Organizational performance here is seen as the output of the organization measured in terms of profitability. While profitability is measured in terms of cost savings. Focus on core business will increase efficiency, invariably reducing money spent on fixed assets otherwise, cost restructuring. This will result in reduction in tax paid (tax benefit) and increase turnover (sales).

Organization performance may be measured in terms of production output, profitability, sales turnover, market share, and so on. It is the degree to which the organization attain a set of expected targets that are in line with its vision and mission. The main determinant of organization performance comprises of access to right knowledge and skills, proper planning, innovation and flexibility. Organization performance measures can be divided into two categories which are financial and non-financial measures. Financial measures consist of return on equity, profit and return on assets, market share while non-financial performance measures consist of use of resources, innovation and quality of service delivery, strategic focus and employee development. (Gathungu & Mwangi 2012),

In tracing the relevance of outsourcing to organizational performance, a number of authors including (Quinn, 2000); Yalokwu, 2006 & Dominguez, 2006) submitted that, outsourcing can improve organizational performance when applied as an organizational strategy. Outsourcing one's business processes can improve one's competitive edge (Dominguez, 2006). The reason behind this is that outsourcing tends to reduce business costs (Yalokwu, 2006; Dominguez, 2006; Kroes & Ghosh, 2010).

We can say that organization performance is a process of accomplishing the pre-established goals by raising efficiency, quality, innovation, cost, productivity, and profitability from the customer aspect and also from the organizational perspective.

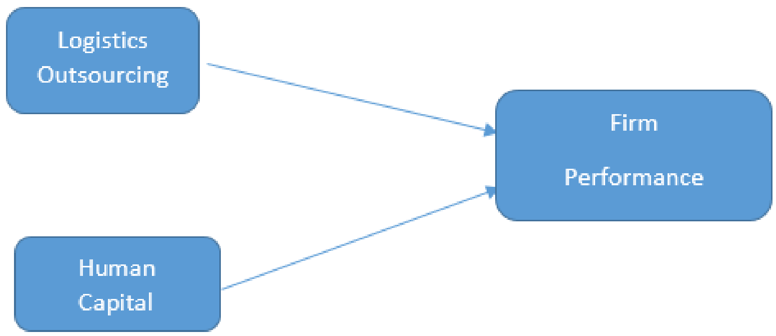
Human Capital and Outsourcing

Staff competence is the sum total of a systematic approach to achieving a set goal of an organization. Griffin in Onah (2014), Onyishi, Eme and Emeh (2012) described staff competence as an act of organizational activities directed towards attracting, developing and maintaining an effective workforce. According to Armstrong, Lyton and Pareek in okafor (2012), staff competence is a result of strategic approach to managing personnel workplace culture and environment. Anyim, Ikemefuna and Mbah in (Ezekwesili & Okoye 2019) argued, that from experience permanent employees who have stake in an organization tend to show more drive and commitment to their duties.

Figure 1

Conceptual Effect model

Model 1



Model

The model for this research will be:

$Y = \alpha + (x_1) + (x_2) + e$

Y = organizational performance

$\propto$ = Constant

x_1 = Logistics Outsourcing

.x_2 =Human Capital

e = error term

Transaction Cost Theory

This theory was derived from (Coase, 1937) theory of the firm. The theory posits that production internally generated by a firm is optimized if cost of external production through market exchange is greater. The Transaction Cost Theory (TCT) is generally accepted as a useful framework for analyzing logistics outsourcing (Aubert, Rivard & Patry, 1996). TCT is relevant to this work as we try to find the extent to which outsourcing affects a firm's performance.

To put it simply, an activity is outsourced if a total profit after increasing income and reducing costs is higher than the total transaction costs of outsourcing.

Resource-Based Theory

The theory was propounded by Wernerfelt (1984). It believes that firms look internally to find sources of competitive advantage through use of their resources. The model suggests that a sustainable competitive advantage counts on the market position and anticipates that companies that have fewer internal skills and resources are more feasible to outsource its activities.

This theory is relevant as it looks at the staff competence and how it affects the performance of an organization.

Empirical Review

In Nigeria outsourcing represents major parts of business dealings of hotels. Hotels outsource power management, generator maintenance and raw materials procurement because product range are large and barrier to entry is low in order to compete effectively, organizations considers cheap means of delegating responsibilities to the outsourcing vendor that will make them realize substantial profit. Gilley and Rasheed (2000) examined outsourcing and its effects on firm's performance. The study examined the extent to which outsourcing of both peripheral and near core tasks influences firm's financial and non-financial performance.

Supo and Wale (2013) studied outsourcing strategy and organizational performance: empirical evidence from Nigerian manufacturing sector. The study adopted a stratified random sampling technique to arrive at the 120 sample size for the study. Questionnaire was administered and the data obtained were analyzed using regression analysis. The findings revealed that firms that outsource experience reduce average cost, improve service quality and saves time. The study recommends that companies that adopt outsourcing strategy should always monitor the contactors activities in order to ensure compliance with best practices.

Akinbola, Ogunnaike and Ojo (2013) did a research regarding the effects of outsourcing strategies on the organizational performance of fast foods industry in Lagos, problematic of this study based on how the fast food industry in Nigeria was enduring very rapid innovation and explosive growth. 300 questionnaires were administered to 10 chosen fast food organization in Lagos to get primary data that conducted correct research questions and three hypotheses were tested appropriately. The study found that outsourcing so far has positively affected the performance of fast food industry and the empirical findings determined that the industry has benefited from outsourcing its business process to reduce cost operation.

Suraju and Hamed (2013) examined outsourcing services as a strategic tool for organizational performance in the Nigerian food, beverage, and tobacco industry used two estimators: naïve estimator and the weighted estimator Proposed by Dehejia and Wahba and modified by Nanfosso and Mbassi were used for the analysis. Data were obtained from the questionnaires administered for period of two weeks to cross-sections of 15 companies in food, beverage, and tobacco industry in Nigeria, as well as secondary data extracted from the files of statistical and fiscal declarations of these companies contained in the fact-book of Nigeria Stock Exchange (NSE) for the period of 2000–2010.

At the end of the research, they realized that, the more an organization outsourced, the higher its organizational growth. Also Akewushola, and Elegbede (2013) examined the axiomatic relationship between outsourcing strategy and organizational performance in Nigeria manufacturing sector, adopted a stratified sampling technique to arrive at 120 sample elements for the study. Some of the top and middle level managers of Cadbury Nigeria Plc and Nestle Foods Plc responded to the questionnaire administered and were interviewed to further elicit information on the key variables. Data obtained were analyzed using Regression analysis, the researchers realized that, firms that outsource experience reduced average cost, increased sales turnover and profitability, enhance expertise, improve service quality, reduce staff strength, streamline the production process, reduced administrative burden and save time for core activities.

Methodology

The design used was the Ex-post facto design and the size was 99 managers in 3 manufacturing and packaging companies in Ota and Agbara areas of Ogun Stahe , Nigeria. The census method was used to identify the respondents and the questionnaire administered.

Results

Convergent Validity Results

S/N	Variable	No of Items	AVE
1.	Organisational Performance	5	0.751
2.	Logistics	2	0.658
3.	Cost reduction	3	0.700
4	Human Capital	3	0.698
5	Customer Service	2	0.711
		Overall AVE	**0.704**

For this study, content validity was used to assess the operationalization of the construct against the relevant content domain. The principal component analysis extraction method was used to determine the construct validity.

Reliability Test Results

S/N	Variables	Cronbach Alpha	Composite Reliability
1.	Organisational Performance	0.710	0.911
2.	Logistics	0.727	0.909
3.	Cost reduction	0.712	0.922
4	Human Capital	0.744	0.910
5	Customer Service	0.781	0.910
Overall Average Alpha for the instrument (∝)		**0.734**	**0.912**

Cronbach Alpha and Composite Reliability were used in the study to determine the research instrument's reliability. Cronbach Alpha's overall average is 0.734 >0.70. This implies that the measurement items are internally consistent. Similarly, composite reliability's overall average is 0.912 >0.80. This metric assesses the internal consistency of the research instrument's scale of items.

Results and Discussions

Ho: Inter-strategic outsourcing has no significant influence on firms' performance.

Table 2 Multiple Regression Coefficients of Hypothesis One

Coefficients

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
	(Constant)	1.503	.400		3.759	.000
1	Logistics Outsourcing	.309	.087	.342	3.560	.001
	Cost Reduction	.214	.069	.297	3.088	.003

Dependent Variable: Firms' Performance

Model Summary and ANOVA

R-value	.399
R-Squared	.159
Adjusted R-Squared	.142
F-value	9.087
P-value	.000

Dependent Variable: Firms' Performance

Predictors: (Constant), Logistics Outsourcing, Cost Reduction,

Table 2 depicts the multiple regression results of hypothesis one, which focused on the relationship between strategic outsourcing (Logistics Outsourcing, Cost Reduction) and firms' performance. The level and degree of relationship between strategic outsourcing and firms' performance were determined by the path coefficient values; the r-square determines the level of variance in firms' performance as explained by strategic outsourcing, while the p-value determines the level of probability. Therefore, the probability can be regarded as significant if the value is less than 0.05. Sequel to Table 2, the finding shows that inter-strategic outsourcing (Logistics Outsourcing, Cost Reduction) has a significant influence on the firms' performance at (R=399, R-squared =0.159 and p-value= 0.000<0.05). The coefficient of 0.399 suggests a fair degree of relationship between inter-strategic outsourcing and firms' performance. The R^2 value of 0.159 suggests that a 15.9% variance in inter-strategic outsourcing can be explained by firms' performance.

The model also shows the estimate of β values and gives an individual contribution of each predictor (inter-strategic outsourcing dimensions) to the model. The β value describes the relationship between firms' performance with each predictor. The model suggests that when all the predictors (logistics outsourcing, and cost reduction) are kept constant at zero, the firms' performance will be at 1.503. At one unit change in logistics, outsourcing will lead to 0.309 increases in firms' performance. Similarly, a one-unit change in cost reduction will lead to a 0.214 increase in firms' performance.

Ho: Human capital has no significant influence on a firm's performance.

Table 3 Multiple Regression Coefficients of Hypothesis Two

Coefficients						
Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	T	Sig.
		B	**Std. Error**	**Beta**		
	(Constant)	1.262	.487		2.594	.011
1	Human Capital	.340	.121	.264	2.802	.006
	Customer Service	.246	.085	.273	2.890	.005

Dependent Variable: Firms' Performance

Model Summary and ANOVA

R-value	.381
R-Squared	.146
Adjusted R-Squared	.128
F-value	8.176
P-value	.001
Dependent Variable: Firms' Performance	
Predictors: (Constant), Human Capital, Customer Service	

The multiple regression results of hypothesis two, which looked at the link between human capital, customer service) and firm performance, are shown in Table 3. Sequel to Table 3, the finding shows that human capital, customer service has a significant influence on the firms' performance at (R=381, R-squared =0.16 and p-value= 0.000<0.05). The coefficient of 0.381 suggests a fair degree of relationship between staff competence and firms' performance. The R^2 value of 0.146 suggests that a 14.6% variance in staff competence can be explained by firms' performance.

The results of the multiple regression analysis revealed that human capital (t=2.802, p<0.05) and customer service (t=2.890, p<0.05) are predictors of firms' performance. Specifically, out of the two dimensions of staff competence used in this study, it was discovered that customer service has the most predictive value at the standardized coefficient (beta) value of 0.273.

Summary, Conclusions and Recommendations

The result of multiple regression for hypothesis one, which focused on the relationship between inter-strategic outsourcing (Logistics Outsourcing, Cost Reduction) and firms' performance. It was shown that inter-strategic outsourcing (Logistics Outsourcing, Cost Reduction) has a significant influence on the firms' performance at (R=399, R-squared =0.159 and p-value= 0.000<0.05). Out of the two dimensions of inter-strategic outsourcing used in this study, logistics outsourcing has the most predictive value at the standardized coefficient (beta) value of 0.342. This result is in agreement with (Akinbola, 2012 and Akewushola and Elegbede, 2013), that outsourcing strategies have an effect on organizational performance.

Hypothesis two, looked at the link between employee competence (human capital, customer service) and firm performance, the result showed that staff competence (human capital, customer service) has a significant influence on the firms' performance at (R=381, R-squared =0.16 and p-value= 0.000<0.05).

Conclusions

Results from the work indicates that human capital outsourcing and logistics outsourcing can be of immense benefit to firms in diverse areas. Owing to the dynamic business environment and changing economy, organizations should seek for strategies to minimize overhead and running cost. Firms are able to gain competitive edge when they employ skilled and competent staff.

Recommendations

It is hereby recommended that:

- Firms should outsource non - core areas of competency to third party logistics providers (3PL). These are functions like transport, security, payroll, recruitment process, etc.
- Firms seeking to have a competitive edge, should hire, train, and retain staff that are competent to interface between the firm and its customers.

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